

MANAPPURAM: TOWARDS A MOBILE ESSENCE OF THE REGION

*A thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

REGIONAL STUDIES

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DECLARATION

I, Simi. K. K. (Reg.No. 08SRPH01) hereby declare that the thesis entitled “Manappuram: Towards a Mobile Essence of the Region” submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Prof. P. Thirumal, Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad, is a bonafide research work, which is also free from plagiarism. I also declare that this thesis has not been submitted in part or full to this university or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhganga/INFLIBNET.

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A part of this thesis is being published as “Manappuram in Ceylon and Ceylon in Manappuram: Migration, Mobility and Remaking of a Region,” November 2019, Volume 8, Issue 11 (2) of International Journal of Multi-disciplinary Educational Research, 2019, (ISSN: 2277-7881, Impact factor: 6. 014, 2019)

“From Disastrous Geography to Productive Geography: Reconstruction of Region Manappuram,” June 2019, Volume 6, Issue 2 of International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews, (E-ISSN 2348-1269, P-ISSN 2349-5138)

Details of presentation of parts of this thesis in seminars/conferences/workshops:
“Selection before Election: Caste, Representation and Forms of Capital in Womenhood” National Seminar, University of Kerala, Department of History, on 11th March 2009;

“Hetero- religious geographies in Manappuram: Theorizing Text and Context,” National Workshop at Center for Studies of Developing Societies (CSDS), New Delhi, 22nd November 2010.

“Bio-Geography of Dakshayani Velayudhan: Question of Spatiality, Caste and Gender” Inaugural Seminar at Dakshayani Velayudhan Centre for Women’s Studies in Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, 28th March 2019.

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C O N T E N T

Acknowledgement	v
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	35
Towards Theorising Region as a Locus of Incessant formation and Transformation: Unpacking Locatedness and Coeval Multiplicities	
Chapter 2	65
Embodied Disembodiment and Disembodied Embodiment of Manappuram: (De)materialising the Region	
Chapter 3	135
Histories and Configuring Power: Discourse of Lease and the Emergence of Sovereign, Kingship and Subject in Manappuram	
Chapter 4	171
Making of Histories and Territorialities of the Region: Discourse on Disputes and Production of Narratives on Manappuram	
Chapter 5	226
Mobile Geographies in between the Catastrophic and the Productive: Re-making of the Region Manappuram	
Chapter 6	281
Popular History and Construction of Manappuram: Memory, Culture and Genealogy of an <i>Avarna</i> Region	
Conclusion	339
Works Cited	346

Acknowledgements

My life is indebted to the University of Hyderabad in many ways. Time and distance have blurred my memories a little. However, some memories that I was able to cling on to, remain as moments redeemed from the indifference of routine.

My supervisor Prof. P. Thirumal's theoretical input and thoughtful questions pushed my thinking into new worlds. His creative engagement with theory, selfless involvement in my academic career and his bottomless compassion are deep in my heart and soul. His intellectual rigor has been an ideal that I have tried to emulate through my PhD work, at least in part. His selfless, unstinting hope has brought me to a stage in life that I can treasure and feel proud of for the rest of my life. His affection, care and concern are so strong that I feel he is more than a supervisor; he is family.

The Center for Regional Studies (CRS) where I pursue my PhD is one of the main source and resource of my academic spirit and achievement. The dialogic and reflexive nature of weekly work-in-progress seminars of CRS initiated by Prof. Sheela Prasad and Dr. Arvind Susarla have made much transformation in my work. Those dialogic inspirations made me learn and unlearn many dispositions in the realm of knowledge. The space offered by CRS for ethical ontology and epistemological rethinking gave me different perspectives. Prof. Sheela Prasad made me wonder about the greatness of a human with her concern and her attitude in identifying the rigorous questions of her students. I am very much thankful for the concern which she showed me.

I really cherish Dr. Aravind's affection and concern for me, and his enthusiastic engagement with my work. His constant efforts to stimulate thinking in students, his ready and selfless dedication in teaching and in guidance are beyond words. I really feel that he always considered me as his own student and pushed me to realise the dreams about my thesis. He has always kept his doors open for me to discuss issues at any time with such readiness and cheerfulness. His facilitation helped me during the most difficult and challenging times, and inspired me to return to my work. Prof. M. T. Ansari, my doctoral committee member also considered me as his own student. Through probing questions, he expressed his concerns to me, and that pushed me to work. His friendship and generosity towards students blurred the boundary between a professor and a friend. Dr. Aravind and Prof. Ansari's trust in my academic commitment motivated me to go forward. Prof Sasheej Hegde's concerns, theoretical

encouragement and rigorous presence always encourage me. The scholastic encouragements and concern offered by some of my teachers are unforgettable, among them engagement with K.Y. Ratnam, Sasheej Hegde, G. Aloysius, Soumya and Lakshminaryana have been quite productive. The friendship and concerns offered by Soumya Dechamma, Deepa Srinivasan and Asma are warm.

Hyderabad has become one of my most favorite places due to the warm friendships I received here. The political engagement in my organization ASA, along with SIO and MSF helped me to learn and unlearn. Engagements with the scholars in CRS such as Kapil, Kabitha, Sasmitha, Pullanna, Lohe, Joseph, Sathri, Jadava, Akkum, Poornima, Greeshma, Swathi, Aashish, and Arnav changed my understanding many a times.

A special thanks to my friends Sreedevi, Ameen, Harita, Thahir, Kavya, Manasi, Ayoob, Bharat, Greeshma, Shameer and Aashish who spent their valuable time for me. I also thank Manju, Dickens, Shinaj, Aasha and Kannan for offering me accommodation. The affection and compassion of Nidhish K. Sunder, Danaraj, Prashanth, Uthamettan, Narmada, Dickens Leonard, Anunad, Shinaj, Prem Ram, Premkumar, Noorah, Vellaisamy, Shan Muhamad, Dileep Karunakaran, Prabhu, Muhamad Ali, Karunamoorthy, Hanu G Das, Agnes, Shihab, Shareef, Anunad, Sreerag, Shan Mohamad, Soumya, Thufail, Noora, Jiyad, Aruna, Manju, Vasil, Bivitha, Ayoob, Basima, Naima, Asha, Kannan, Khadeeja, Feba and Musahb were decisive in many ways in my life.

The concern showed by K. K. Kochu, K. K. Baburaj, Jenny Rowena, Hani Babu, Sujith Kumar Parayil, Ratheesh Kumar, Asma, Partha, Ranjith, Swathi and Murali are truly unforgettable. The love and support of my family Achan, Amma, Pappan, my siblings Bobi, Jincy, Nived, and Arun's Achan and Amma helped me recover from desperate conditions. I wondered at my family's patience and wishes for me. They believed I could become a scholar and writer even at times when I myself had lost that belief. My intimate friends Vidhya, Divya C, Elsa, Smita, Divya R.Raj, Diana and Rose motivated me with their sincere support and encouragement.

And last but at the highest in my mind, I am grateful to my soul mate, Arun Ashokan, for his love, compassion and dedication towards me and my work. It would have been impossible to complete this work without his motivation and gentle but firm encouragement.

for Arun,

Introduction

Region and identities are mutually constituted by mental and material relations. They are multidimensional entities formed by social, political, economic, historical, geographical and cultural elements. Region is marked and demarcated by concrete boundaries on geographical lines and the emergence of consciousness of a region has a historical lineage. Even though the consciousness of the region within communities does not map concrete boundaries, the region might exist with meta-boundaries¹ in the minds of different communities through everyday practices (mental, material and symbolic interactions), memories and experiences. Everyday practices, memories and experiences are important factors of consciousness. They are established through oral and written narratives; therefore, their textualisation is also significant in the context of consciousness. Consciousness is influenced by both historical constructions and material affects, and reversely consciousness determines them. Therefore, consciousness determines the shaping of the imagination on/of the region, and the region influences consciousness. The constitution of everyday practices, memories and experiences are spatiotemporal. Put differently, in the same way that consciousness is influenced by hegemonic ideology, imagination of region becomes hegemonic.

Statement of the problem

Manappuram is located in Thrissur district in Kerala. The region is 24 km in length and 4.5 km in width and is surrounded by the sea and the backwaters. The western boundary of this region is the Arabian Sea and the eastern boundary is the Connolly Canal² (hereafter Canoly Canal). The northern side

¹ Meta-boundary here means the boundary which exists in the mind of people.

² The river which flows on the eastern side of the Manappuram was known as 'Nandiaar' in the ancient period. During the British period, the depth of the river was augmented. H.V. Connolly was the district collector of Malabar from 1841 to 1855. Connolly Canal is named after Connolly. Hence, the river became part of Connolly Canal which is also known as Canoly Canal locally. Since people usually call it Canoly Canal, I use the same in the thesis instead of Connolly Canal. Nandiaar used to flow through the eastern boundary of Manappuram, from Chetuva to Kodungallur Puzha (a stream of Bharathapuzha) through

is the Chetuva estuary and the southern side comprises of “Kodungallore” and Azhikkode estuary³ (Das; Innes; Logan; Menon). Dalits, Deeveras (OEC fishermen community), Thiyyas (sub-caste Ezhavas and Chon) (OBC), Muslims (OBC), Nairs (numerical minority) and Syrian Christians are the different communities that have settled in the region. A minor population of Latin Christians and people of Portuguese descendant also live in Manappuram.

Manappuram is not a region, state, district or a village within the administrative and geographical boundaries of the state of Kerala. Manappuram, the object of this scholarly enterprise, is never present in the administrative and historical frontiers of Kerala as a place or a region. In other words, in the available materials, Manappuram is not a physical region. That means that it does not physically arrive as an administrative and historical region in the geo-history of Kerala. Similarly, people do not commonly share any specific homogenous cultural traits. However, in the minds of the people, it is always alive as a region. Therefore, Manappuram is not a historical, administrative, linguistics, cultural and structural region, if we follow the definitions of Bernard Cohn⁴, it is also difficult to associate the region “bound together within one single frame” of political, economic, or cultural cohesion.⁵ At the same time, people can see, possess and dwell in Manappuram. Perhaps one could reasonably ask, how does Manappuram materialise and de-materialise, either materially or mentally, or is it a mutual constitution of both “real” and “construct”?

canals. It was marked as the Theevra River in the Manappuram Cultural Foundation’s brochure.

³ Kumara Das, “Manappuram,” Mangalodayam 1917. C. Achyutha Menon, The Cochin State Manual (Ernakulam: Cochin Government Press, 1911). Logan, Malabar Manual, Vol. 1 (Madras: Madras Government Press, 1951). Innes, Malabar Gazetteer, Vol. 1 and 11, (Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Gazetteers Department, 1997).

⁴ Cohn explains about these kinds of classifications of the region in the Indian Context. Bernard Cohn, “Regions Subjective and Objective: Their Relation to the Study of Modern Indian History and Society,” Bernard Cohn Omnibus (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004) 100-135.

⁵ Sudipta Kaviraj, “Three Planes of Space Examining Regions Theoretically in India,” Economic and Political Weekly 18 Nov. 2017: 56-63.

Region is conceptualised differently in various academic disciplines. Yet, it does appear as the object of study across disciplines. Those studies delineate taxonomies and conceptual dispositions of region as an analytical category. Distinct analytical categories of region such as scale, network, place, space and territory are deployed to understand the region by varied scholastic enterprises. Taxonomy of region such as historical region, cultural region, economic region, linguistic region, and political region is generally analysed in numerous theoretical queries in the context of region. It has been observed that region as the object of scrutiny in many studies appears as a closure, surface, container, backdrop, given context, or framework. Such categorisation has been observed as reductionist and further problematised by different scholars such as Henry Lefebvre, Doreen Massey, and Anssi Paasi. Nonetheless, region is theorised as “historical contingent”, as a “process”, as “relational” and as “spatiotemporal dialectics” (Henry Lefebvre, Edward W. Soja, Doreen Massey, David Harvey, and Nigel Thrift). Contemporary researches on region broadly deal with the conceptual disposition of region such as real or construct, mental or material, ideal or praxis, bounded or unbounded.

Only in rare contexts do mainstream history writings on Kerala mark Manappuram. Most of the time, in modern historical registers, it appears as ‘Chetuva Island’. This appearance is not identical to the Manappuram that is envisaged by the people. Besides, it was marked in those registers as a battlefield. However, people of Manappuram do not appear to be involved in the war as either warriors or military agents. Since it was positioned in between the kingdoms of Cochin and Samuthiri (Das 1917), the Samuthiri and Cochin Raja used it as a corridor of power, or a pathway for conquering other countries (*rajyam*). However, it is never portrayed as a powerful region in both their maps. A few foreigners also used this region for setting up temporary settlement. It has to be noted that the Portuguese, the Dutch, the

British, and Tipu Sultan also attacked Manappuram.⁶ Therefore, in mainstream history writings, Manappuram physically appears as an island; and politically as a battlefield and a corridor of power.⁷ It portrays the region as a closure or backdrop. Further, it tries to territorialise and bind the region contrary to the imagination/formation of the region by the people of Manappuram. Hence, the mainstream history writings on Kerala illustrate Manappuram as/in a “military notion”.

In his discussion with the geographers, Foucault observes, “Region is a fiscal, administrative, military notion” (68).⁸ In mainstream history-writing, region emerges as a “fiscal, administrative, military notion”, along with “closure and backdrop”. It is a preliminary problem for this thesis. This thesis tries to re-examine this problem in the context of the region. Parallely, I try to revisit the problem which was raised by John Agnew as one of the serious theoretical area of tension in the contemporary discussion on region. He addresses the nuances of conceptualisation of region by complicated conflictual relation between realists and constructionists in the theorisation of region. Realists argue that region is “real”, that is experienced directly through our senses. Constructionists argue that regions are “mere inventions” of mind. For a new conceptualisation of region, Agnew proposes an interrelation between “real existence” and “prior thought” by distancing from binary arguments of realists and constructionists (92).⁹ I would be revisiting these two problems

⁶ Puthethathu Raman Menon, “Chetuva Manappuram”, Shakthan Thampuran (Thrissur: Sulabha books, 1942). William Logan, Malabar Manual, trans. T.V. Krishnan, (Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi, 1985). Das 1092.

⁷ In mainstream histories on Kerala, like Kochirajya Charitram, Cochin State Manual, and Malabar Manual, Manappuram appears as an island and corridor of power. See Chapter 1.

⁸ Michel Foucault, “Questions on Geography”, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980). The origin of the concept ‘region’ by the geographers in response to Foucault, “The region of the geographers is the military region (from *regere*, to command), a province is a conquered territory (from *vincere*). Field evokes the battlefield” (69).

⁹ In the constructionist thinking about region, he observed “social determinism” or “ontological relativism”. In his opinion, social determinism understands region as a product of economic or social forces; ontological relativism understands region as a construct of “social conventions or purely linguistic categories without real-world counterpart.” Then he argues that totalistic visions of both realists and constructionists about region pose serious

that emerge out of the empirical and theoretical query in the context of Manappuram. By problematising these two problems, I would be rethinking the concept of the region and re-analysing the formation of the region as an identity. In short, I attempt to look at how region, as an idea and identity, mutually constitutes the “real” and “construct” or the ‘mental’ and material in the context of Manappuram. This thesis addresses region in terms of space, place, network, and territory, and takes the initiative to see region in terms of time.

Research Question

In this thesis, I would be exploring how region arrives through relational intersection of space and time in general. I, then, attempt to look at how region is mutually formulated through the mental and the material (mutually real and construct) in particular. To understand the formations of the region by juxtapositioning the mental and the material, a) I try to illuminate how everyday memory and everyday practice manifest the region and complicate its existence and try to uncover its nuances. Put differently, I try to illustrate how the region of Manappuram appears as an embodied disembodiment and disembodied embodiment in the context of the mental and material existence and production of the region. To clarify, I attempt to depict how everyday memory and everyday practices (including material practices) formulate incorporeal presence and corporeal absence or incorporeal absence and corporeal presence of the region. b) I try to look at how memory appears as history that makes the region an *avarana* Utopia. In other words, I try or analyse how history which is rendered by the memory that produces *avarana* genealogy of the present envisages the future. I attempt to illustrate how memory (oral and written memory) of people, objects, resistance and traditions produce fragments which make history. Besides, I also examine how natural and manmade material construction and ideation of people

difficulties in understanding the mutual relationship between these two standpoints. John Agnew, “Regions on the Mind does not Equal Regions of the Mind,” Progress in Human Geography 1999: 91-96.

produce memory in relation to the mutuality of the mental and material in the formation of region. c) In addition, I attempt to illuminate how trans-territorial flows (of people, goods and idea) and network (of place and ideas) formulate the mobile geographies that make the region. Along with that, I depict how mobile geographies are formulated through interconnections between the transformation of the natural landscape (construction of built-environment such as hospital, drinking water system, bridges, education institutions, agrarian construction and industries) and ideation of textual discourse (both oral and written texts). d), I further attempt to explain how historical construction tries to territorialise and politically homogenise the region in relation to the mutual coexistence of its mental and material formations. I would be detailing how the legal discourse produces the boundary and narrative which tries to territorialise the region and how the historical fact and evidence interconnect each other at the juncture of colonial modernity. And further, I would be exploring how everyday practice, material affect, memory and network understand the material and mental manifestations of the region of Manappuram. Put differently, I try to delineate how histories and territorialities produce the narrative and boundaries for/of the region. I look at how lease of land configures power and proposes the idea of sovereign, kingship and subject for Manappuram. Specifically, I explore how the sovereign is produced through the right to control over subjects and objects (human body and goods) apart from its juridico-fiscal power and traditional socio-cultural power.

Manappuram: *Mental Real and Material Construct*¹⁰; an Anti-essential and Impermanent Region

Michel Foucault has captured well the problem of real and unreal (constructed) spaces by theorising heterotopia as space that juxtaposes the

¹⁰ Emphasis is mine.

real space and the unreal space¹¹. He explains heterotopia by invoking the case of the mirror:

The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there (24).

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (2005) address this problem much insightfully. They discuss two kinds of space that are the smooth space (nomad space) and striated space (sedentary space). They delineate how those opposite spaces intermix. They are basically distinctive as a smooth space is described as non-homogenous, as being contrasted point by point, as infinite, open, and unlimited in every direction as having neither top nor bottom nor centre; whereas a striated space is delimited, closed, having top and bottom, and fixed. However, they always “happen simultaneously, they “exist only in a mixture”. They delineate that “the two spaces, in fact, exist only in a mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, traversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space.”¹²

I address the problem that positions region in a binary view, “real” or “construct”, by picking up insights from these theorisations. I argue that region is formulated through mutual intersections of mental and of material by exposing the juxtaposition of binary and simultaneity of opposition, as mutual constitutive. I further argue specifically that regions are perhaps mentally real and materially construct(ed) in the context of Manappuram where both conjointly constitute each other without binary, by complicating this problem. The intermixing of binary not only interrelates but also

¹¹ See Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* Spring 1986: 22-27.

¹² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, “The Smooth and the Striated”, *A Thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) 474-500.

complicates each other. In other words, in the context of Manappuram mental or construct apparently is real. Similarly, real or material arrives as a construct. That means real or material itself is a mental construction, and construct or mental would be in existence. Juxtaposing binaries (real and construct), may complicate its ideal and physical fixity and the boundedness of real and construct. (Bounded not only signifies the physically bounded but also connotes the ideally bounded). It not only complicates its presence and absence but also nullifies the very idea of the essence by the complex position of region as a simultaneity of *embodied disembodiment* or *disembodied embodiment*.¹³

Therefore, I further argue that it not only negates or nullifies the essence that is incorporated or attributed into both real and construct, and mental and material, but rather negates the idea of essence in the constitution of region as well. To rephrase, I argue that perhaps there is no essence of the region of Manappuram and its identities. Therefore, the region appears here as anti-essential. In another context, Doreen Massey argues that space is “anti-essential”, but her argument is limited to a political sense. I try to take this forward and argue that Manappuram sounds anti-essential and is not limited politically, conceptually and materially. Conceptually, it might nullify watertight separation between space and time through the mutual interrelations of time and space. Materially it negates the binary of real and construct or mental and material by *corporeal absence* and *incorporeal presence* or *corporeal presence* and *incorporeal absence*¹⁴ of the region. Politically it denies caste and the state in the context of Manappuram, by nullifying the administrative idea of the state and it negates caste by envisaging the *avarana* utopia. The idea of anti-essential arrives here through different registers. In the context of Manappuram, the very idea of the region is complicated with impermanence and anti-essence. That means the

¹³ Emphasis is mine.

¹⁴ Emphasis is mine.

impermanence and anti-essence of the region arrive through its everyday simultaneous embodied disembodiment and disembodied embodiment, *avarna*-utopian imagination, juxtaposition of smooth space and time, mobile geographies, de-territorialised historical dispositions, memories (popular history) of/on human and non-human entities.

The region is perhaps something that has neither disappeared nor appeared but is always becoming. It offers simultaneous belonging and not belonging because it has never had an administrative existence nor has it historically existed as a physical region. Moreover, it is not culturally embedded with specific traits. On the one hand, the region's corporeal absence perhaps signifies nothingness. It is not only exactly part of infinite space, but also the element of infinite time. On the other hand, the region's corporeal absence signifies temporal pause or pause of the time which offers re'form'. That is, re'form' of its corporeal presence and its continuous impermanence. So, re'form' is a continuous process.

Temporal pause is a prerequisite for the corporeal absence and incorporeal presence of the region. The temporal pause might be the significant element of time or one of its reflexive natures of time, probably a duration, or interval as well. Time is usually characterised with its speed and slowness, but here it also offers pause which does not necessarily suggest the stagnancy of time, but rather it offers the meditative contemplation. Such space-time, in fact, offers an anti-essential, impermanent region of Manappuram. Indeed, the embodied disembodiment and disembodied embodiment which offer the anti-essentialism and impermanence of the region also re'form' and complicate the idea of consciousness of region, its valorisation and its fetishism by negating the essence of the region and its identities.

Manappuram, the region is a multitude with the simultaneity of historical, geographical, political, economic as well as social aspects which is also

spiritual because it also arrives through the everyday meditative space. The intimate space of the individual also produces the region through personal creativity which certainly allows the manifestation of the region as a pleasure. But it complicates the libidinal economy because its personal creativity constitutes a communitarian commitment as well, therefore creativity seems to be politically alluring.

Etymology of Manappuram: Mentalities and Materialities of the Region

The etymology of Manappuram may help us to figure out the simultaneity of mental and material. The word Manappuram appears as a recurrent expression in the context of Kerala. It visibly appears in two other contexts besides the region Manappuram. On the one hand, the word Mana(l)ppuram often appears as an expression which indicates *kada(l)ppuram* (beach).¹⁵ On the other hand, it appears as the name of a place, like the Aluva Manappuram on the shores of the Aluva River (Periyar River) (in which context, the word is collocated Aluva). There is Manappuram at Thaikkattussery panchayath in Alappuzha district; it is concretely visible in the administrative map of Kerala, as different from the region Manappuram.

The name Manappuram in this context, etymologically inheres in the popular imagination and everyday discourse of people. They observe that the name Manappuram emerged from the word Manalppuram.¹⁶ Peethambaran says, “The name Manappuram has emerged out of the word Manalppuram”. It is, in fact, “originally Manalppuram”,¹⁷ because of which it is known in the name of Manappuram¹⁸. Gradually the word Manalppuram “might have syncopated

¹⁵ See K.C. Krishnan, personal interview, 06.05.2012.

¹⁶ Raman (14.01.2016), Peethambaran (15.01.2016), Ajayagosh (12.01.2016), Rahman Set (09.01.2012), Engandiyoor Chandrasekharan (12.01.2016) and E.V. Jinan (13.01.2012), personal interviews.

¹⁷ Ajayagosh, Jinan, and Raman, personal interviews.

¹⁸ Raman, personal interview.

into Manappuram”.¹⁹ According to Ajayagosh, Manalppuram may be the right usage of the name of the region, but it is expressed as Manappuram.

The meaning of the word Manalppuram appears in Malayalam dictionary in the sense of “a sandy island” (Gundert 777)²⁰ or “river bed from which water has seasonally receded” (Pillai 835).²¹ The word also connotes a sandy beach (Gundert 777; Pillai 835). It is important to discuss here the etymological and philological understanding about Manappuram. In other words, one could observe that the word Manappuram has emerged from *mana(l)ppuram*, as a sort of portmanteau (*manal* and *puram*). It exposes both the literal and symbolic meaning as well as material and semiotic interpretations of these two words. The *manal* in the blend word connotes sand, especially loose, dry sand (Pillai 835). The sand signifies material, an object. The sand is collocated in expressions like *manalkunnu* (dune), *manalthitta* (sand bank) and *manalthari* (sand grains) that indicate the sandiness. Put differently, these expressions connote the very texture of the object, *manal*. Also, sand attached to sandy beach and sandy island provides a wider perceived experience of an object. Manappuram is considered as *manalaranyam* (sandy desert).²² It indicates the geographical constraints and struggles as well. That means the very experience of the embodiment. Precisely sand not only appears here as an object, but rather it suggests the materiality of the region as well. The second word *puram* has different meanings in this context such as the west, outside and beyond (Gundert 681). *Puram* also indicates *padinjaru* (west), opposite of *kara* (land) (Gundert 681). It probably shows its geographical distinction with *kara*. *Kara* seems to represent land, place opposite to sea, and lee which lies opposite *puram* (208). Therefore, it is a place of security, the security of life; hence *puram* is more exposed as a catastrophic contingency.

¹⁹ Chandrasekaran, personal interview.

²⁰ Herman Gundert, [Malayalam Online Dictionary](#).

²¹ C. Madhavan Pillai, [NBS Malayalam English Dictionary](#) (Kottayam: Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd, 1999) 835.

²² Chandrasekaran and Peethambaran, personal interviews.

Kara is also used in expressions such as *karasthanam* and *karayogam*.²³ So, *kara* is a place for privilege, rank, and dignity. It might denote socially privileged and ranked life. Therefore, *puram* expresses its difference from *kara*.

Padinjaru, or the ‘west’ is relegated to *kizhakku*, the east in the Malayali spatial consciousness²⁴ (It is quite different from the meaning of east and west in the worldview suggested by oriental and occidental). Such spatial direction contextually indicates the spatial location demarcated by uncivilised and unclean²⁵ human/space as opposed to east which connotes nobility, high status, civilised, and cleanliness. *Padinjaru*, or west, not only indicates spatial location close to the seashore but is connected with the social locations attached to space. Since it is widely connected with the sea, it is attributed to the space of fisherfolk. Generally, Arayas, Mukkuvas are the fishermen community and Muslims were widely engaged in fishing and selling fish. Many of the Muslims have/had fish-related jobs before or after their Gulf immigrant life, especially in the case of lower-middle-class or middle-class

²³ *Sthaanam* means grandeur (Gundert 1068) and *karayogam* is meeting or assembly.

²⁴ In the space consciousness in the architectural context in Kerala, the *padinjatta* or *padinjattaka*, especially in the house (*naalukettu*) of elites were considered as the prime room in the house, like “a sanctuary of the ancestor, the bedroom of the owner”. Gundert 598.

²⁵ “Manappuram... was known as a fishing area earlier. The culture of the area and the people depended on the sea. The culture of the people of Manappuram was the culture of fishing; now everyone has developed, thanks to the Gulf migration... Now there is progress in every field. I am basically from Chavakkad, where the distance to sea is 4 km, but here the distance is only one and a half km from the highway in Manappuram. People hesitated to come to Manappuram in 1979... It was a non-developed area. But it was difficult to settle down here for somebody from outside and it was an undeveloped area in 1979. It was like a task or one would think like a hundred times before taking the decision to drink even a cup of tea from the teashop at Manappuram in 1979. This was so because the culture of Manappuram was like that. There were only two teashops at Chenthrappinni at the time. The soil on the floor (the floor itself was sand) looked like it was fertile and sufficient for a ten-acre land. It was such dirty soil... There was a pervading smell of fish as well. It’s not the fault of the teashop because there were only two shops here. The sense of cleanliness arrived here recently. Other places had improved on this matter much before... Now Manappuram is a good location not only for business but also for interaction with people. Now their culture is not the same as what it was before. The old culture has changed drastically. The people have progressed culturally and educationally... I settled here, not exactly here, but 1 km east from this National Highway. Manappuram does not seem to be a bad place to settle down since the last fifteen years. Now it is a good place to interact with, relate to and converse with others.” Joseph, personal interview, 12.01.2013.

in Manappuram; the Dalits also seems bound with the space, the sandy plains and barren land such as *thuruthu* (bench and holm), and *varambu* (berm and baulk) in mainstream common sense. Therefore, the *padinjaru* signifies the lower caste people and hierarchically lower positioned people within society. Therefore, the east is attached to high caste. Such spatial and social signification of space ordered the space temporally, spatially and socially and it perhaps relegated, and culturally demoted identities that belong to the space. These attributed relegations scaled through manner, slang, habit, style of delivery of speech, approach, smell and so on.

Further, the word *puram* is expressed through several expressions such as *purampokku* which signifies the outlaw, socially and morally outcaste in the Malayali cultural analogy. Contextually, *puram* also indicates outside (Gundert 681). Outside here denotes many directions. *Puram* (West) also indicates a location opposite *kara* (land) (which signifies something that is opposite the sea) (681). The land seems to be a concrete, corporeal existence, and of course, and so does the sea (water). Land and sea (water) allow us to perceive their physical materiality. Outside also denotes beyond (681). Hence *puram* seems outside of land and water, or beyond the land and water. Therefore, *puram* seems beyond the irreducible physicality and inevitable materiality of a perceived entity like water and land. *Puram* probably exists outside or beyond the concrete and the corporeal. It sounds like something that is ambiguous to appear or to become visible.

Puram is the opposite of *kara*²⁶ (as boundary) and it signifies beyond the boundary, therefore beyond the bounded. The boundary suggests the boundedness, limited and confined space, and probably a definite administrative region; similarly, the boundedness suggests physical boundedness. But here, Manappuram is quite contrary to the idea of boundedness and boundary. In some sense, the bounded signifies both

²⁶ *Kara* also means boundary. Gundert 681.

physical and symbolic boundedness that means that it not only connotes physical fixity but rather the symbolic framing with any homo(genous) ideology or singular conceptual categories.

‘Outside’ sometimes suggests the outcaste, rejected, underprivileged, or considered lesser in society.²⁷ Nonetheless ‘outside’ offers an idea of outcaste or outside the caste system. ‘Outside’ necessarily offers a way beyond or outside the system; outside of the two predominant systems in the context; outside of caste; and outside of the state. Or rather it is an outside which looks forward to the new world beyond any concrete definitions/ concrete structure; something beyond what we perceive and conceive. It offers Manappuram as a region beyond the administrative (state), beyond concrete, and beyond varna (caste).

Apart from that, Aluva Manappuram and Thirunavaya²⁸ are considered as two well-known manappurams (sandy lands) in the context of Kerala. Now they are known for *balitharppanam*, a ritual which aims for the moksha of the soul of the dead in the Hindu belief. Thirunavaya is associated with *mamankam*, a great fare and festival in medieval Kerala which was held every twelve years. Those two sandy islands are the river beds, near the Bharatapuzha (Thirunavaya) and Aluvapuzha (Aluva manappuram), unlike Manappuram, which is near both the river and sea. The river-based culture is considered ‘civilised’ in opposition to the sea-based culture²⁹ and whereas urban cities are considered as heterogeneous and multicultural,³⁰ the sea-based culture is

²⁷ The Brahmins had been advised to live away from seashores and hills.

²⁸ Thirunavaya is also a *manappuram* and is shown as an example of *manappuram* (as sandy islands) in the Gundert dictionary (777).

²⁹ Vadakkedath observes, “We have a number of readers and writers. I think that a new culture developed here, which was based on this river and sea”. He says, “A river always develops a particular culture in the area which surrounds it; it is reflected here as well”. He brought in the examples of “Mundassery Mash (Joseph Mundassery) who lived on the other side of the river bank”, K.S.K. Thalikulam and Ramu Karyat who were living “here at Manappuram”. He adds, “River influences our character, it is calm and the sea is always in turmoil.” Vadakkedath, personal interview, 03.05.2012.

³⁰ For example, Mumbai and Kochi.

linked to identities who inhabit there and are attributed as ‘uncivilised’ and branded as ghettos.³¹ These sandy islands are religiously connected within the cultural context of Kerala, probably the ritualistic space. In a sense, these are the sanctified spaces.

Manal-puram appears here as a kind of mix of binaries, a combination of opposition and a juxtaposition of paradox. Moreover, Manappuram is not necessarily a linguistic region but, language apparently mediates the formation of the region. The language itself is constituted by material and cultural entities. The semiotic and metaphorical expressions manifest the material and the cultural through language. Nevertheless, the region also arrives through the *manal*, the material manifestation of the region and *puram*, the mental expression of the region. In other words, *manal* indicates the real and the material while *puram* designates the mental. It, in fact, exposes the interrelations of the region which mutually consists of real and unreal space where simultaneity and juxtaposition of a real place and unreal utopia happens. In a sense, Manappuram is a kind of heterotopic expression. It traverses from embodied disembodiment and disembodied embodiment, like spatial “traverse” from smooth to striated and “reverse” from striated to smooth. There is “de jure distinction”, but which “happens simultaneously”.

In various popular expressions – everyday oral and written, everyday expressions like conversation and recollection, popular literature³² – Manappuram emerges out of the sea. It is also remarked upon historically. The historical accounts also show that Manappuram originated from sea long before the first century A.D. Some other regions also share certain kind of a story of origin. For instance, Karappuram, which lies between Cochin and Alappuzha, emerged sometime in the first century A.D and the island of

³¹ Many of the beach towns like Mattancherry and Fort Cochin at Ernakulam, Beemapalli at Thiruvananthapuram, Vellayil at Kozhikode are considered as loud, bad, outlawed, ugly and immoral.

³² *Manappurathe Sandhya*, poem by K.S.K Thalikulam, and *Brahmasri Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar*, biography of Vaidhyar express that Manappuram emerged from the sea.

Vypin, between Kochi and Kodungallur, emerged in 1341.³³ But it does not say exactly when Manappuram emerged out of the sea. Achyutha Menon mentions about certain places which emerged out of the backwaters or sea in *The Cochin State Manual*. He writes:

The tracts between the Cranganore and Chetwa bars called Manappuram was the first to come into existence long before the Christian era, as Cranganore was known to the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans as an emporium of trade. The tract between Cochin and Alappey called Karappuram some centuries later as it appears from the descriptions of Pliny and Ptolemy that it was not in existence in the first century A.D, while the island between Cochin and Cranganore bars called Vypen or pudu vaipu was formed only in the fourteenth century (9).

Achyutha Menon says with due emphasis, “The names of these tracts are significant for their history. Manappuram means sand-bank, karappuram accreted land, and putu vaipu new deposit.”³⁴ But it is interesting to notice that Manappuram came out of the sea after ‘Keralam’ emerged out of the same sea. Therefore, Manappuram does not seem to have emerged out of the Parasuraman myth, and it perhaps nullifies the legendary myth of Parasuraman.³⁵

Different accounts reveal how people approach the idea of island which is contrary to the mainstream history writings in the context of Manappuram.

³³ In accordance with this incident of emergence of Vypin, which lies between Kodungallur and Kochi, the island emerged out of sea following an extraordinary flood in 1341. It started a new era in Malayalam called as Puduvaipu era (Menon, *History of Kerala* 22). “This era”, Sreedara Menon quotes Fra Palino, “is called pudvaipu from ‘pudu’ new and ‘vepu’ the foundation or introduction of any thing.” And he also brings in notes from Visscher, “The second era the year poodu vaipu which they call the new style was first established when the island of vypeen was recovered from the sea and inhabited by man”. See, Sreedara Menon and C.K. Kareem, *Kerala District Gazetteer: Trichur* (Thiruvananthapuram: Government of Kerala, 1962).

The emergence of Vypin shows how one place also produces time as well.

³⁴ *The Cochin State Manual* Footnote 9.

³⁵ A prominent story on the origin of Kerala is that it emerged out of the sea by the axe of Parasuraman (Hindu mythical character). See *Malabar Manual*, Vol. I, 221.

People from Manappuram usually describe this as “a place which lies from Chetuva to Aala.”³⁶ According to Varghese Mechery:

Manappuram is divided into 10-15 villages, 30 km in length from Aala to Chetuva. We call all of these places Manappuram. But these villages have independent names such as Chetuva, Engandiyoor, Thrithalloor, Vadanapally, Thalikulam, Nattika, Valappad, Edathuruthy, Kazhimbram, Edamuttam, Chenthrapinni, Kaipamangalam, Moonupeedika, Mathilakam, Perinjanam, etc.³⁷

Therefore, some people think that the Connolly Canal is not a natural water source.³⁸ Most of the time, they keep a meta-boundary, “It is from Chetuva to Aala”³⁹. Aala is now known as Sreenarayanapuram, a place situated near Kodungallur.⁴⁰ Sometimes they add that Kodungallur, which was part of Manappuram in the olden days, was later attached to Cochin State.⁴¹ But while they try to contour it, their narrative is quite confusing. Therefore, the southern boundary of Manappuram is a little varied when different people describe it. Their opinion varies, “from Chetuva to Kodungallur”,⁴² “from Chetuva to Kottappuram”⁴³, and “Chetuva to Kodungallur-Kottappuram estuary”.⁴⁴

Manappuram is depicted as an island,⁴⁵ surrounded by water⁴⁶ in the everyday imagination of the people along with the mental map. The idea of the island

³⁶ Jose Thadikkaran, Shajith (15.01.2012), Anil Pulikkal (02.02.2013), Sajay Vayanappillil, Majeed (12.01.2013), Suresh (28.01.2012), Nandakumar (07.03.2013), and Peethambaran, personal interviews.

³⁷ Varghese Mechery, personal interview, 04.05.2012.

³⁸ Majeed, personal interview.

³⁹ “The places that lie between Chetuva and Aala is called as Manappuram. Its boundary point does not extend to Kodungallur”, (Thadikkaran). We see exactly similar statements made by Shajith, Pulikkal, Vayanappillil, Majeed, and Suresh.

⁴⁰ Mechery, Suresh, Ramadas (16.01.2016), personal interviews.

⁴¹ Sivan Karanchira (01.02.2013) and Vadakkedath, personal interviews.

⁴² Shashidharan, personal interview, 13.01.2016.

⁴³ “This area from Chetuva to Kottappuram is called as Manappuram”, Karthikeyan, personal interview, 01.02.2013.

⁴⁴ Peethambaran, personal interview.

⁴⁵ Valsan Pokkanchery (15.01.2012), Chandrasekaran, Shajith, Suresh, Peethambaran, and Nandakumar, personal interviews.

⁴⁶ Nandakumar and Peethambaran, personal interviews.

seems quite contrary to the meta-boundary, which illustrates that “Manappuram lies from Aala to Chetuva”. It is apparent when we analyse Peethambaran’s words:

Manappuram is a place that lies from Chetuva to Aala. That means it is a place surrounded by water on four sides; on the eastern side is Canoly Canal, the western side is the sea, Chetuva River is on north and Kodungallur-Azheekode Kayal (backwaters) in south. We could call it an island.

Therefore, it appears that among them or even in the opinion of a single person, it is a complex category.⁴⁷ Because, it is Kodungallur after Aala and one cannot see any river or water force in between these places. It is widely illustrated as an island, and they very often try to rectify and reconfigure their idea of an island. Therefore, sometimes it is projected as a *dweep* (island), *upadweep*⁴⁸ (peninsula) and *ardhadweep* (half-island).⁴⁹ It is, in fact, located out of the boundary sense and physical contours of the region. There is an entrenched idea or ‘imagination of the island’ in their everyday.⁵⁰ It proposes an idea of the particular.⁵¹ For them, the island is not a physical object, but rather a metaphor; one could say that the island is a metaphor of closure as the mainstream history imagined the region. The island in this context is perhaps a metaphor of their geo-historic-cultural differences with others. Difference always appears with regard to the past. However, the difference

⁴⁷ “Manappuram is an island. Is Kodungallur included in Manappuram? Maybe Manappuram was a big place at an earlier period. And there might have been something like a trench or stream in between Manappuram and Kodungallur” (Chandrasekharan).

⁴⁸ “Manappuram is an island...yes... Manappuram is not an island, but *upadweep*. Even though if we consider it to extend up to Kodungallur, it seems like an island. Kodungallur then went to Kochirajyam, but we were annexed to Malabar” (Vadakkedath).

⁴⁹ “It looks almost like an *ardhadweep* (half island)” (Mechery).

⁵⁰ “If we say that the boundary of Manappuram is from Chetuva to Aala, in between the Arabian Sea and Connolly Canal, there is an imagination of an island. In fact, the east canal is not natural. It was constructed by Connolly Saipu, in the 19th century” (Majeed).

⁵¹ “We can probably say that Manappuram is a village. In another sense, it is an island, where on the western side is the Arabian Sea, and on the eastern part is the Connolly Canal, north – Chetuva estuary, and south the Kodungallur estuary. So, it’s an island which is a remote place from a town” (Suresh).

presupposes a relation with other places that seem distinct. Otherwise it is a metaphor, of the particular, not necessarily distinct, but different. Manappuram as an island might or might not have existed in the past. But the idea has been passed on through the generations, perhaps to portray its difference. Hence the concept of an island is probably a loose figure in history or a symbolic idea of difference. But it is also a metaphor of openness, open on every side, open to another world⁵² that apparently nullifies the idea of the closure.

Methodology

This study takes an interdisciplinary approach, both empirically and analytically, to conceptualise the region as Manappuram. In brief, I have used different kinds of methods such as archival research method, ethnography and textual method to understand people's perception, historical construction and textual dispositions to understand the formation of the region Manappuram. Ethnography included fieldwork, discussions, observation, and personal interview including participant observation, and in-depth interviews. For archival research method, I spent four months in the archives to collect the manuscripts. The manuscripts are in early Malayalam language which I collected and later translated. Some of the manuscripts I copied by hand, while for others, I have taken photographs. I have focused on the various enterprises and collectives in the name of Manappuram to study the materialisation of the region and its nuances. Therefore, I did interviews with fifty-five respondents⁵³ and participated in a carnival, called the Manappuram Beach festival.⁵⁴ I conducted the interviews, and transcribed and translated

⁵² Vadakkedath said, "Even though it is an island which is surrounded by water, Manappuram is politically enlightened and it has the openness to accept any new thought/concept which emerges even outside and is ready to carry it forward" (Vadakkedath).

⁵³ All interviews were done, transcribed, and translated by myself. I have used their names, in general, as they address themselves. But some of them use their surnames in their public life. In such cases, I have used their surnames as well. In the context of Kerala, people usually only use their first name, except in official contexts. But recently they have been using their last names as well, whether real or not, after starting to use social media.

⁵⁴ The beach festival organised for four days at Kazhimbram beach from 25 to 28 December 2014.

them. Most of the interviews were conducted from 2012 to 2016 in a discontinuous manner. Nonetheless, my fieldwork, in fact, started from 2008 onwards. It helped me to create a bond with the respondents. It also assisted me in collecting materials from many of their personal repositories. Additionally, the initial time of my fieldwork also helped me to access material from local libraries. But the interviews were officially recorded only from 2012 onwards. Some of the respondents were interviewed two or more times. I have chosen the respondents through random sampling and snowball sampling. I have used the unstructured interview method. I have collected the popular written narratives from the private repositories through fieldwork. The popular materials (novel, autobiography, biography, souvenir and so on) were translated by Arun Ashokan.

I have collected primary data from three different kinds of sources such as archival sources, ethnographic sources and print narratives (including popular). As for archival sources, I have used unpublished and published manuscripts from the Kerala state regional archives – Ernakulam and Kozhikode; the Dutch memoirs I collected from online archives. I have collected unpublished archival manuscripts, *Series Files (1684-1869)*,⁵⁵ early Malayalam manuscripts and published archival documents such as *Saktan Thampuran: Selected Administrative Records*.⁵⁶ The *Series files* consist of letters, treaties, proclamations, agreements, deeds and other documents. The *Saktan Records* consist of proclamations, treaties and other records. I have largely used letters from these sources, the correspondence between the Cochin Raja and his officials, the letters of the inhabitants of Manappuram, and some of the letters from colonial officials, in both English and Dutch. The letters in the *Series Files* and the letters in *Saktan Records* were written in

⁵⁵ *Series Files (1684-1869)*, unpublished files from Ernakulam Regional Archives, (hereafter *Series Files*).

⁵⁶ *Saktan Kerala State Archives Bulletin: Saktan Thampuran, Terenjodutha Bharana Rekhakal* (Saktan Thampuran: Selected Administrative Records), Vol. I, Issue 2, ed. J. Rejikumar, (Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala State Archives Department, 2010), (hereafter *Saktan Records*).

early Malayalam (before standardisation of the Malayalam language). Some of the letters were found in Tamil and Dutch, a few of them were translated into Malayalam and English. Most of the letters in the *Series Files* and *Saktan Records* were written the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries and a few were from the early nineteenth century. I collected four hundred letters from the *Series Files* and I have analysed 45 letters among these for the thesis and 15 letters from *Saktan Records*. The remaining published manuscripts which I examine, are *The Joint Commissioners Report on Malabar 1792-93*,⁵⁷ *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Relating to British Affairs in Malabar*,⁵⁸ and two memoirs of Dutch Commandeurs Gollennesse in 1743 and Moens in 1781.⁵⁹

For ethnography, I have analysed songs, memories of communities, everyday expressions and activities (conversation, rumination, everyday creativity and every day activities, including material practices). I have examined print narratives (including popular) such as newspaper, autobiography, memoir, biography, novel, souvenir, magazine, pamphlet, booklet, etc. For example, I navigate through the *Nattika Firka Cooperative Bank Silver Jubilee Souvenir*, *Anubavangalude Kalpadukal* (The Footsteps of Experience, a souvenir), *Manappuram Samskriti*, (Heritage of Manappuram, a souvenir), *Thaliyola* (Palm leaf, a magazine), *Manappuram Times* (1949-1974, a newspaper),

⁵⁷ *The Joint Commissioners' Report on Malabar 1792-93* (Kochi: Kerala State Archive, reprint 2010).

⁵⁸ This collection is "divided into two parts". The first part deals with the time "prior to the treaty of Seringapatam" in 1792 and the second part deals with "the period subsequent to 1792 down to the present day (1879)" in "Extracts from the Preface to the First Edition", *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance relating to British Affairs in Malabar*, ed. W. Logan, (Madras: Government Press, 1951) v. (Hereafter *A Collection*).

⁵⁹ The Dutch Commandeurs had to write memoirs for the "guidance of their successor". There was a total of 14 Dutch Commandeurs at Malabar. Gollennesse was the seventh and Moens was the thirteenth Dutch commandeur. See A. Galletti (trans), "Memorandum on the Administration of the Malabar Coast by Julius Valentijn stein Van Gollennesse (1743) and Memorandum on the Administration of the Coast of Malabar by Adriaan Moens (1781)", in *Dutch Records no. 13: The Dutch in Malabar* (Madras: Government Press, 1911). <<http://www.archive.org/details/cu319224023942828>>. Hereafter I use "memoirs" instead of Memorandum.

Ende Jeevitakatha (My Life Story), *Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* (Memoirs of Malayalis in Ceylon), *Brahmasri Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar* (a biography), *Innale* (Yesterday, a novel), *Manalmozhi* (Sand-Speech, a novel) and so on. I have also examined different sources as secondary data such as history books, theses, travelogues, journals, academic books and journal and so on.

Structure of the Thesis

I have organised the thesis as five core chapters along with introduction and conclusion. I have written these five core chapters based on primary materials.

Chapter 1: Towards theorising Region as a Locus of incessant formation and transformation: Unpacking Locatedness and Coeval Multiplicities

In this chapter, I uncover the dynamics of spatiality through significant works that theorise space and region. In addition to that, I go through different appearances of Manappuram in historical books on Kerala. The part which deals with theories of space and region is classified into three sections such as “the resurrection of space in social theory and geographical critique”, “the reassertion of the concept region in social and geographical theory”, and “re-theorising region from the Indian context”. The last part shows the entry of Manappuram into the books on Kerala history titled “Manappuram in the History of Kerala: ‘Chetuva Island’ and the corridor of power”.

The section reviews the work of Henry Lefebvre, Edward W. Soja, Doreen Massey, David Harvey and Michel Foucault and shows the reconceptualisation of space. Social production of space, reassertion of space in social theory, delights of spatial analysis, geographical imagination, and heterotopia that juxtapose real and unreal spaces are the main problem areas these theorists address to retheorise space. Mutuality between abstract and concrete, interrelation among mentality and materiality in the production of space, both nodes that I problematise in my thesis, are explicated substantially

in these scholars' works. The section that discusses the retheorisation of region examines the work of Allen Pred, Anssi Paasi, Robert Sack, John Agnew, Nigel Thrift, Doreen Massey, Edward Soja, David Harvey and Ash Amin. The conceptualisation of these theorists that explain region as "human product", "a historically contingent process", "region as a social process" and "relational construct" are valuable to understand the formation of Manappuram. Similarly, another section that engages with the works of scholars such as Bernard Cohn, Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhaus, Barbara Harriss-White and Sudipta Kaviraj shows the nuances of the concept of region by anchoring it on the Indian context. The last part of this chapter gives a view of how Manappuram is historically registered in the work of different scholars such as William Logan, Padmanabha Menon, Achyutha Menon and Ramachandran Nair. I think these examinations of theoretical and empirical registers not only demonstrate the theoretical context of my work but also show the location of Manappuram in history.

Chapter 2: Embodied Disembodiment and Disembodied Embodiment of Manappuram: (De)materialising the Region

In this chapter, preliminarily, I try to understand how everyday practices manifest the region. I try to illustrate materialisation and dematerialisation of the region through the manifestation. In addition, I attempt to unravel how such materialisation is complicated by the complexity of everyday and I further examine how corporeal absence of region dematerialises the region. To rephrase, I try to examine how the region Manappuram appears as an embodied disembodiment and disembodied embodiment in the context of the mutuality of the region's mentality and materiality. Furthermore, I depict interconnections between everydayness and memory and how these complicate each other in the formation of the region. To understand the embodied disembodiment and disembodied embodiment of the region and its complex nuances, I uncover the everyday practices of the people in/of Manappuram. Through ethnographic sources like personal interviews, in-

depth interviews, and observations, including participant observation I have collected everyday expressions of the people living in Manappuram, and everyday activities and practices of various enterprises and collective platforms formed in the name of Manappuram. The interviews uncover the complexities of the appearance, life, and existence of the region by examining everyday practices like conversations, soliloquy/interior monologue, creativity, speech, rumination, activities (material practices), events, engagements, and memory. I have focused on data collection, the various enterprises and the collectives in the name of Manappuram to study the (de)materialisation of the region and its intricacies. I had interviews with forty respondents and also participated in a carnival, called the Manappuram Beach Festival as mentioned earlier. This chapter is divided into two parts: The first part attempts to analyse the manifestation of the region through naming and everyday expressions in the form of naming (of shops and persons), everyday conversations and ruminations, and everyday creativity. The second part addresses how the region is animated through everyday activities and practices of various enterprises and collectives in the name of Manappuram.

I argue that the manifestation and animation illustrate the disembodied embodiment or embodied disembodiment of the region. Therefore, the region is (de)materialised simultaneously, that means everyday practices materialise and dematerialise the region in mutuality. The corporeal body of Manappuram appears through everyday expressions like chatter, colloquy, oratory, interior monologue, and creativities (in the intimate space) and the various enterprises and collectives on the name of Manappuram. Manappuram appears as a material reality precisely through the manifestation and animation of the region by the people. But the region simultaneously dematerialises through complex nuances within the same everydayness.

Memory, one of the everyday practices, makes its intricacies more visible, because region appears as a memory in the everyday. The region as a material

reality is in contrast to the region as a memory. In fact, rumination, recollections and nostalgia about Manappuram render the region as a memory. Therefore, memory exemplifies the region as disembodied, certainly incorporeal, contrary to the corporeal existence of the region. Paradoxically, Manappuram appears to still “exist” in the present, contrary to the imaginative memory on the idea of loss. Therefore, the memory of Manappuram might not be about erosion, but rather about the erotic.

Manappuram is retrieved through memory and the everyday practices of the region. The people “possess and dwell”, and therefore belong in that retrieved region. Consequently, it is not a given but it always appears and disappears or rather it neither appears nor disappears. It necessitates fleshing out and retrieving Manappuram constantly through memory and the everyday. Manappuram, then, ruptures the meaning of place as we conceive it in our time. Here, in fact, it erases the distinction between memory and material reality; or it is on the fringes of memory and material reality. Memory may transgress its boundary in the past and the present, or the idea of the past might be diluted in memory and in the present. This implies that time has probably melted down in memory. It has perhaps diluted the distinctions between the past and the present, the mental and material, the real and construct and time and space as well.

Chapter 3: Histories and Configuring Power: Discourse of Lease and the Emergence of Sovereign, Kingship and Subject in Manappuram

In this chapter, through the analysis of the discourse of lease in the context of Manappuram I attempt to understand the configuration of power and construction of the idea of sovereignty, kingship and subject by exploring the interface between colonial modernity and traditional authority. How the question of fiscal system, juridical system and ownership of land is interrelated with configuration of power is addressed in this section. How the idea of the native is contested within the dominion of the power of colonial

modernity and traditional authority is studied in the chapter. How sovereignty controls the mobility of subject and object is also scrutinised. For this analysis, I examine the letters of the natives (the Cochin Raja and the inhabitants of Manappuram) and colonisers (Dutch and English); and the treaties, and agreements from the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In detail, I navigate through archival sources such as the unpublished archival manuscript, *Series Files (1684-1869)*, and published archival documents such as *Saktan Thampuran, Terenjedutha Bharana Rekhakal* (Saktan Thampuran: Selected Administrative Records), as well as *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance relating to British Affairs in Malabar*.

The correspondences among the Cochin Raja, his officials, inhabitants of Manappuram, English and Dutch are the concern of my enquiry. The letters in the *Series Files* and *Saktan Records* were written in early Malayalam (before the standardisation of the Malayalam language). Some of the letters were in Tamil and Dutch, and a few of them were translated into Malayalam and English. Most of the letters in the *Series Files* and *Saktan Records* were from the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries and a few were from the early nineteenth century. Among the letters I engaged with, 45 letters from the *Series Files* and 15 letters from the *Saktan Records* were readable and seemed to be useful sources for my research. Some of the letters were very difficult to read since they were brittle and blurred. Most of the letters were dated in the *kollavarsham* (Malayalam era in Malayalam numerals in *vattezhuthu* script) and some of them were not dated.

In this chapter, I argue that the idea of kingship is formed in the context of Manappuram through the fabrication of the status of *pramanis* (chiefs) and *kudikal* (subject), and the ordering of inhabitants under a graded structure of status by the discourse of lease. Through this discourse, Cochin and the English became the main actors who competed for sovereignty over

Manappuram during early modernity. It also shows the possibilities of having multiple sovereign claims and the presence of sovereignty during the early colonial period that is quite contrary to what transpired in the late colonial period. In short, the discourse of lease, in fact, proposes both a native sovereign and a colonial sovereign.

Further, I argue in this context that the discourse of lease produces ideas such as kingship, subject and sovereign within the historical milieu of the region during the period. Hence, it is possible that the emergence of kingship, subject and sovereign configures the power of the region. Here, I argue that the power is configured by tenets such as ownership of land, fiscal power and juridical power. Apart from the possession of land, control on revenue, and right to life and death, the power is preoccupied with the right to mobility of subject and object. These appear as the essential elements for determining power. In addition, in the discourse of lease, the possession of the land is too complex to be reduced to terms of kingship, subject, and sovereign. The possession of the land of *kudikal* would have been complicated based on changing landlords and *jenmam* (birth or birth right). The Airoor Raja is presented in the discourse of the lease as a king but he does not possess the land, rather he is seen only as a witness. He is placed as a king of Manappuram, without the possession of *rajyam* in the context of the lease. Nonetheless, the discourse (of the lease) positioned the Airoor Thampuran as a mere Raja in the ‘past’ by denying him possession of land, and it generated the presence of a sovereign in the modern ‘present’.

Cochin was apparently a sovereign — a native sovereign who acquired possession of the land but struggled to achieve sovereignty on Manappuram in the absence of the right to life and death, and right to mobility of subject and object. In contrast, the English were indeed a sovereign power; colonisers with the right to life and death and right to control over the mobility of subject and object of the native sovereign without even holding possession of the land. Therefore, here it can be observed that the right to control the mobility

of the subject and object seems the decisive element that defines power. Power in this context combines with colonial modern authority and native traditional authority and is, therefore, a “collaborative”.⁶⁰ I argue here that the native traditional authority, who is part of native hegemonic structures like caste, gender and religion, is here arrived at as a native traditional power. Hence, here power constitutes itself not only through the politico-juridical-fiscal system but also configures itself through traditional socio-cultural power.

Chapter 4: Making of Histories and Territorialities of the Region: Discourse on Disputes and Production of Narratives on Manappuram

Claims and contestations illustrate the very idea of history and territorialisation and its interconnections. It might serve as one of the routes to understand the formation of a region in general, and Manappuram in particular. In this chapter, I try to examine how histories and territories are generated through disputes and the production of narratives that influence the formation of the region in general. Besides that, I shall endeavour to illustrate how a discourse of dispute makes the boundary of the region and produces narratives of the region in particular. To unpack the complexities of the contestations and claims, I look at historical accounts from the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such as the letters written by the natives (the Cochin Raja and the inhabitants of Manappuram), and colonial letters (the Dutch and the English); memorandums (memoirs) of the Dutch; and the treaties, agreements (by the natives and colonisers during the period), and reports of the Joint Commissioners.

This chapter aims to uncover historical debates on the claims and contestations on Manappuram, by the Cochin Raja and Samuthiri (who were

⁶⁰ David Ludden, “Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge.” *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, eds. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) 250-278.

the native rulers), Pazhenchery Nair, Airoor Raja, and Cranganore Raja (who were all considered petty chiefs at Manappuram), and the colonial powers (such as the Dutch and the English). The chapter has two parts: the first deals with the discourse of dispute and the second part considers the production of narratives by the Dutch memoirs. For this purpose, viz. the uncovering of historical debates and contestations on Manappuram, I examined published manuscripts like *The Joint Commissioners Report on Malabar 1792-93* extensively; *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Relating to British Affairs in Malabar*, and letters (unpublished *Series Files* and *Saktan Records*) to uncover the intricacies of the discourse of dispute; and two memoirs of the Dutch Commandeurs – Gollennesse in 1743 and Moens in 1784 – offered details to aid this exploration of production of narratives in the context of histories and territorialities.

In this chapter, I argue that Manappuram, as a place had no “real proof of ownership”, was “not regularly divided”, and could not “be properly surveyed and mapped” (Moens 138, 139). It had no “proper map” because the natives were distrustful and suspicious about colonial land measurements in the Dutch period (139). It is through this locus that the dispute and the historical narratives enter into the region’s historicity that provides the normative idea of the region. The entire project of claim and contestation could not arrive at strict boundaries, homogenous region, or a singular sovereign for Manappuram.

Further, I argue that the very idea of language, reproduction of evidence, geographical markers and representation of narration would suggest the boundary that facilitated the creation of a concrete, physical administrative region called Manappuram in the context of the dispute. The process of marking the boundary, characterising the physical nature and setting the closure endeavours to bind the region – it is like mapping the region — without a map. This was not merely an enterprise to define the region, but

also to territorialise it. Furthermore, the narratives on principalities and non-principalities, myth, lived expression of name, measuring and oracle unpacked by the Dutch memoirs would suggest the script of the past for the region. This discourse, especially the discourse of dispute, tries to concretise and territorialise Manappuram but different claims and contestations end up rupturing the notion.

Additionally, I emphasise that the idea of territorialisation that transpired through the attempts of the British to reify the region by settling different contestations and claims was unsettled by the heterogeneous, multiple, discontinued and conflicted nature of contestation and claims. Therefore, it is these multitudes of claims and contestations that render Manappuram immune to the process of territorialisation, unlike “many ordinary kinds of places” that “become territorial to exist as places” in modernity (Sack 19). However, if we perceive the process of territorialisation in the historical context of Manappuram we can understand that contrary to his observation, Manappuram seems undocile to the process of territorialisation in modernity.

Further, I extend my argument that the discourse on dispute and the Dutch memoirs try to constitute a linear past and a homogenous region. This can be seen as an attempt towards territorialisation and production of modern history, which forms the backdrop of the formation of the modern region as well. In short, therefore, the mapping of the boundary and scripting of the past not only seem as mere backdrops of the modern region — rather they appear as the very roots of consciousness which might be one of the basic tenets in the formation of the region. The Dutch accounts could have potentially revealed a homogenous script of the region’s past. However, even these accounts reveal multiple claims. Claims and contestations, instead of solidifying mono-history writing on the region, uncover several possible histories. It can be argued that the discourse on dispute tries to establish and maintain the sovereignty triggered by the lease and by doing so, it attempts

to settle the contestation and different claims on the region so that a physically homogenous region is offered. One could argue that the narrative, language, geography and (evidence) legalities played a pivotal role in marking the boundaries of the Manappuram region during this time. Therefore, it is a kind of mapping of the region through the narrative, legality, language and geography — without a map. The ‘evidential’ and ‘factual’ narratives are perhaps a substitute of the map that offers “concrete” and “accurate” boundary for the region. It also shows how the region is complicated by the simultaneity of the mental and the material.

Chapter 5: Mobile Geographies in between the Catastrophic and the Productive: Re-making of the Region Manappuram

In this chapter, I delineate the making of the region Manappuram through symbiotic relations between the transformation of the natural landscape of Manappuram, the manmade material construction⁶¹ of Manappuram and ideations about Manappuram by texts. For operationalising this relational construction of Manappuram, I unravel the interconnection between disaster (such as storm, famine, flood and cholera faced by people), development (such as the transformation of a landscape, built-environment, migration, mobility) and textual discourse (newspapers and other print materials).

Through this, I explicate the interrelation of four areas. Firstly, I explore the linkages between the construction of built-environment (such as roads, drinking water systems, hospitals, bridges, educational institutions, agrarian constructions and industries) and relief activities (for alleviating famine, cholera, flood and storm) in Manappuram. Secondly, the funding by migrants from Manappuram (who work and do business in Ceylon and in the Gulf⁶²) along with other Manappuram residents for relief and development is

⁶¹ In the case of forces of nature (like flood, famine, etc.), place making is not only constructive but also destructive. This will be taken up in detail in the rest of the chapter.

⁶² Colloquially, ‘Arab states of the Persian Gulf’ are known as the Gulf or the Gulf countries. It includes Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

explored in detail. Thirdly, I tease out the influence of Sree Narayana Guru's⁶³ anti-caste theology on relief, development and textual discourses. Fourthly, construction of Manappuram as a region is explored through the textualisation of material construction, development and relief activities by *Manappuram Times*, *Ende Jeevithakadha*,⁶⁴ *Ceylon Malayali Smaranika*,⁶⁵ *Brahmasri Chodayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar*,⁶⁶ *Innale*,⁶⁷ *Manalmozhi*⁶⁸ and other oral narratives.

Here I delineate the movement of people, money, knowledge, newspaper, commodity and labour within Manappuram through the circuit of roads, schools, industries, electrical system and water supply system that is mainly realised by the external linkages of people and flow of money, knowledge, newspaper, commodity, and labour from Manappuram, Ceylon, Gulf countries, Mumbai and Kozhikode through the migrants. Then I argue that the main constituent of the making of built-environment in the Manappuram region and textual discourse is produced through this trans-territorial flow of people, goods, ideas, and networking of Manappuram with many places. Therefore, the making of the Manappuram region not only happens locally in Manappuram but it is also produced globally from/in different parts of the world. This (mental and material) mobile geography of Manappuram is supplemented with its own catastrophic and productive geographies that exist in the interrelation between disaster and development of Manappuram.

Chapter 6: Popular History and Production of Manappuram: Memory, Culture and Genealogy of an Avarna Region

⁶³ Sree Narayana Guru was a legendary anti-caste philosopher and a social reformer from Kerala.

⁶⁴ V.K. Kumaran, *Ende Jeevithakatha* (Thrissur: Map Printers, 1989).

⁶⁵ M.R. Krishnan, M. V. Abdulla Moulavi, A.K. Nair, V. Vasu, S.P. Kadavil and P.R. Dharmabandu, (eds). *Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* (Memoir of Malayalis in Ceylon), (Nadavarambu: Ceylon Malayali Smaranika Prakasana Committee, 1986).

⁶⁶ Sudhakaran Chodayil, *Brahmasri Chodayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar* (Thrissur: Chodayil Kunhimamy Smaraka Prasadheekarana Nilatam, 1981).

⁶⁷ E.V.G., *Innale* (Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhath Book House, 1985).

⁶⁸ Sreelatha, *Manalmozhi* (Thrissur: Current Books, 2019).

In this chapter, I analyse how memories on people, commodity, resistance and traditions of Manappuram produce fragments of history, and how history through these fragments signifies the (trans) formation of Manappuram as an *avarna* region for the future. Moreover, I explicate how this “history for now” is distinct from linearly written professional history that seeks (claims) facticity, truth and authenticity of the past.

To understand this popular history, I unravel written and oral memories that appear as fragments of history in registers such as souvenir, memoir, magazine, pamphlet, booklet, speech and conversation. I describe in detail different modes of articulation of popular historical accounts through remembrance of people’s contributions in the field of material construction, politics, literature, Ayurveda, spirituality; memories on production of *beedi*, screw-pine mat and vetiver; recollection of resistance of people against the practice of caste system, so as to understand appearance of Manappuram through the representation by this history.

I navigate mainly through *Nattika Firka co-operative Rural Bank Silver Jubilee Souvenir*, *Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal* (Footprints of investigative knowledge),⁶⁹ *Manappuram Samskriti*⁷⁰ and other oral registers for understanding the production of this popular history. One of the oldest records that produced many fragments of the history of people of Manappuram is the *Nattika Firka Co-operative Rural Bank Silver Jubilee Souvenir* that was printed in 1981. *Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal* (footprints of investigative knowledge) a memoir published on the occasion of the golden jubilee of Velayudhan Panikkassery’s writings was printed in 2006, and contains fragments of history of the people who shaped the region of Manappuram. *Manappuram Samskriti* (culture of Manappuram), one of

⁶⁹ *Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal* (Thrissur: Manappuram Times Suhrudvedi, 2006).

⁷⁰ K.V. Unnikrishnan (ed), *Manappuram Samskriti*, (Thrissur: Published by Prof. T.R. Haari, 2006).

the grand popular registers of the fragments of history, contains more than a hundred snapshots of historical figures of Manappuram.

In this chapter I argue that popular history which is formed through the memories of people not only signifies (trans)formation of terrestrial settings of region by human labour instigated by an anti-caste ideology but also imagines Manappuram as an *avarana* utopia by invoking chips of pasts that signify anti-caste values, ideals, morals and ethics as a force to future. Moreover, I extend my argument that *avarana* utopia does not exist by the numerical majority and cultural supremacy of so-called *avarana* communities but by the rejection of essential identities and cultural hegemony.

Chapter One

Towards theorising Region as a Locus of incessant formation and transformation: Unpacking Locatedness and Coeval Multiplicities

This chapter unravels theorisations of space and region in social and geographical theories that open up a new horizon to understand our spatial being. In addition to that, it attempts to show different appearances of Manappuram in mainstream historical writings on Kerala. The part that deals with theorisations of space and region is classified into three sections such as “the resurrection of space in social theory and geographical critique”, “the reassertion of the concept region in social and geographical theory”, and “re-theorising region from the Indian context”. The last section deals with the entry of Manappuram in mainstream history writings on Kerala titled as “Manappuram in the history of Kerala: ‘Chetuva Island’ and the corridor of power”.

The section that deals with the reconceptualisation of space reviews the work of Henry Lefebvre, Edward W. Soja, Doreen Massey, David Harvey and Michel Foucault. Social production of space, reassertion of space in social theory, delights of spatial analysis, geographical imagination, and heterotopia that juxtapose real and unreal spaces are the main problem areas these theorists address to re-theorise space. Mutuality between abstract and concrete, interrelation among mentality and materiality, both in the production of space, that I problematise in my thesis are explicated substantially in these scholars’ works. The section that discusses the re-theorisation of region examines the work of Allen Pred, Anssi Paasi, Robert Sack, John Agnew, Nigel Thrift, Doreen Massey, Edward Soja, David Harvey and Ash Amin. The conceptualisation of these theorists that delineate region

as “human product”, “a historically contingent process”, “region is a social process” and “relational construct” are valuable to understanding the formation of Manappuram. Similarly, another section that engages with the works of scholars such as Bernard Cohn, Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhaus, Barbara Harriss-White and Sudipta Kaviraj shows the nuances of the concept region by anchoring it on the Indian context. The last part of this chapter examines how historically Manappuram was registered in the works of different scholars such as William Logan, Padmanabha Menon, Achyutha Menon and Ramachandran Nair. I think these examinations of theoretical and empirical registers not only demonstrate the theoretical context of my work but also show the location of Manappuram in history. Let me begin with the reconceptualisation of space.

1.The Resurrection of Space in Social theory and Geographical Critique

Henry Lefebvre’s path-breaking work *Production of Space* (1991) is the ever-preeminent register that delineates the complex matrix of production of space. This work not only challenges the entrenched commonsensical views about space but also uncovers the blindness of our academic insight about space. By spelling out the aim of this work he asserts that he “Does not aim to produce a (or *the*) discourse on space, but rather to expose the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory” (16).⁷¹

This single theory of space interweaves and combines different conceptions on space such as physical space, mental space and social space, and suggests a unitary theory of the production of space. Put differently, Lefebvre conceptualises a theoretical unity by connecting the “physical” (nature, the Cosmos), the “mental” (logical and formal abstractions) and the “social,” that have been deliberated distinctly before (11-12). He argues that the mental (logico-mathematical) space and the “real” space (space of social practice)

⁷¹ Henry Lefebvre, *Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

are basically distinct, one from the other, but that each “involves, underpins and presupposes” the other (14).

To elucidate the complex of space, Lefebvre develops an assemblage of three concepts. These are “spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space”. He theorises that spatial practice is society’s space, which is exposed by the “deciphering of its space.” Representations of space are the conceptualised space; the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, and social engineers. He observes that representations of space occupy a hegemonic space in society; representational space is space as it is lived through images and symbols, and therefore the space of inhabitants and users. He discerns, that representational space is a subjugated space. He theorises that perceived, conceived and lived natures signify physical, mental and social spaces (38-40).

Social space is a social product that is concurrently abstract and concrete for Lefebvre. He illustrates social space as “concrete abstraction” (like commodities and money) that are difficult to differentiate from mental space and physical space. He further clarifies to uncover the complexity that social space is neither constituted by an aggregate of (sensory) data nor by form imposed upon phenomena, upon things, or upon physical materiality (26-27). But rather he argues that social space constitutes the social “relations of reproduction” (bio-physiological relations between sexes and age groups, along with the specific organisation of the family) and the “relations of production” (the division of labour and its organisation in the form of hierarchical social functions.). “These two sets of relations, production and reproduction, are inextricably bound up with one another” (32).

To explicate the intricacy of social space he exemplifies that “(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their

coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder [...] Social space implies a great diversity of knowledge [...] any space implies, contains and dissimulates social relationships – and this despite the fact that a space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things (objects and products)” (73-83).

He elaborates thereafter:

Social space contains a great diversity of objects, both natural and social, including the networks and pathways which facilitate the exchange of material things and information. Such “objects” are thus not only things but also relations. As objects, they possess discernible peculiarities, contour and form. Social labour transforms them, rearranging their positions within spatio-temporal configurations without necessarily affecting their materiality, their natural state (77).

One can understand from his theorisation that space is neither a constellation of nouns that signify products (that have a particular quantity like one-kilogram sugar) nor the place where those products are located. He asserts that space is a *social relationship*, that is inherent to property relationship, and that inevitably connects with the force of production. It is not only a product (that one can use) but also a “means of production.” He grounds his argument by observing, “Thus this means of production, produced as such, cannot be separated either from the productive forces, including technology and knowledge, or from the social division of labour which shapes it, or from the state and the superstructures of society” (85). In his observation, social space is mutually interpenetrated and/or superimposed. To him, “space is neither a thing that has mutually limiting boundaries [...] nor a frame or form or container” (86-94). As a culmination of this discussion, Lefebvre conclusively argues, “Space as locus of production, as itself product and production, is both the weapon and the sign of this struggle” (109). And that, “Space is neither a ‘subject’ nor an ‘object’ but rather a social reality” (116).

The concept of “Spatial turn” has revolutionised the domain of social theory by drawing insights from Lefebvre’s theory of space and by the influence of other paradigmatic shifts about the force of social space. Edward W. Soja’s book *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*⁷² (1990) was a work in this direction. Soja draws from other social theorists like Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, John Berger, Fredric Jameson and Ernest Mandel in his work. His aim is spatialising the historical narrative with critical human geography by “reassertion of a critical spatial perspective in contemporary social theory and analysis.”⁷³ He endeavours to spatialise the intellectual history of critical social theory by “evolving dialectics of space, time, and social being: geography, history, and society” (3). How the hegemony of the nineteenth-century historicism that gave much prominence to history and time devalued emancipatory potentials of spatial praxis is explained in his book in detail.

In his work, Soja asserts the habitus of being potentially placed on both the making of history and construction of geographies. As he puts it concisely, “Social being actively emplaced in space *and* time in an explicitly historical *and* geographical contextualisation” (10-11). This was his indirect critique of the overemphasis on the potentials of time and temporal consciousness. This line of argument dismisses the interaction between time and space in the definition of being. To overcome this crisis, he advocated the “possibilities for a simultaneously historical and geographical materialism; a triple dialectic of space, time, and social being; a transformative re-theorisation between history, geography, and modernity” (12).

⁷² Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York: Verso, 1990).

⁷³ His book “attempt to deconstruct and recompose the rigidly historical narrative, to break out from the temporal prison-house of language and the similarly carceral historicism of conventional critical theory to make room for the insight of an interpretive human geography, a spatial hermeneutics” (1-2).

He revealed the force of his theoretical venture by basing himself on Henri Lefebvre; the tenacious, active, and towering beacon of the spatialising project; and he also placed his theory within the frame of Michel Foucault and John Berger's postmodern geographies. He defined Lefebvre's idea of space as "lived and socially created spatiality, concrete and abstract at the same time, the habitus of social practices." Soja theorised that Foucault's work accommodates history into an "interpretative geography" other than an anti-history turn by reminding us that "history will protect us from historicism", one of the brilliant revelations of Foucault (18-21).

Evoking Lefebvre's conception that "industrialisation, once the producer of urbanism, is now being produced by it," Soja theorises about the dialectical relation between the social and spatial relations of production. Going beyond the definite reasoning of David Harvey and Manuel Castells about the precedence of the social on spatial, Soja proposes that "relations (of production) are simultaneously social and spatial" (78). Then he further states, "the two sets of structured relations (the social and spatial) are not only homologous, in that they arise from the same origins in the mode of production, but are also dialectically inseparable [...] space in itself may be primordially given, but the organisation and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation, and experience" (78-80).

Then he redefined socially-produced space as spatiality. In his analysis, devaluation of spatio-social dialectic in western Marxism emerged from Marxist theorisation of space as a "container" or "external reflection," "a mirror of the social dynamic" and "social consciousnesses," a perspective identical to "bourgeoisie social science". Like Lefebvre, he argued that socially produced space is inseparable from physical/material and psychological/mental spaces. In the process of social production of spatiality, these material space and mental space are incorporated, reproduced and transformed (120). Both spaces are "ontologically and epistemologically part

of the spatiality of social life [...] Spatiality exists ontologically as a product of a transformation process but always remains open to further transformation in the contexts of material life. It is never primordially given or permanently fixed” (120-122).

Putting forth eight radical arguments, Soja not only outlines the promise of spatial analysis but also offers a possibility to think about our being in an innovative way. One, spatiality (social space) is a social product, which is the indistinguishable extension of “second nature” that “incorporates”, “socialises” and “transforms” physical and psychological spaces. Two, “Spatiality is simultaneously the medium and outcome, presupposition, and embodiment, of social action and relationship.” Three, “The spatio-temporal structuring of social life defines how social action and relationship (including class relations) are materially constituted, made concrete.” Four, the “concretisation process of spatiality is problematic, filled with contradiction and struggle.” Five, “Contradictions arise primarily from the duality of produced space as both as an outcome/embodiment/product and medium/presupposition/ producer of social activity.” Six, “Concrete spatiality—actual human geography is thus a competitive arena for the struggle over social production and reproduction, for social practices aim either at the maintenance and reinforcement of existing spatiality or significant restructuring and/or radical transformation.” Seven, “The temporality of social life, from the routines and events of day-to-day activity to the longer-run making of history (*événement* and *durée* to use the language of Braudel), is rooted in spatial contingency in much the same way as the spatiality of social life is rooted in temporal/historical contingency.” And eight, “The materialist interpretation of history and the materialist interpretation of geography are inseparably intertwined and theoretically concomitant, with no inherent prioritisation of one over the other” (129-130).

For theorising his idea about “spatialised ontology” and “existential spatiality of being”, Soja borrows from the theories of Martin Buber, Jean-Paul Sartre, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger and critically argues, “This existential spatiality gives to being a place, a positioning within the “lifeworld.” This emplacement is a passionate process that links subject and object, Human being and Nature, the individual and the environment, human geography and human history” (134).

Doreen Massey’s *For Space*⁷⁴ (2005) is not only a ground-breaking book on the promise of space but also a register that explicates the possible delight of spatial analysis. Through this work, she expounds how hegemonic theorisations and political practices undervalued the potential of space. For resisting this discourse of theory and praxis, she proposes a renewed theorisation about the promise and challenge of space. By explicating three dominant ideas about space, she demonstrates three means that subdue the challenges of space: “The imagination of space as a surface on which we are placed,” “the sharp separation of local place from the space out there”, and “the turning of space into time” (7). She puts these hegemonic thoughts as a great failure, the “failure in the sense of being inadequate to face up to the challenges of space; a failure to take on board its coeval multiplicities to accept its radical contemporaneity.” (8).

To counter the above hegemonic ideas Massey develops an “alternative approach to space,” through three interrelated arguments. “*First*, that we recognise space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny.” *Second* (is) “that we understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity [...] without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no

⁷⁴ Doreen Massey, *For Space* (New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2005).

space. If space is indeed the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality” (9). “*Third*, that we recognise space as always under construction... It is always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed. Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far” (9).

She constructed a possible range of interconnections between the “imagination of spatial” and the “imagination of political” by these arguments. Interlinking the spatial and the political, she makes three further observations. First, “understanding space as a product of interrelations chimes well with the emergence over recent years of a politics which attempts a commitment to anti-essentialism.” The observation is that space as a product of interrelation stands in opposition to the idea of “identities are given and already constituted”. Moreover, this negates the essentialist claim of individualistic liberalism and identity politics. Second, “Imagining space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity resonates with the greater emphasis which has over recent years in political discourses of the left been laid on ‘difference’ and heterogeneity” (10-11). Third, “Imagining space as always in process, as never a closed system, resonates with an increasingly vocal insistence within political discourses on the genuine openness of the future.” For substantiating this observation, she asserts Laclau’s argument, “Only if we conceive of the future as open, can we seriously accept or engage in any genuine notion of politics” (11). She encapsulates her observations by an annunciation: “A space... is neither a container for always-already constituted identities nor a completed closure of holism. This is a space of loose ends and missing links. *For* the future to be open, space must be open too” (12).

Massey not only unravels the potentials of space but also discloses strategies which erase the potentials of space, for offering spatial imagination. She then shows the conceptual formulation of space/politics in the realm of philosophy

while directing space/politics towards novel orientations to strengthen the challenges of space. By relocating the concept of space as being identical with heterogeneity/relationality/coeval-ness/liveliness as against the common perceptions that see space as stasis/closure/representation, her book suggests the concept of space being a progressive political topography (13).

Like Soja, Doreen Massey also borrows from Henri Lefebvre to show the unhelpful meanings of space as static, closed, immobile, opposite of time, and then she re-joins space with meanings such as openness, heterogeneity, and liveliness. Different from an understanding that visualises space and time as completely disconnected entities, she attempts to show those interconnections and argues, “Imagination of one will have repercussions for the imagination of the other [...] space and time is implicated in each other” (18).

David Harvey’s article “The Sociological and Geographical Imaginations”⁷⁵ (2005) is another work that addresses the question of space innovatively. For a critical geography along with sociological imagination, he problematised historical imagination, geographical imagination, knowledge and power.⁷⁶ He engages with the distinguished work of J. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* that suggests that knowledge about historical and biographical location of oneself is the prerequisite for a critical consciousness, and stressed on Mills’ “omission of geography (as opposed to history) from the list of disciplines within which the sociological imagination was at work.” Harvey critically engages with the theorisation of Mills by suggesting a geographical imagination (spatial consciousness) that:

⁷⁵ David Harvey, “The Sociological and Geographical Imaginations,” International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society, Vol. 18, No. ¾, Spring-Summer, 2005: 211-255.

⁷⁶ The question of geography, power and knowledge is addressed differently by different scholars. For instance, *Geographical Imaginations* written by Derek Gregory explicates the interrelation between Geographical knowledge, power, and space that connected with geographical-mapping. See, Derek Gregory, Geographical Imaginations (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1994).

Enables the individual to recognise the role of space and place in his own biography, to relate the spaces he sees around him, and to recognise how transactions between individuals and between organisations are affected by the space that separates them. It allows him to recognise the relationship which exists between him and his neighbourhood, his territory...It allows him also to fashion and use space creatively and to appreciate the meaning of the spatial forms created by others (212).

He sees the conflictual relation between “sociological imagination” and “geographical imagination” as being detrimental to sensible critical research. Then he considers the analysis of interrelations between social processes and spatial forms as a precondition for critical research. He observes popular ideas such as “social process produces spatial forms”, “time took precedence over space”,⁷⁷ and “history subsumed geography” as reductionist thoughts that fail to understand the potentials of space. He theorises space as “a socially contested cultural configuration”, for crossing the gulf between sociological imagination and geographical imagination (213).

To engage with the question of the present contemporary human universe, Harvey offers an emancipatory critical geographical theorem. Encapsulating his arguments, he concludes:

The sociological and geographical imaginations have to be interpenetrated more freely to create what I call a “dialectical utopianism” operating in space-time rather than in either space or time. This dialectical utopianism calls for a full engagement of the geographical imagination since it requires a remapping of the world (as much in our heads as on the ground), redefinitions of the social construction of space and time, a re-territorialisation of the world and a

⁷⁷ In another work, David Harvey deals with the interconnection between space and time, and argues, “Space and time are deeply implicated in processes of social reproduction.” See David Harvey, “Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination”, Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 80, No. 3 (September, 1990): 418-434.

quite different approach to the dialectics of socio-environmental change and uneven geographical development (252).

Like these social theorists, Michel Foucault's minor pieces such as "Of Other Space"⁷⁸ and "Questions on Geography"⁷⁹ also restate the potential of space and the cutting-edge theories in spatial analysis.⁸⁰ Foucault delineates states and temperaments of spaces in the modern world in "Of Other Space," by introducing the term "heterotopia". In this work, the shift that occurred in modernity regarding the conceptual understanding of space is clearly outlined. He traces the transformation from "hierarchic ensemble of places" in the Middle Ages to the "place of emplacement" revealed by Galileo (22-23). By pointing out to the contemporary hidden presence of the sacred space, he complicates this transformation by stating that contemporary space seems not to have been de-sanctified completely, that even Galileo's invention offers de-sanctification of space. He further explicates modern spaces by developing two theoretical categories: Utopia and Heterotopia (23). In his argument, Utopia indicates an unreal space, which connected with the real space of world metaphorically and symbolically. Different from Utopia, Foucault suggests heterotopia as space which juxtaposes the real and the unreal. He explains heterotopia by invoking the case of the mirror:

The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there (24).

⁷⁸ See Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics*, Spring 1986: 22-27.

⁷⁹ See "Questions on Geography" in Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977: Michel Foucault* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) xi, 63-77.

⁸⁰ His iconic works such as *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973), *Discipline and Punish* (1975) have magnificent analyses about space. See, Jeremy W. Crampton and Stuart Elden (ed.), *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography* (Cornwall: Ashgate, 2007) 1-16. See also Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1991).

In “Questions on Geography,” Foucault’s interview with the geographers in *Herodote*, was a dialogic exchange between Foucault and geographers. This interview led Foucault into self-realisation and retrospection about the significance of his spatial analysis and the importance of space to understand the present world. Similarly, it allowed the geographers to re-examine the complex interconnections between space, knowledge and power that formulate contemporaneity.

In this dialogue on geography and space, both Foucault and the geographers understood and acknowledged certain critical nuances. Geographers understood the “epistemological weakness of Geographical Studies and at the same time of their profitability for apparatus of power.” Foucault reflectively responded:

I have enjoyed this discussion with you because I’ve changed my mind since we started...Now I can see that the problems you put to me about geography are crucial ones for me. ...Geography must indeed necessarily lie at the heart of my concerns (77).

2. The Reassertion of the Concept Region in Social and Geographical Theory

The reassertion of the concept region emerged from the theorisations of Allen Pred, Anssi Paasi, Robert Sack, John Agnew, Nigel Thrift, Doreen Massey, Edward Soja, David Harvey, Nicholas Entrikin and Ash Amin.⁸¹ Some of the key theoretical referents of Allen Pred, Nigel Thrift, David Harvey, Edward Soja, Anssi Passi and Ash Amin are borrowed from the theories of Torsten

⁸¹ This perspective is a shift from the chronological perspective of region offered by Richard Hartshorne. Hartshorne theorises region as “an area of specific location which is in some way distinctive from other areas and which extends as far as that distinction is determined by the student using the term; if not explicitly stated, it must be judged from the context.” See Anssi Paasi, “The Institutionalisation of Regions: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Emergence of Regions and the Constitution of Regional Identity,” (first published 1986), in Regions: Critical Essays in Human Geography, ed. J. Nicholas Entrikin (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008) 78.

Hagerstrand, Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu, Roy Bhasker and Jurgen Habermas (68-69).

Critiquing chronological views that see region as a mere portion of the earth having certain physical dispositions, Allen Pred (2008) redefines region. He conceptualises region as a human product, produced by “social acts and interactions”. In his text, region and place appear interchangeably without many differences. He theorises:

[P]lace (region)...always involves an appropriation and transformation of space and nature that is inseparable from the reproduction and transformation of society in time and space...It also is what takes place ceaselessly, which contributes to history in a specific context through the creation and utilisation of a physical setting.⁸²

The theory of structuration, transdisciplinary ability of time-geography and the Vidalian tradition were the theoretical perspectives he used to conceptualise place as a process. Picking insights from these perspectives, he argues place (region) as “a historically contingent process that emphasises institutional and individual practices as well as the structural features with which those practices are interwoven [...] the material continuity both of the people who participate in that process and of any natural and humanly made objects employed in time-space specific practices” (132).

His argument is that continuous production, reproduction, formation of biographies and transformation of nature (134-143) are the elements of “historically contingent process”. Similar to the transformation of physical nature, spatially located biography and spatially located social reproduction are indistinguishable from the becoming of place (139). He views nature and objects as subjects who have their own biography similar to humans. Because

⁸² Allan Pred, “Place as Historically Contingent Process: Structuration and the Time-Geography of Becoming Places” (first published 1984), Regions: Critical Essays in Human Geography, ed. in J. Nicholas Entrikin (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008) 131-149.

of simultaneous occurrence and disappearance of becoming of place he argues that becoming of place “can easily escape conventional linear language” (140).

The theorisation of region by Nigel Thrift is indebted to Torsten Hagerstrand’s work on time-geography.⁸³ In his work on social action through a time-geography analysis (1983), he not only signals temporal and spatial relations in the formation of region⁸⁴ but also theorises region as a perpetual process. He conceptually qualifies region as an “*actively passive* meeting place of social structure and human agency” and “generator and conductor of structure” (38). In his conception, region is “made up of a number of different but connected settings for interaction...that is mediated by institutional correlations with social structure” (40). In each production of region is a result of the interaction of individuals with a particular model of production or consumption. In the definition of Thrift, region is a “medium and an outcome” of social labour where social structure and human agency mutually constitute each other. Similar to Pred and Thrift, the theorisation of region by Edward Soja (2008) defines region as a socially and historically contingent process.⁸⁵ He further elaborates that in the production of region, global network of flows and productive forces of capitalism is decisive along with heterogeneous spatiality like day to day praxis and “immediate built environment” (153).

In the earlier work of Doreen Massey (1978/2008), region appeared as a concept defined by the analysis of scholars. She puts it thus, “Regions must be constituted as an effect of analysis; they are thus defined in relation to

⁸³ See Nigel Thrift, An Introduction to Time-Geography (Norwich: Geo Abstracts, 1977).

⁸⁴ See Nigel Thrift, “On the Determination of Social Action in Space and Time,” Environment and Planning: Society and Space, Vol. I (1983) 23-57.

⁸⁵ Edward Soja, “Regions in Context: Spatiality, Periodicity, and the Historical Geography of the Regional Question,” (first published 1985) Regions: Critical Essays in Human Geography, ed. J. Nicholas Entrikin (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008) 151-166.

spatial uneven development in the process of accumulation and its effects on social (including political) relations.”⁸⁶ In *Rethinking the Region* (2002),⁸⁷ Massey envisages the region “in an open, relational political context” (viii). In this book, she suggests two interrelated approaches to define a region by interlinking region with space and place. In the first approach by relationally thinking about space and place, she suggests that the reader “understands both space and place as constituted out of spatialised social relations—and narratives about them—which not only lay down ever-new regional geographies but also work to reshape social and cultural identities and how they are represented” (1). In her second approach, she affirms “Regions [...] are not ‘out there’ waiting to be discovered; they are our (and other’s) constructions” (1-2).

Like many other social theorists, Anssi Paasi⁸⁸ (2008) also theorises “region as a process” that “continually reproduced and gradually transformed into individual and institutional practice”. As a human and social category, he contrasts with views that see region as a “flat lattice”, “given context” and “framework”. He delineates region as “a concrete dynamic manifestation of social (natural, cultural, economic, and political, etc.) processes that affect and are affected by changes in spatial structures over time” (72). He additionally affirms, “Space and its symbolic and ideological dimensions, as well as its material basis (e.g. nature, economic development), are essentially social categories, and thus essentially reflect the development of the society” (82). Then he elucidates the existence of region as a contingent historical

⁸⁶ Doreen Massey, “Regionalism: Some Current Issues,” (first published 1978) *Regions: Critical Essays in Human*, ed. J. Nicholas Entrikin (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008) 111-130.

⁸⁷ John Allen, Doreen Massey and Allan Cochrane, *Rethinking the Region* (London: Routledge, 2002).

⁸⁸ Anssi Paasi, “The Institutionalisation of Regions: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Emergence of Regions and the Constitution of Regional Identity,” (first published 1986) *Regions: Critical Essays in Human Geography*, ed. J. Nicholas Entrikin (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008) 67-108.

process, a spatial structure of society that establishes and changes through *longue durée*.⁸⁹

To explicate the institutionalisation of region, Paasi defines four stages that are “assumption of territorial shape”, “development of conceptual (symbolic) shape”, “development of spheres of institutions”, and “establishment of the regional system and regional consciousness”. He sees these four stages as interconnected (83-93). For him, “Institutionalisation of a region is a process during which some time-space specific level of spatial structure becomes an established entity which is identified in different spheres of social action and consciousness and which is continually reproduced in individual and institutional practice (cultural, legal, educational, economic, political etc.)” (72).

Ash Amin’s (2008) theorisation of region delineates the transformation of region from bounded to unbounded by “globalisation” and by its “society of transnational flows and networks”.⁹⁰ He sees this transformation as a challenge against the politics of regionalism that imagines region as a bounded entity. Amin illustrates the above-mentioned as the two interconnected elements that cause a region to shift territorially from a bounded region into an unbound region. He argues that the formation of region as a relational construction is by the “spatiality of flow, juxtaposition, porosity and relational connectivity” (374) without prescribed or proscribed boundaries.⁹¹

⁸⁹ He distinguishes between region and place. He remarks, “instead of the man-centred category of place, a region is interpreted as a category with an explicit collective dimension which represents institutional practices and the history of the region, not the history of an individual as a place does” (75-77).

⁹⁰ Ash Amin, “Regions Unbound: Towards a New Politics of Place,” (first published 2004), Regions: Critical Essays in Human Geography, ed. J. Nicholas Entrikin (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008) 373-384.

⁹¹ Ash Amin, emphasising political regional differences, notes, “Very different sensibilities of the political spring out ... not only to the scope and reach of local political activity, but also to what is taken to count as being political at the local level” (374).

According to him, new regionalism that asserts political, economic and cultural autonomy of people in a specific territory is much anomalous. Because, in his opinion, the present-day world has no geographical terrain and no territorially defined public sphere, where “local actors can have effective control and manage as a social and political space” (376). With the help of “travelling” technologies, like books, newspapers, billboards, television and the internet, in the contemporary world, anyone can connect with anybody from anyplace (377-78). In the contemporary world, a single region and city connect with different nodes of network-spaces at a time. Therefore, it is not a single bound territory and its public sphere.

He critiques the idea of politics of bounded territory by marking the politics of proximity and politics of connectivity as the two markers of contemporary global space making (378). For substantiating his argument, he explains cities and regions as “sites of heterogeneity juxtaposed within close spatial proximity and as sites of multiple geographies of affiliation, linkage and flow” (378). Then, he says, “Cities and regions possess a distinctive spatiality as agglomeration of heterogeneity locked into a multitude of relational network of varying geographical reach” (382-83).

Paasi indirectly engages with the theorisation of Ash Amin and addresses the problem with his arguments. He admits the problem met by enduring locatedness of region and its people by globalisation⁹² and argues, “The contemporary world is characterised on all spatial scales by mobility, which challenges the fixed links between a territory and a group of people, and forces us to reflect spatial identities in more dynamic ways.” However,

⁹² He illustrates, “Geographers are understanding regions increasingly as social constructs and historically contingent process, not naturally given, permanent elements that provide a framework for a fixed identity, but in spite of this the links between ‘regional identity’ and ‘regions’ have not been sufficiently well analysed” (387). See Anssi Paasi, “Bounded Spaces in the Mobile World: Deconstructing ‘Regional Identity,’” (first published 2002), Regions: Critical Essays in Human Geography, ed. J. Nicholas Entrikin (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008) 385-396.

opposing the oversimplification of this state by Amin as the “disappearance of boundaries” and configuration of “hybridity of identities,” he asserts, “boundaries have not disappeared, even though their meanings have changed, and that people still seem to rely on collective identities” (392). Then he adds, “While people’s roots are typically associated with their place of birth, they can, of course, identify themselves with new home regions too. When families move, there can also be a difference in the forms of identification, which emerges from the diverse experiences of various generations” (392).

In the work of Robert Sack (2008), the conceptual question of region is addressed indirectly. His emphasis is on locatedness of the social process⁹³ and he announces that “the empirical and moral implications of our geographical nature by developing a general relational framework that connects the factors of perspectives, the self, and forces — especially those of place and space.”⁹⁴ He considers the geographical as a standpoint to explain the interrelation between perspectives, the self, and forces of geography and shows the locationality of our self. The real concern of his work was how geography acts as a force that affects nature, meanings and social relations of human. He explains, “How place and space are forces, and how they braid together nature and culture (which includes social relations and meanings) and help constitute the self” (1).

John Agnew (1999) addresses the nuances of conceptualisation of region by complicated conflictual relation between realists and constructionists in the theorisation of region.⁹⁵ Realists argue that region is a “real” that is experienced directly through our senses. Constructionists argue that regions

⁹³ Robert David Sack, “Chorology and Spatial Analysis,” (first published 1974), Regions: Critical Essays in Human Geography, ed. J. Nicholas Entrikin (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008) 23-36.

⁹⁴ Robert David Sack, Homo Geographicus (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) 1.

⁹⁵ John Agnew, “Regions on the Mind does not Equal Regions of the Mind,” Progress in Human Geography, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1999): 91-96.

are “mere inventions” of the mind of individuals. For a new conceptualisation of region, Agnew proposes an interrelation between “real existence” and “prior thought” by distancing from binary arguments of realists and constructionists. In the constructionist thinking about region, he observed “social determinism” or “ontological relativism”. In his opinion, social determinism understands region as a product of economic or social forces, ontological relativism understands region as a construct of “social conventions or purely linguistic categories without real-world counterpart.” Then he argues that totalistic visions of both realists and constructionists about region pose serious difficulties in understanding the mutual relationship between these two standpoints (92).

He explains this problematic further using an analogy between real-constructed binary positions of geographers and body-mind question in philosophy — problems he found in the thinking that understands real as body and constructed as mind. This thinking sees “real” as similar to “body” and “constructed” as equal to “mind”. Meaning, the body, like real, “is tangible, touchable and empirically decipherable with a minimum of assumptions.” Similarly, mind, constructed is “making sense of itself” and it makes real as well (92).

He takes the theory of Ian Hacking that differentiates “object” from an “idea about object” to explain the above problem. Agnew explains:

An object and an idea about the object are not the same, and in the world that humans inhabit the distinction is crucial. Neither can be reduced to the other because humans are reflexive. There are objects to which humans react but they also have ideas about those objects to which they also react. Human behaviour, therefore, cannot be reduced to one or the other but is constituted by both (92-93).

He further argues:

Regions both reflect differences in the world and ideas about differences. They cannot be reduced to one or the other. Observers and people in the world use regional designations to make sense of the world and these draw on real differences between parts of the world but they cannot claim a total fit to the world because they are based on ideas about regional differences that are not simply about those differences *per se* but also about ideas of how the world works (93).

3. Re-theorising Region from the Indian Context

Bernard Cohn's article "Regions Subjective and Objective"⁹⁶ (2004) that studies region's "conceptual relation to the study of Indian history and society," thinks seriously about the concept region from the Indian context. Cohn's discussion about the concept 'region' starts by showing the fluidity and contextuality of the context region. He quotes from geographer Norton Ginsburg, "There is no universally accepted definition of the region, except as it refers to some portion of the surface of the earth" (101). Cohn continues, "Most definitions of regions begin with a geographic component and develop out of the relationship between geographic features and man's adaptation to the physical environment" (101).

Cohn observes, "At one end of a continuum of definitions of regions would be the idea of a natural region, which would encompass only the physical basis of a region [...] For the last fifty years human geographers have been developing techniques for the definition and analysis of various kinds of geographic regions, all of which involve synthetic or analytical efforts involving space relationships which encompass human as well as physical conditions" (101).

⁹⁶ See, Bernard Cohn, "Regions Subjective and Objective: Their Relation to the Study of Modern Indian History and Society," Barnard Cohn Omnibus (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004) 100-135.

He categorises region into four major types — historical region, linguistic region, cultural region and structural region.⁹⁷ In his definition, the historical region is “one in which there are sacred myths and symbols, held by significant groups within the area, regarding the relationship of people to their ‘past’ and the geographical entity” (102). He pronounced linguistic region as “one in which there is a shared and recognised literary language, the standardised form of which is known and identified with by the educated groups within the area” (102-103). Cohn delineates the cultural region as:

One in which there are widely shared and recognised cultural traits and patterned behaviour, particularly among the common people. Descriptively, one or two kinds of behaviour, costumes, or traits and taken a diagnostic of regional culture. Gods, goddesses, rituals, myths, and festivals are the most frequent diagnostic traits used to establish the ‘reality’ or particular regions (103).

A structural region is “one in which there are groups of associated structural variables which differentiate one structural area from another” (104).

Though he categorises region as four types, he realises the uneasiness of a definite categorisation of region that may seem to be set in stone.⁹⁸ Therefore, in the concluding part of his article, he expresses the multifaceted, flexible, fluid and contextual nature of the concept region. He concludes:

Regions are far from fixed, enduring things, especially if any historical perspective is taken. They are not absolutes and they are difficult, if not impossible, to define by objective criteria. Where one stands and for what purpose one is observing or studying will determine the boundaries of

⁹⁷ There are different studies that discuss the historical region, linguistic region, cultural region and structural region. For instances, see “The Segmentary State in South Indian History” by Burton Stein, “Power in Traditional India: Territory, caste and Kinship in Rajasthan” by Henri Stern, and “Ravari Kingdom and the Mugal Empire” by M. S. Rao in, Realm and Region, ed. Richard Fox (New Delhi: Vikas publishing House, 1977).

⁹⁸ Cohn’s opines, “It is usually difficult to differentiate the four types of regions, historical, linguistic, cultural and structural, as it is assumed that there is concomitant variation among linguistic, cultural, historical and structural variables” (103).

unit one is studying. For many purposes a region, which can be defined in a relative fashion for the purpose of the study, makes a logical unit; for other purposes a village, a city or civilisation make the relatively important unit to be studied (132).

The book *Region, Culture and Politics in India* (2006) edited by Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhaus⁹⁹ also is an important register about “various type of constructions of regions in India in relation to culture and politics”. In the introductory essay, they discuss content, concern and context of the book. In their definition, “A region is a mental construct. It is always a human product, whether the product of scholarship, political ideology, or daily life” (7). Borrowing from Cohn, they delineate, “Whether identified ‘objectively’ by social scientist, recognised ‘subjectively’ by a poet or pilgrim, or cultivated ‘cynically’ by a politician, regions are created and nourished by human minds and emotions” (7). They examine previous discussions on region in the light of present discourse. For instance, they cite the geographer Hartshorne’s differentiation between area and region in these terms: “Region – as an area of specific location which is in some way distinctive in relation to other areas and which extends as far as that distinction extends.” Moreover, they specify the contextuality of region by stating, “A region must always be defined with reference to a context. If the context changes, the boundaries or definitions of the region can change radically” (7).

For other theoretical accounts that conceptualise region in the Indian context, the articles written by Barbara Harriss-White¹⁰⁰ (2017) and Sudipta Kaviraj¹⁰¹ on “Regional Political Economy” (2017) are excellent references. In the

⁹⁹ Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhan, eds., Region, Politics and Culture in India (New Delhi: Manohar Publisher, 2006).

¹⁰⁰ Barbara Harriss-White, “Constructing Regions Inside the Nation Economic and Social Structure of Space in Agrarian and Cultural Regions,” Economic and Political Weekly, 18 Nov. 2017: 44-55.

¹⁰¹ Sudipta Kaviraj, “Three Planes of Space Examining Regions Theoretically in India,” Economic and Political Weekly 18 Nov. 2017: 56-63.

editor's words, these two pieces form a "project of conceptualising the region in the Indian context in all its diversity" that targets to "tackle the concept of region in its manifestation at multiple scales."¹⁰² For understanding the present-day theorisation of the concept of region in the Indian context, two different articles written by Barbara Harriss-White and by Sudipta Kaviraj on region will be analysed in the following paragraphs.

Barbara Harriss-White (2017) theorised economic and cultural regions in India that are "manifestations of the spatial patterns of Indian Capitalism" other than political units of the Indian nation. For her, "material agency of capital" is the constructive force of economic region and intellectual activity constitute social region (45). In her argument, rent and petty production are the deciding factors behind spatial patterning and formation of agrarian and cultural regions. Moreover, for her, the markers of boundaries of region seem petty commodity production, surplus from agrarian labour and cultural identities. Here we can clearly understand that for Harriss-White the process of capital and economic structure are the main forces behind the manifestations of regions (54).

Sudipta Kaviraj's article (2017) conceptualises region as a product of the historical and social process. He argues that both region and (Indian) nation are historical by relating the concept of region with the Indian nation.¹⁰³ To substantiate his argument he points out two claims. The first claim is that these two concepts are referentially not permanent, temporally transforming, corresponding to historical processes. The second claim is that these concepts are "formed by contingent epistemic processes" that are framed by intellectuals or social agents through knowledge production (56). He

¹⁰² Sub-national, national and super-national levels seem multiple scales. See Arjun Jayadev and Vamsi Vakulabharanam, "Possibilities of Seeing the 'Region' Differently," Economic and Political Weekly 18 Nov. 2017: 41-43.

¹⁰³ He observes, "If we ignore the reality of regions, we get a skewed and misleading picture of Indian politics, if we do not grasp this second-order reality of India, we get a picture that is skewed from the other direction" (63).

proclaims that “regions are historical; they are formed historically, and thus get unformed or transformed in time. Second, the fact that these regions remain bound together within one single frame of some kind - political, economic, or cultural-imparts some serious qualities to the regions and how they function” (58).

He reinforces his argument by asserting:

Regionality is created, or regions are formed by three separate kinds of forces—political, economic and cultural—and regions are also consequently of three kinds. These three kinds of regionalities are produced by distinct kinds of logics, and their boundaries are maintained in different ways. One form of regionality also affects others, and the power of the state, in particular, affects the two other types of region formation. All three forces are communicative in the sense that they produce a certain kind of currency exchanged between individuals and groups, and the circulation of these objects—of political power, material goods and cultural artefacts—create zones of common experience and intelligibility, which have the historical effect of producing what we call regions. These three kinds of regionalities might overlap, for understandable reasons (58).

As we have seen in the theorisations of Bernard Cohn and others, here also we see the complexity, fluidity, intersection and multi-directionality of this concept that form in-between the mental and material relations.

4. Manappuram in the History of Kerala: ‘Chetuva Island’ and the Corridor of power

Exclusive historical writings on Manappuram are rare, even in administrative, mainstream, professional or popular history writings. However, Manappuram appears as Chetuva Island, alone or with many of the important places within it such as Chetuva, Kodungallur (Cranganore), Pathinettarayalam and so on

in the administrative and mainstream history writings on Kerala. These examples of history writings include *Malabar Manual* (Logan), *A History of Kerala* (Padmanabha Menon), *Cochirajya Charithram* (A History of Cochin, Padmanabha Menon), *The Cochin State Manual* (Achyutha Menon), and *Kerala District Gazetteer: Trichur* (Ramachandran Nair).

Manappuram is marked as Chetuva Island (Logan, Padmanabha Menon, Achyutha Menon, and E. Keyns) in these historical writings. Francis Day notes, “Stretching between Cranganore and Chetway, the island is divided into three small states, Cranganore to the south, Chetwaye to the north, and Paponetty or Ayroor or Belanga in the centre” (12).¹⁰⁴ Contrary to people’s beliefs about Manappuram, it is discernible as Chetuva Island in history writings which delineate it as an island, a physical category which includes Cranganore and seems to project Manappuram as a closure, a territory.

At no point in history does Manappuram seem to have been entirely under a homogenous juridical prudential or the sovereign power of a native or colonial rule. Manappuram was owned in parts and handed over to different rulers at different times. For instance, Manappuram was added to the territory of Perumpadappu Swaroopam (Cochin Raja) and Nediyrippu Swaroopam (Samuthiri) interchangeably many times. Moreover, one could say that Manappuram was simultaneously shared by different rulers such as the Samuthiri, Cochin Raja, Portuguese, Dutch, Hyder Ali, Tipu and English at different times. Thus, existing narratives illustrate that they shared the place interchangeably, and often simultaneously. To clarify, when Chetuva was under Dutch, Pathinettarayalam was under Cochin Raja, but even at that point there was a post of Samuthiri at Pappinivattom and Mathilakam and concurrently Airoor was under Airoor Raja.

¹⁰⁴ Francis Day, *The Land of Perumal or Cochin its Past and its Present* (Madras: Gantz Brothers, 1863).

War was the usual order during the late medieval and the colonial period in the area now marked as Kerala. Manappuram stood as a passage (or corridor of land) to conquer other regions and it was exposed as a battlefield in various historical epochs. The wars or attacks, in fact, were aimed at different targets than specifically at Manappuram. Many a time, they were aimed at Cochin, the Samuthiri or Travancore but seem not to have taken note of the petty principalities of Airoor Raja, Pazhenchery Nair and Cartamana at Manappuram. Due to its strategic geographical peculiarities, Manappuram certainly appears to have been the chosen battlefield of native kings and colonisers in the past. Often, they attacked the two forts at Chetuva and Cranganore after the forts were built there. Consequently, Manappuram became an effective corridor of/to power in mainstream history writings.

William Logan explains in the *Malabar Manual* that Chetuva Island was captured by the Samuthiri from the Cochin Raja before 1502. Because of the treaty between the Dutch and the Samuthiri, Chetuva was handed over to the Dutch Company in 1717 (*Cochin State Manual* 100). The Dutch built a warehouse at Chetuva after that. It was a part of the Mysore Dynasty, under the rule of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, from 1776 to 1790. Chetuva came into the possession of the English Company as a part of British Malabar after the Sreerangapattanam Treaty.¹⁰⁵ Then they gave it as a tenancy to Cochin.¹⁰⁶ In this long duration of time, the various narratives of history reveal that Manappuram witnessed many military moves and wars from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The native Rajas, especially the Cochin Raja and the Samuthiri, were the main counterparts in the many wars. However, foreigners like the British and the Dutch were also important players in the wars and Mysore under Hyder Ali Khan and Tipu were additional key players in certain other wars.

¹⁰⁵ See Logan *Malabar Manual* 349-473.

¹⁰⁶ *Manual of the Administration of the Madras presidency, Records of the Government and the Yearly Administration Reports*, Vol. 2 (1885) 475.

Manappuram had witnessed many military movements as mentioned here because it was politically and geographically significant. Chetuva and Cranganore were two important places in Chetuva Island at the time. Chetuva was important for both the Samuthiri and Cochin. For Samuthiri, the possession of Manappuram made it easy to attack Cochin. Manappuram was important for Cochin as well, because it provided easy access to Chitrakoodam at Vanneri, Perumpadappu where the coronation ceremony traditionally took place.¹⁰⁷ It also gained the attention of the colonisers:

The Dutch, the Portuguese, and English fought for the possession of Chetuva, because it stood at the mouth of a broad river and an extensive backwater system on the north. So also, with Cochin. But for its deep land-locked harbour, affording safe anchorage to ships of large draught and its unsurpassed facilities for communication with the interior, Cochin would never have been heard of (Menon 1982: 77-78).

Similarly, the Dutch considered it imperative to reinforce their northern point and resist the future move of Samuthiri towards Chetuva.¹⁰⁸ Hyder Ali seized the same fort in 1776.¹⁰⁹ In fact, Hyder Ali needed to make a move to attack Travancore via Chetuva. But the Dutch strategically extended their reply in response to Hyder's demand. It provoked Hyder Ali and he attacked the Dutch and seized the whole of the land except Cranganore Fort at Chetuva (*Cochin State Manual* 123).

Chetuva was under Samuthiri in 1664 (Menon 1982: 239). Initially, the Dutch tried to settle in Chetuva but they left it in favour of the English. And then,

¹⁰⁷ "Vanneri was wrested from the Raja of Cochin by the Zamorin sometime before the advent of the Portuguese on the coast. The loss of the Villages comprising Vannerinad had always been a sore point to Cochin [...] Rama Varma (1698-1722) is said to have taken a solemn oath on his accession to the musnad that would not be crowned anywhere except at Chittrakutam...", see K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala* Vol. I, (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1982) 207.

¹⁰⁸ *Kerala District Gazetteers: Trichur* 154.

¹⁰⁹ *Kerala District Gazetteers* 610. Logan 348-349. This is also mentioned in *Joint Commissioners' Report*.

the Dutch abandoned Chetuva to the Samuthiri in 1691 (330). They returned in 1714, and the Raja of Cochin gave them consent to erect a fort at Chetuva (330). However, the Samuthiri attacked them. Padmanabha Menon details the attack by the Samuthiri with the help of Hamilton's observation:

The Dutch with the assistance of the Rajas of Cochin and Ayrur, forthwith commenced erecting a fort at the mouth of the Chettwaye River, which was declared to be the boundary between the Zamorin's and the Cochin Raja's territories [...] acting under the advice of Mr Adams, the Zamorin had recourse to a stratagem. Captain Alexander Hamilton, who was then travelling on the coast, has left us an account of what took place at the time. He says, 'the Dutch made small account who had the best title but carried on their work with diligence. The Dutch were building the fort at Chettwaye, and the Zamorin got some of his men in the disguise of labourers to be employed by them and to take an opportunity of surprising the Dutch. The two lieutenants, who had the overseeing of the work, were one evening diverting themselves with a game at tables in a guard room about half a mile from the fort. They had let some of their soldiers go straggling about, and the disguised natives took the opportunity to kill the sentinels, signal to ambuscade, and take the half-built fort. One of the lieutenants in attempting to retake it was killed, the other, thinking it impracticable to attack greater forces within than he had without, embarked for Cochin with his men [...] The Zamorin caused the English flag to be hoisted, and the fort was destroyed (330-331).

After that Mr Adams, the head of the Tellichery English factory acquired permission from Samuthiri to build a warehouse at Chetuva in 1715. But the Dutch recaptured Chetuva and erected a fort, named Fort William when:

William Bakker Jacobtz was despatched from Batavia with an excellent army consisting of Europeans, Javanese and Balinese, who were on their arrival at Cochin joined by the Raja's forces. The first attempt of the joint

forces was upon the stronghold of Pappinivattam, which was surrendered after an obstinate resistance, in which the Zamorins sustained a heavy loss. After completely destroying the fort, they advanced to Chetuva, and some of the Dutch ships were sent to attack it by sea. On arriving there, however, they found the fort altogether deserted, the Zamorin's men had retreated to their outpost in the interior.

Finally, the war ended and the Dutch got possession of Chetuva Island, and Cochin recaptured most of the places which were conquered by Samuthiri (*Cochin State Manual* 100-103). Afterwards the Dutch made it the capital of their province, Pappinivattom in 1717. After a few years, Samuthiri attacked Chetuva and seized Cranganore in 1755-56, but the Dutch recovered the fort at Chetuva in 1758.¹¹⁰

Cranganore, the southern part of Chetuva Island, was another important place in Manappuram. The Cranganore Raja had long been the feudatory of Samuthiri but the Portuguese settled at Cranganore in 1504 and they built a fort there in 1523 (Menon 1982: 316). The English East India Company also opened a factory at Cranganore in 1616 (328). However, the Dutch captured it in 1662.¹¹¹ Tipu occupied Cranganore in 1790 and it came under the control of the English Company in 1791 after the defeat of Tipu. They restored it to the Raja of Cranganore. Cranganore was more often under the Samuthiri or the Dutch than Cochin (177).¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Logan 400. The French also unsuccessfully attempted to settle at Chetuva in 1740. See, Innis 57.

¹¹¹ Kerala District Gazetteers: Trichur 153.

¹¹² Pathinettarayalam had been alternately possessed by Samuthiri, the Dutch and Cochin, but in 1761 it was handed over to Cochin by the Dutch. Later in 1789, the place was handed over to Travancore by the Dutch because of the threat from Mysore.

Chapter Two

Embodied Disembodiment and Disembodied Embodiment of Manappuram: (De)materialising the Region

Introduction

In this chapter, I contest the idea of how region (de)materialise as an *embodied disembodiment* and *disembodied embodiment*¹¹³. In other words, I illustrate how the region materialises as a corporeal presence through different kinds of manifestation and animation in the everyday discourse of people. Similarly, I attempt to unravel how such materialisation is complicated by the complex articulation and imagination of people in everyday discourse. Therefore, I further attempt to look at how everyday dematerialises the region as an incorporeal presence. I illuminate how memory and everydayness are interconnected in the manifestation and animation of the region. In addition, I depict how everydayness and memory interrelate and complicate each other in the formation of the region. To understand the *corporeal presence* and *incorporeal absence* or *corporeal absence* and *incorporeal presence*¹¹⁴ of the region and its complex nuances, I uncover the everyday discourse of the people in Manappuram. For that purpose, I collected everyday expressions of people living in Manappuram, and everyday activities and practices of various enterprises and collective platforms formed in the name of Manappuram through ethnographic sources like personal interviews, in-depth interviews, and observations, including participant observation. I have focused on the various enterprises and the collectives in the name of Manappuram to study the materialisation of the

¹¹³ Emphasis is mine.

¹¹⁴ Emphasis is mine.

region and its nuances. I had done interviews with forty respondents¹¹⁵ and participated in a carnival, called the Manappuram Beach Festival.¹¹⁶

The chapter has two parts: Part one deals with how the region manifests through naming and everyday expressions by analysing naming (of shops and persons), everyday conversations and ruminations, and everyday creativity. The second part addresses how the region is animated through everyday activities and practices of various enterprises and collectives in the name of Manappuram. To be precise, it delineates how different everyday activities and practices of shops and collectives not only materialise Manappuram by manifesting its name but also animate its life and lives, such as subsistence, craft, care, re-creation and flourishing. The everyday is complicated by the manifestation and animation. This work is also concerned with how the materialisation of the region as a corporeal presence is complicated through the complex everyday imaginations of the people in Manappuram that dematerialise the region as an incorporeal presence. The interviews would uncover the complexities of the appearance, life, and existence of the region by studying everyday discourse like conversations, soliloquy/interior monologue, creativity, speech, activities, events, engagements, and memory.

¹¹⁵ All interviews were done, transcribed, and translated by myself. Most of the interviews were done from 2012 to 2016 in a discontinuous manner. However, I started my fieldwork from 2008 onwards. It helped to form a bond with many of the respondents. It also helped with collecting materials from their personal collections. Additionally, I could access material from the local libraries due to this. But the interviews were officially recorded only from 2012 onwards. Some of the respondents were interviewed two or more times. I have used their names, in general, as they address themselves. But some of them use their surnames in their public life. In such cases, I have used their surnames as well. In the context of Kerala, people usually only use their first name, except in official contexts. But recently they have been using their last names as well, whether real or not, after starting to use social media.

¹¹⁶ The beach festival organised for four days at Kazhimbram beach from 25 to 28 December 2014.

I. Manifesting Manappuram: Everyday Expressions and Memory

This part of the chapter deals with how everyday expressions manifest in Manappuram and how these everyday expressions interlink with memory. In this particular context, everyday expressions represent name or naming (of shops and persons), everyday conversations and ruminations, and everyday personal creativities (of individuals).

1. Manifesting Region

1.1. Manifesting Region: Names of Shops and Persons

On travelling from Chetuva to Aala by road or on foot, one repeatedly encounters letters in English or Malayalam on steel, wood, cloth, plastic, or cement surfaces.¹¹⁷ These letters are typed, painted or printed on boards, walls, flexes, banners and so on. The letters spell ‘MANAPPURAM.’ The word Manappuram is extended as a prefix to other locations, institutions, etc. For instance Manappuram Homeo Clinic at Engandiyoor, Manappuram Vegetables at Vadanapally, Manappuram Slab Work at Puthukulangara, Manappuram Financiers,¹¹⁸ Manappuram Builders at Kaithakal (Thalikulam), Manappuram Tailors at Kaithakal (Thalikulam), Manappuram Super Market at Nattika, Manappuram Fast Food, a petty vendor shop at Triprayar, Manappuram Tea Stall and Cool Drinks at Valappad,¹¹⁹ Manappuram Laboratory and ECG, Manappuram Medicals and Clinic at Valappad,¹²⁰ Manappuram Finance at Valappad,¹²¹ Manappuram Spinners and Weavers Association at Kothakulam, Manappuram Social Welfare Co-

¹¹⁷ The photographs were taken during fieldwork by myself.

¹¹⁸ It is a small gold loan firm at Thalikulam. This is not part of the Manappuram Group of companies which is under the chairmanship of Nandakumar.

¹¹⁹ A small tea shop at Valappad.

¹²⁰ This is a small laboratory at Valappad, where they provide services like blood test, urine analysis and so on. Medicines and services of doctors are available 2-3 days per week.

¹²¹ Manappuram finance is a non-banking financial company under the Manappuram Group of Companies. There are various other business enterprises also under the parent company at Valappad, like Macare – Manappuram Medical and Dental Clinic, Manappuram Gold, Manappuram Beauty Parlour, and so on.

operatives at Chenthraipinni, and Manappuram Agro Farms.¹²² They are name boards, fingerposts of shops and their advertisements. These display the name of different shops and institutions,¹²³ providing health care, financial services, food, agricultural services, beauty care, and construction services and so on. One can find them on the main roads and the interior¹²⁴ roads, in centres and towns,¹²⁵ small junctions and pockets in villages,¹²⁶ and even within house compounds in Manappuram.¹²⁷ However, there are other shops and institutions which do not use the term, ‘Manappuram’ for their enterprises, but have used it as a caption for their advertisements.¹²⁸ The invitation notices of programmes, performances and events also use the name Manappuram to attract their audience.¹²⁹

¹²² Manappuram Agro Farm is a subsidiary of the Manappuram group.

¹²³ We can also see names of such shops in popular material. For example, there is an advertisement for Manappuram Hardwares at Vadanapally in the C.V. Jayadevan Master Farewell Souvenir 1981. There was also a visual advertisement in a local channel for Manappuram Gold dated 05.04.2011.

¹²⁴ For example, Manappuram Agro farms, Manappuram Builders, Manappuram Tailors, Manappuram Spinners and Weavers.

¹²⁵ There are no big towns in Manappuram. Triprayar and Vadanapally are upcoming towns when compared to other places in Manappuram. But people call these places ‘centre.’ The centres developed from temporary *angadis*, bazaars, etc. (local markets). They usually recognise Thrissur as a town and call places like Ernakulam ‘city’.

¹²⁶ The term village is not used to denote places usually depicted as Indian villages. The term village is used here in the sense of places that come under the administrative category of panchayat, and not under municipalities or corporations.

¹²⁷ An advertisement board of Manappuram Builders can be seen in the compound of a house.

¹²⁸ For example, advertisement captions go like these, “To remember forever the childhood of Manappuram,” of Baby Land Toys and Gifts, Vadanapally, found in Why Magazine (2004), UTEC Valappad; “New charm for the fashion imagination of Manappuram”, of Keerthi Ladies Fashion, Triprayar, found in Alhind News (22.07.2009); “The famous music school of Manappuram”, of Sreeranjini Kalakshethra, Valappad, found in the special magazine on Triprayar Nataka Virunnu (2010); “The first computerised eye testing system in Manappuram,” of Bright Spectacles, Edamuttam, found in Maya Magazine (1998); “The biggest gold supermarket of Manappuram,” of Abhilash Jewellery, Triprayar, found in Millennium Eve, Sreenarayana College Magazine (1999); “The first Parallel College of Manappuram,” of Atheena College, Triprayar, found in the souvenir, Binesh, Kannan, Ravi, Smruthi Rekha; “A bindi on the forehead of Manappuram,” of Mangala Tourist Home, Vadanapally in Vidyarambadina Smaranika (2005); “...the love which snowed in the sunny heart of Manappuram,” of Vertex Ice-cream, Vishakalanam Magazine, Janmashadabdi Pathippu (January 2004); “With pride of Manappuram,” Mijooja Fashion Palace, Kitchen wares, Vadanapally found in Maya Magazine (1997); “The biggest shopping wonder in Manappuram,” of Silk Plaza, Vadanapally found on the carrying bag of Silk Plaza; “The well modernised and best showroom in Manappuram”, of Kanz Footwear, a visual advertisement in a local channel (08.08.2010).

¹²⁹ From notice of the Ramu Karyat Film Award function, at Oruma Beach Festival, Thalikulam, (2-8 April 2012); felicitation programme and performance of a play at



Fig 1. Signpost of Manappuram Super Market. Photo taken on 20.05.2011.

Figure 1 is the signpost of a small supermarket situated at Nattika centre. The supermarket was started in 1995 by four ex-Gulf migrant workers: Sreenivasan (Thalikulam), Backer, Sanjayan, and Valsan (all three from Nattika). The supermarket is for retail grocery and stationery. They also offer door-delivery of goods. Backer and Sreenivasan describe the process, “We named the supermarket based on the name of this area, which is from Chetuva to Kodungallur, generally known as Manappuram. We have heard this name since our childhood; that’s why we used its name for the supermarket.”¹³⁰

Sreenarayana Hall in Edamuttam (19.12.2010); Invitation paper or the Seventh Anniversary of NES College, Triprayar (27.06.2010); the invitation card for the 70th Birth Anniversary of Dr Satish Babu organised by the Indian Medical Association Triprayar (16.06.2011); invitation letter for the felicitation programme for coach and winner, and newly selected office bearers of the Triprayar Sports and Games Association, held at TSGA Ground Triprayar (2010); invitation notice of the felicitation programme of Mr Midun Vishnu selected to the State Hockey team, Under-Seventeen Session by the DYFI committee, Valappad (2010); invitation notice of the Triprayar Drama Fest and Felicitation Function of “eminent artists” from Manappuram held at Priyadarsini Auditorium, Triprayar (19.09.2010); invitation notice for the book releasing ceremony of Mr Habib Valappad’s short story collection on held at SNDP School, Triprayar (18.11.2007).

¹³⁰ Sreenivasan and Backer, personal interview, 23.05.2011.



Fig 2. Name board of Manappuram Vegetables in Triprayar. Photo taken on 24.05.2011.

Figure 2 is the name board of Manappuram Vegetables. It is a vegetable shop, situated on the side of the National Highway at Vadanapally, owned by Hameed from 1999 onwards. Instead of this vegetable shop, earlier, there was a textile shop named Manappuram Vasthralayam started by his father Muhammed. In his opinion, his father gave this name to their shop based on this area, Manappuram.¹³¹

These name boards, signposts, and advertisements of shops and so on can be seen on main roads, small shopping complexes, in market places and the interiors of Manappuram. The name boards of the shops exhibit the name of the region as well. The visibility of the name seems the visual manifestation of the region. It is visible to anyone, whether they belong to Manappuram or not. For anyone travelling across Manappuram, i.e., mobile corporeal bodies, the name is visually exposed. But the visually manifest names that one perceives are not necessarily stagnant in their positions. Put differently, such name boards change, are refurbished or modified. For instance, the surface of the name board, writing style, colour of letters, etc. constantly changes; the banners and flexes (advertisements of shops) are moved from their positions. It might regenerate the manifestation of the region which already appears

¹³¹ Hameed, personal interview, 24.05.2011.

through naming. Moreover, such visual manifestations also travel via other objects within and outside the region. For example, the Manappuram name can often be found on the body of buses, trains and other vehicles.¹³² Those material bodies (of object) are carriers of mobility as well; therefore, the name and the region traverse beyond the spatial fixations, (one space to another space or from abstract to physical space). Manappuram as the name of a shop or as a caption in an advertisement often travels with the human body, in the form of a carry bag¹³³ or a folded banner.¹³⁴ Therefore, the region seems ready to hand; handy like these objects that can be carried around. Hence the region appears tactile and perhaps mobile. In short, name boards, signposts and advertisements of shops are instrumental to the visual manifestation of the region; it indeed offers the region as perceived.

Similarly, there are people who carry the Manappuram name as part of their own names. N. R Manappuram, Manappuram Ponnu and Ashraf Manappuram are examples. N.R. Manappuram's actual name was Ramakrishnan. He belongs to Thiyya Community (OBC). He was a poet and dramatist. His notable poem was "kalithozhan" (Childhood friend) on D.M. Pottekkad (a communist, poet, and short-story writer who directed a feature film in Malayalam). N.R. Manappuram was a childhood friend of Pottekkad. Pottekkad N.R Manappuram had worked as a teacher. Initially, he was in charge of the Communist Party's secret files, and then he became the spokesperson of *Deshabhimani*, the party's official newspaper. Pottekkad was from Painoor, a place in Manappuram. The writer reminds the reader of how he dedicated his restless life for Painoor.¹³⁵ Manappuram Ponnu was a *nadaswara* (wind-based classical instrument) instrumentalist. His real name

¹³² The researcher observed the advertisement of Manappuram Finance and Gold loan on buses (bus services from Ernakulam to Guruvayur in 2018), trains (MMTS, Hyderabad, in 2010) and a road roller named after Manappuram (at Thrissur town in 2019).

¹³³ Researcher observed and collected carry bag of Silk Plaza (a fabric shop) at Vadanapally.

¹³⁴ Researcher observed a rolled banner of Manappuram Gold's advertisement in the hand of an artist during fieldwork.

¹³⁵ These details can be found as a note written by Kovoore Salim in *Vidyarambadina Smaranika* (2005).

was Krishnan Kutty. He was eminent and well-known. His house was at Engandiyoor in Manappuram. He used to travel across Kerala and outside for musical concerts. He also used to visit Tamilnadu in connection with his programmes. Now he is no more. His children are also very talented and play various musical instruments. They play the tabla, the flute and the nadaswara. Most of them sing well and they work with famous singers like Yesudas. Mohan Sitara, the famous music director in Malayalam industry used to visit their home at Engandiyoor. Now all of them, except one daughter, have shifted from Engandiyoor to Arimboor, a place outside Manappuram in Thrissur district. They belong to the Paana community, a Dalit community.¹³⁶ Ashraf Manappuram is a theatre performer. Initially, he started his career with Kazhimbram Theatre. He has also worked with Yamuna Entertainers and other theatre groups (Both theatres are based in Manappuram). He is a scriptwriter and actor as well. He used to play comedy roles. He has directed one play. He has received local awards for acting (best comedian) and scriptwriting. He has not been acting for the past eight years due to deteriorating health, but still engages with amateur theatre.¹³⁷

Manappuram is an integral part of their name, either as a suffix or as a prefix. Manappuram enters their name and their mind in the formation of their self. In a way, it seems as if it is difficult to detach the region from their self. In the process of the naming of a person, the region signifies their being and it also suggests that the region emerges as a being through their name. Thus, one sees Manappuram through certain inanimate objects like boards and flex; and animate objects like people. Inanimate objects might correspond to the being of (appearance of) Manappuram, but the naming of animate objects like people emphasise the significance of the being of the region. Further, for the people, the region is perhaps their being itself.

¹³⁶ The information on Manappuram Ponnu is from Engandiyoor Chandrasekharan, personal interview, 12.01.2016.

¹³⁷ Ashraf Manappuram, personal interview, 01.02.2013.

Shajith Pallath¹³⁸ stated how this trend of adding the name of the region to one's name fluctuated with times. He opines:

The name, Manappuram, was widely used by people. In certain cases, region and people were addressed under the same label of Manappuram. Later the trend went out of fashion and people started to use local place names such as Kazhimbram, Valappad etc. Similarly, people came to be known as K.S.K. Thalikulam,¹³⁹ Kazhimbram Vijayan,¹⁴⁰ and so on. If these people had lived a few years ago, they would have titled themselves as Manappuram so and so. For example, Kazhimbram Vijayan might have been known as Manappuram Vijayan if he had been born a little earlier. Even though they attached the name of the local place with their names, they were all constantly speaking about Manappuram.¹⁴¹

N.R. Manappuram and Manappuram Ashraf were contemporaries, N.R. Manappuram passed away recently¹⁴² and Manappuram Ashraf is still alive. It is interesting that the name Ashraf Manappuram for Ashraf was suggested by Kazhimbram Vijayan in 1972.¹⁴³ Yet, K.S.K. Thalikulam (1903-1980) who was quite senior to them was named after the local place. He may have been the contemporary of Manappuram Ponnu. People preferred to use the name of the region and the local name (in this context of the region, Manappuram, the local is variably concrete), for instance, Manappuram and Thalikulam simultaneously. There is a mutual exchangeability between both these. All of them manifest the region beyond the name of the locality, or they articulate themselves beyond the local, probably beyond the being of

¹³⁸ Shajith Pallath is a politician from Kazhimbram, one of the main organisers of Manappuram Beach Festival.

¹³⁹ K.S.K. Thalikulam (1903-1980) was a popular writer from Manappuram. He wrote poetries and plays. His masterpiece *Ammuvinte Attinkutty* is well-known in the Malayalam literary world. For more details, see the chapter on memory.

¹⁴⁰ Kazhimbram Vijayan (died 1996) was a popular theatre artist and director from Manappuram. He used to run a theatre troupe name Kazhimbram Theatre.

¹⁴¹ Shajith, personal interview, 11.01.2016.

¹⁴² See *Vidyaramba Smaranika* (2005). There is a short note on N.R. Manappuram by Koolur Salim, but I could not locate dates for his death.

¹⁴³ Ashraf Manappuram, personal interview, 01.02.2013.

themselves, which is located through their names. This entails the concrete materialisation of the region through the manifestation of its location, the local place. It sounds like a disordered journey of the region from space to location and from location to space.

1.2. Manifestating Region: Everyday Conversation and Rumination

Apart from shop names and individuals' names, there are other forms of manifestation of the name. It is visible in Jose Thadikkaran's¹⁴⁴ words:

Manappuram used to enter our day-to-day conversations automatically. Whatever the topic, whatever the speech, whatever the conversation, Manappuram would always make its way into people's daily chit chat, discussions and the speech of public figures. People like C.K.G. Vaidhyar,¹⁴⁵ V.A.H Valappad¹⁴⁶ and Valsan Pokkanchery¹⁴⁷ used to talk regularly about Manappuram. They always ruminated over the incidents which had taken place in Manappuram and would remember the prominent personalities who had lived in Manappuram in their talk. It was a kind of renewal of memory. Public figures like Manoharan Mash,¹⁴⁸ Karthikeyan Mash, and K.R. Raveendran still use Manappuram in their speech. The memory of Manappuram is in every generation's blood. Our generation and the former generation had been the spirit of Manappuram... At that time, we had a community feeling. Today, the term Manappuram is used as a name for shops, events and as a collective platform. They, in fact, want to use the name to hold on to old memories.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Jose Thadikkaran is a local journalist, who runs an evening daily. He has been active in the various collectives in the name of Manappuram.

¹⁴⁵ C.K.G Vaidhyar is a public figure in Manappuram, He was initially an Ayurveda Physician, and he worked as a journalist as well.

¹⁴⁶ V.A.H. Valappad is V.A. Hamsa Valappad, a freelance journalist. He is the part of many collectives on Manappuram.

¹⁴⁷ Valsan Pokkanchery is an actor in the field of theatre. He is also part of many collectives on Manappuram.

¹⁴⁸ Mash is the Malayalam version of master/sir.

¹⁴⁹ S.P. Kadavil (1917- 1990,) was a journalist and creative writer from Engandiyoor also uses 'Manappuram' in his speech. Jose Thadikkaran, personal interview, 15.01.2012.

As Jose Thadikkaran said, the word Manappuram is found frequently in the day-to-day conversations of people in Manappuram. People usually say, “I am from Manappuram,”¹⁵⁰ when they introduce themselves to someone. “It has never happened before in Manappuram,”¹⁵¹ is what they say when they wonder about something in their daily conversations. It would often enter their interior monologue like, “How can we live here in Manappuram?”¹⁵² when they worry about an issue. Apart from that Manappuram echoes in public announcements like election propaganda, marketing events, advertisements, invitations for public events¹⁵³ and public speeches as well. Public figures constantly use Manappuram in their speech.¹⁵⁴

Across generations, people of Manappuram have called and identified this region as Manappuram in everyday conversations.¹⁵⁵ There is a culture of identifying themselves as belonging to this region. It is evidently visible in Jose Thadikkaran’s words, “There is a culture in our day-to-day conversation of saying that I am from Manappuram.”¹⁵⁶ The name Manappuram has been in their consciousness since their childhood.¹⁵⁷ They had first heard the term Manappuram in chats at home. Engandiyoor Chandrasekaran¹⁵⁸ pointed out, “It is quite normal for Manappuram to enter our day-to-day conversations at

¹⁵⁰ C.K.G. Vaidhyar, personal interview, 06.05.2012.

¹⁵¹ Krishnan. K.C., personal interview, 06.05.2012.

¹⁵² Krishnan K.C., personal interview.

¹⁵³ Observations during fieldwork and personal interviews with Jose Thadikkaran (15.01.2012), Krishnan K.C (06.05.2012), and Beena Ajayagosh (12.01.2016).

¹⁵⁴ “V.S. Keraleeyan used to address the people of Manappuram as children of Manappuram”, Engandiyoor Chandrasekaran, personal interview, 12.01.2016. T.N. Prathapan (a politician from Manappuram, elected as MP from Thrissur constituency during the election in 2019 also addressed the people of Manappuram in the same way according to Ashraf Manappuram. Also, from interviews with K.V. Peethambaran (15.01.2016), Shajith Pallath (11.01.2016), and Jose Thadikkaran (15.01.2012).

¹⁵⁵ From personal interviews with Thadikkaran, Vaidhyar, Pallath, Aasha (16.01.2016), and Ajayagosh.

¹⁵⁶ Thadikkaran, personal interview.

¹⁵⁷ “I have heard the name Manappuram from my childhood”, Ashraf, personal interview. Also see personal interviews with Valsan Pokkanchery (15.01.2012), Thadikkaran, Alli Ramadas (16.01.2016), and Majeed (11.01.2016).

¹⁵⁸ Engandiyoor Chandrasekaran is a poet and well know lyricist from Manappuram.

home”¹⁵⁹ or in colloquy at their neighbourhood. In some way or the other, Manappuram sneaks its way into everyday conversation.¹⁶⁰ Contrary to the above-mentioned routes, the name is first heard in other ways as well; like, through objects,¹⁶¹ or names of shops¹⁶² and they realise later that it is the name of the region through different remarks and conversations. But awareness of details like its boundary, important events and prominent personalities who (had) lived in Manappuram develop slowly within them and they then start to use it in their own verbal exchanges. They imbibed details connected to Manappuram from their immediate surroundings like the talk of elders,¹⁶³ the oratory of public figures,¹⁶⁴ and in party classes.¹⁶⁵ Often it was discussed in school, through questions posed by teachers¹⁶⁶ and in chatter among classmates.¹⁶⁷

The feeling of belonging remarkably extended to recalling and pondering about events and people in Manappuram in their everyday casual conversation. The day-to-day remembering and ruminating arrive as memories. These memories passed down through generations are constantly

¹⁵⁹ Engandiyoor Chandrasekaran, personal interview, 12.01.2016. “At our homes, we had grown up hearing that the name of the region was Manappuram since our childhood”, Shajith Pallath, personal interview. See also personal interviews with K.V. Peethambaran (15.01.2016), and Ramadas (16.01.2016).

¹⁶⁰ Personal interviews with Ramadas and Majeed (11.01.2016).

¹⁶¹ “I first heard the name Manappuram through the Manappuram beedi because the owner of the beedi company was our neighbour. I realised that it was, in fact, the name of a region, and realised its area and significance only later,” K.V. Peethambaran, personal interview.

¹⁶² “I heard the name through Manappuram Finance because my house is at Valappad where this firm is situated. I realised that this was the name of a region after I worked for the Manappuram Beach Festival. When I cross-checked with my family, I realised that all the former generations already knew that this place was called Manappuram and about its boundaries. My family members shared these with me. It is true that there were some people who didn’t know, but some of them came to know through the Manappuram Beach Festival.” Mani, personal interview, 16.01.2016.

¹⁶³ Ajayagosh, personal interview.

¹⁶⁴ “I started to use Manappuram in my conversations after listening to V.S. Keraleeyan’s speech”, Chandrasekaran, personal interview.

¹⁶⁵ “We learned the details about Manappuram from the speeches of comrades and in party class,” Shajith Pallath, personal interview.

¹⁶⁶ “When I was studying in the fifth standard, my teacher asked me, ‘What is Manappuram?’” Ashraf, personal interview.

¹⁶⁷ “From the time I can recall, I remember hearing the word Manappuram at home. However, it was more so when I started to go to school,” Ramadas, personal interview.

articulated through conversation, chatter, oratory, and so on.¹⁶⁸ Such constant rumination, in fact, disseminates and reproduces the memory. Everyday recollecting, ruminating, and reminiscing allow the memory to “renew”. The constant repetition also updates, repairs, innovates and revives the memory that allows the memory to be kept alive. It might also retrieve the memory. Paradoxically they find belonging in a place which is ruminated from memory, and perhaps they belong in a retrieved region. These memories make them wish to return to Manappuram wherever they go or may have moved to.¹⁶⁹

Jose Thadikkaran explicates:

Manappuram is not a state or district, but a *pradesh* (region). I am sure that there is always a memory regarding Manappuram, a piece of memory of its nature or its peculiarity that we constantly keep in mind. I am sure that everyone has such memories. Kunjunni Mash¹⁷⁰ returned to Manappuram because of that, even though he had spent a large part of his life in Kozhikode for his teaching job. People usually say that *manappurathukaran* (inhabitant or person from Manappuram) must come back to Manappuram. The elders say ‘Mash returned to Manappuram finally’. He used to come to my press every evening, along with Varghese Mechery¹⁷¹ and Habeeb Valappad.¹⁷² We would disperse after we had tea.

Therefore, the region also sounds like a space of nostalgia and apparently arrives here as a memory as well, probably without losing the materiality of the region.

¹⁶⁸ Thadikkaran, personal interview.

¹⁶⁹ Thadikkaran, personal interview.

¹⁷⁰ Kunjunni Mash (1927-2006), one of the popular poets of Kerala. His house is at Valappad, Manappuram.

¹⁷¹ Varghese Mechery is one of the pioneers of the media field in Manappuram.

¹⁷² Habib Valappad (died in 2006) was a short story writer from Manappuram.

The elders worry whether the young and the next generation would carry on and pass along the memory of the region.¹⁷³ They resent the attitude of the new generation towards the region because the new generation is not knowledgeable¹⁷⁴ and do not recollect such memories.¹⁷⁵ Engandiyoor Chandrasekaran delineates:

Manappuram is, in fact, a memory. It exists in many of our minds. But the new generation does not have sufficient knowledge of the same. I do not think that they have any feelings or commitment to Manappuram. The people who are at least fifty years of age may have such a consciousness of Manappuram because they have listened to the older people speak about Manappuram. Manappuram is expressed through just a cultural field right now. The business field does not deem it necessary to talk about Manappuram. Even though generally it can be seen that the idea of Manappuram is present in everybody's mind and such a kind of consciousness is still alive, I doubt whether our new generation has given adequate attention to the same. Nevertheless, consciousness about our region is in our minds. It is evident when programmes such as the Manappuram Beach Festival are held. This, in fact, recreates the memory.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ "The older generation alone remembers the name of Manappuram. They had the Manappuram spirit. I am a little worried about what would happen to Manappuram after their time and I doubt whether the next generation would continue with the expression of this memory or not," Thadikkaran, personal interview.

¹⁷⁴ "Many of the new generation think that Manappuram is Manappuram Finance Limited. They don't know what the old Manappuram was. It was part of old Malabar. The east shore of Canoly Canal was Cochin and the west shore was Malabar. It existed almost till Sreenarayanapuram. Sreenarayanapuram was called Aala in olden times. It was said that at one point, Manappuram was called Nattika Firka where there were ten panchayats. Those ten panchayats were under the Ponnani taluk once," Ramadas, personal interview.

¹⁷⁵ Thadikkaran, personal interview, "The existing generations have the memory of Manappuram in their blood. But the new generation does not remember it. For them, the name has shifted from the region to the location, such as Valappad, Thalikulam etc. Our generation and the former generation had been the spirit of Manappuram.... Then, we had a community feeling."

¹⁷⁶ Chandrasekharan, personal interview.

However, they have hopes for the new generation, seeing the voluntary, continuous expressions of naming shops¹⁷⁷ and events,¹⁷⁸ when functions are organised to remember or felicitate important personalities in Manappuram, and when souvenirs/memoirs (*smaranika*) are published to commemorate these personalities.¹⁷⁹ Naming seems like resistance against amnesia about Manappuram.¹⁸⁰ The recreation of the memory probably recreates the past as well.

In short, Manappuram is a presence among the people whether it be a conversation, a speech, a soliloquy/interior monologue, chatter at home, colloquy with friends, a word with an acquaintance, rumination by an elder, the oratory of a public figure, a question in a classroom, or a rattle of pals; in a way Manappuram is alive; perhaps a being, in the everydayness of people. The different kinds of everyday expressions such as, “I am from Manappuram” may materialise the region in the ‘present’ giving it a corporeal existence. But thoughts like “...regarding Manappuram, it is always there in our minds” does not necessarily dismiss its embodied matter, rather it suggests a conceived form of the region.

1.3. Manifestating Region: Everyday Creativity

¹⁷⁷ “It is present in the mind of the new generation also. Even today, there are so many people that use the term Manappuram to name their shops, events and other collective platforms. They, in fact, want to hold on to the old memories through the name,” Thadikkaran, personal interview.

¹⁷⁸ Chandrasekaran, personal interview.

¹⁷⁹ “While the name Manappuram flashes back in our everyday life, there are still places where people continue to use the name. Nobody insists that they do so, but they do it voluntarily. It is an automatic reaction when people organise functions to reminisce about something or to felicitate somebody. Someone may tell that such and such people lived in Manappuram if they see *Manappuram Samskrithi* (culture of Manappuram),” Thadikkaran, personal interview.

¹⁸⁰ “There existed a Manappuram here. There existed an emotional presence here. It may end with the older generation. Such a process is part of globalisation. Such changes are usual when we transfer from a small place to a bigger place. Our local nature will be lost through such changes. In such a situation, we name (objects/places/people) to resist change. It’s a pleasure to hear the name of our place. That’s why people use such names. For example, Manappuram Ashraf, Manappuram Theatres, Manappuram Karthika etc.” Chandrasekharan, personal interview.

Apart from names, everyday conversation and rumination, especially beyond its public visibility and clamorous orality, Manappuram manifests in a tranquil fashion in one's dialogue with oneself in the personal space other than soliloquy/interior monologue. This manifestation is visible in diaries, in footers in photo albums, sketches, and maps. Such personal contemplation in private space is found in many other places. There were a few interesting sketch series in the personal collection of Ima Babu, an artist and documentarian, named *Manappuram, Ormayude Ulkzhcha*¹⁸¹ (Manappuram, the inner sight of memory). It was of the old main freeway in Manappuram that was, in fact, a sandy boulevard filled with cashew trees on both sides.¹⁸² It also depicts the old *Valappad Chantha*¹⁸³ (Valappad market). There is a series of sketches on eventful moments including the Communist movement in Manappuram, especially the life of Sardar Gopalakrishnan, including that of his custodial death.¹⁸⁴ The footer of the photo album by E.V.G.¹⁸⁵ remarks that the main initiatives/events that took place in Manappuram were the inauguration of the first commercial institute at Manappuram,¹⁸⁶ the renovation of Perinjalam High School with the help of

¹⁸¹ Ima Babu, a professional photographer, had drawn the sketches after he talked with Sukumaran master, a retired professor. Sukumaran master, who passed away, was differently-abled (visually).

¹⁸² Now the cashew trees on the wayside have mostly been cut down. Cashew trees are part of their everyday conversations along with Pandanus tree and Malabar tamarind (*garcinia gummi-gutta*).

¹⁸³ Valappad *chantha* was very famous across Manappuram.

¹⁸⁴ Sardar Gopalakrishnan (1914-1950) was a Communist leader from Manappuram. He died in custody at the Mathilakam Police Station. It has been claimed as the first martyrdom in Republic India. The sketch details the people's protest against the rice black market at the time of famine, the arrest of T.P. Baskara Panikkar (another Communist leader), Sardar's public speech which called for the *pauraavakasha samrakshana jatha* (Civil Rights Protest March - which became the instrument of Sardar's custody), Sardar's custodial death, his burial space, police protection for his burial place from the mass. For more details see the chapter on memory.

¹⁸⁵ E.V.G. is E.V. Gopalan (1916-1995), a creative writer from Manappuram. He has written novels, stories and plays. One of his novels *Innale* (Yesterday), portrayed Manappuram as a central character. See the chapter on memory for more details.

¹⁸⁶ West Coast Institute of Commerce started in 1935 at Valappad.

Ceylon migrants, the different activities of Manappuram Kalasamithi,¹⁸⁷ and an initiative to build a house for the poet K.S.K. Thalikulam by the people.

The diaries found in the personal collection of V.S. Keraleeyan¹⁸⁸ show the landmark events in Manappuram and his thoughts on developmental plans for Manappuram. The diary notes recollect his friends who took part in the activities along with him at Manappuram. It also reveals the correspondence between him and others on development schemes for Manappuram and glimpses of new initiatives like the *Manappuram News*, an evening daily started from Valappad.¹⁸⁹ Apart from these, a fascinating find was a map from V.S. Keraleeyan's collection. The map seems modern, drawn professionally and it has longitudes and latitudes marked on it. It outlines Manappuram from Chetuva to Kothaparamb with boundaries on the Arabian Sea, Canoly¹⁹⁰ Canal and Chetuva estuary. It seems a copy of certain portions from the colonial map of Ponnani Taluk (south Malabar) under the British.¹⁹¹ However, it is not an exact replica of the colonial map, but separately drawn

¹⁸⁷ Manappuram Kalasamithi, was a cultural collective which was active in the 1950s. The footer shows that the drama played by Manappuram Kalasamithi received the best drama award in 1965 in the drama fest.

¹⁸⁸ V.S. Keraleeyan (1911-1990), a famous public figure, social activist, and media person started the *Manappuram Times*.

¹⁸⁹ The researcher found three diaries of V.S. Keraleeyan from his personal collection for the years 1974, 1982, and 1984. Other diaries could not be found. The notes in the diary show the Foundation Stone Day of Chetuva Bridge on 16 July 1982. He also shares his thoughts on the development of the Chetuva Port, and the possibility of research on oil deposits in the sea with the help of gulf migrants. The correspondence between him and others reveals the possibility of placing regulators in Canoly Canal at Chetuva and Vallivattom, the two ends of Manappuram. It also notes that there was another newspaper called *Manappuram News* started by Davis C. Antony after *Manappuram Times* stopped printing.

¹⁹⁰ Canoly Canal is a connection of water sources like small rivers and streams from Kannur to Kochi made by Canoly Saipu. H.V. Connolly was district collector of Malabar from 1841 to 1855. Canoly canal was named after him. Canoly is the local version of Connolly. It was made during the colonial period for the purpose of easy water transportation. Canoly Canal is the eastern boundary of the Manappuram. The Canal is usually known as Canoly Canal by people and it is as such marked in popular books and magazines. Therefore, I use Canoly Canal.

¹⁹¹ The colonial map is titled *Ponnani Taluk* (Sheet 2, I had taken a photo of the map from Kozhikode regional archives on 15.06.2011). It is "Helio-Zincographed at the central survey office Madras 1930" (first published in 1917).

and titled, “CHAITWA¹⁹² MANAPPURAM MAP”, without specifying the date or author.

It is a personal contemplation of the region and its manifestation in an intimate space. They bring the region into their private space or extend the manifestation into their secret desires. Such creative enterprises have precisely been done for personal consumption of aesthetics. The region expresses as aesthetics and manifesting the region is a self-enjoyment activity. Therefore, region and its manifestation are certainly a pleasure. So, the region becomes an erotic (object/subject) which emerges from the meditative space. However, the people who creatively manifest the region in their private lives also engage with other visible expressions in contrary to their tiny beautiful personal space. Therefore, it seems a voyage between the pleasant cacophony and tranquil depth of silence. However, it complicates the libidinal economy¹⁹³ because its personal creativity constitutes a communitarian commitment as well. Therefore, here creativity seems a charming politics apart from the personal pleasure.

It manifests through everyday expressions like soliloquy/interior monologue, conversation, and (public) speech among the common people and public figures,¹⁹⁴ similarly through creativity in the intimate space. For outsiders, Manappuram might be merely a common name for an area or a colloquial word for a place.¹⁹⁵ But for the people of Manappuram, it is a name that

¹⁹²They have titled the map “Chaitwa Manappuram Map”. People use the name Manappuram generally but contextually use Chetuva Manappuram. This choice of title is surprising. The colonial records usually use the word Chetuva. V.S. Keraleeyan perhaps needed a name which expressed its oldness. Manappuram is an old name, “It has been used for centuries,” Thadikkaran, personal interview. The map seems a historical artefact. Rahman Set (who runs a local daily and is part of many platforms in the name of Manappuram) observed, “Chetwa or Chatwa the name has emerged from the Arabic word for river shore”. Rahman Set, personal interview, 09.01.2012.

¹⁹³ Gean-Francois Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy* (New York: Continuum, 2004)

¹⁹⁴ Chandrasekaran, Thadikkaran, and Ramadas, personal interviews.

¹⁹⁵ “Manappuram is a common name for this area that lies between Chetuva and Aala...Manappuram is a colloquial word for this place, like the name for every other place”, Joseph, personal interview, 12.01.2013.

generates pride,¹⁹⁶ an emotional sensation, self-respect, and supportive energy.¹⁹⁷ They think that this place has an aura and a unique individuality.¹⁹⁸ It is a passion, a spirited feeling,¹⁹⁹ perhaps like the possession of a “spirit”. Such we-feeling²⁰⁰ among them brings a consciousness of cohesion in their mind;²⁰¹ it is like a small country.²⁰² It appears as memory and nostalgia as well. It seems Manappuram is an aesthetic²⁰³ and a secret desire in their intimate space.

Many times, people recognise the region from its name, Manappuram. This means that the understanding of the region starts from the name. But sometimes the region is realised through the name of objects and through the names of shops. Even though the region’s entry through the experience of material – like a beedi ²⁰⁴ or shop – does not necessarily offer (quite contrary to the concrete existence of those materials) a region with a boundary, here it is unmeasured and unbounded. Therefore, it is indeed the region that is a space that seems to appear infinite. Then it slowly develops through its details, like boundaries, in everyday conversation and rumination that suggest that the contour of a region might make it bounded. However, there is perhaps no concrete boundary due to the puzzles within the mental map.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁶ Ajayagosh, Vaidhyar, and Peethambaran, personal interviews.

¹⁹⁷ Peethambaran, personal interview.

¹⁹⁸ Varghese Mechery, personal interview, 04.05.2012.

¹⁹⁹ “We have maintained Manappuram within us, as a passion, a spirit. We drew this passion for the region from the former generation,” Thadikkaran, personal interview.

²⁰⁰ “We usually introduce ourselves as being from Manappuram. We always maintain a ‘we’ feeling, and hold a group challenge when we go for trips or to participate in competition etc.” Thadikkaran, personal interview.

²⁰¹ Personal interviews with V.A.H. Valappad (01.02.2013) and Chandrasekaran (12.01.2016).

²⁰² “It is like a small, separate country; almost like an isolated island and seems like a gathering that is always present in people’s mind”, Chandrasekaran, personal interview.

²⁰³ “This *pradesh* (region) which lies between Chetuva and Aala has the sea as the boundary in the west and the river in the east. This place looks very beautiful with its geographical peculiarities. The journey across Manappuram puts us in a joyful mood”, Thadikkaran, personal interview.

²⁰⁴ Beedi is a kind of cheap local cigarette used by common people all across Kerala. It was the popular form of inhaling tobacco until the advent of the cigarette.

²⁰⁵ The people in Manappuram share a mental map which maintains the boundary of Manappuram between Chetuva and Aala.

2. Manifestation and its Complications

The manifestation of the region is complicated in the context of the use of the name of the region by capitalist enterprises. This came up during the discussion on the name of Manappuram Finance.²⁰⁶ People's approach towards such naming seems complex. Jose Thadikkaran responded:

Initially, we felt that the naming of Manappuram Bank was inappropriate. We felt that such naming reduced the image/idea of Manappuram into the name of a blade company.²⁰⁷ But later the feeling of dissent disappeared when Manappuram Finance became instrumental in spreading the name of the region to the whole of India when it started branches across India.²⁰⁸

Many of them do not object to the name of the region being used by anyone,²⁰⁹ even for economic enterprise.²¹⁰ They feel that people have the freedom to use the name and it is quite normal since it is a part of their consciousness.²¹¹ It also provides the opportunity to publicise the region to other people unaware of its existence and to places where the region is unknown without putting in any particular effort.²¹²

²⁰⁶ Manappuram Finance is a non-banking financial company from Manappuram that has branches across India.

²⁰⁷ People usually call private money lending firms as blade companies across Kerala because of their high-interest rates and conditions which can easily lead to people losing their pledge. Here they consider gold loan also as a kind of money lending.

²⁰⁸ Thadikkaran, personal interview.

²⁰⁹ See personal interviews with Sajay Vayanappillil (12.01.2013) and E.G. Jinan (13.01.2012).

²¹⁰ There is a Manappuram Cooperative Society other than the Manappuram Finance. The former has its head office at Perinjanam/Chenthappinni. Vayanappillil, personal interview.

²¹¹ "There is no problem in anyone using the name of the region. I don't object to that. We have freedom in our country to do that. And people will continue to use it even tomorrow. It seems a part of the historical process and normal consciousness", Balachandran Vadakkedath, personal interview, 03.05.2012.

²¹² Vadakkedath, personal interview.

But dissent arises if the name is used for marketing²¹³ especially, for profit-marketing. Meera Bhai expressed:

When they use the name of the region for capital investment, they would be thinking about the impression it would create among people and making a profit out of that. I do not feel that they are doing it for the benefit of the region... There is a vested interest here. However, I am not neglecting the truth that there are many people employed in their different branches.²¹⁴

Such trends shift expression of the region from culture (signifying self-respect, local consciousness, and unity) to market. Then, culture becomes a metaphor for the market, which is quite problematic according to some of the local people. Balachandran Vadakkedath²¹⁵ articulated this well:

The only benefit when a finance company uses the name of the region for their enterprise is that the name of the region would reach people who do not know anything about our region, Manappuram. Beyond that, there is no benefit. Some may claim that we could publicise, spread and establish the region through such naming. In fact, they use our region to extend their market. Whether the region benefits from this is doubtful. Even though it is true that their representation is of the region, the intention behind the representation is something else. Then the focus is different. Therefore, this is a problem of culture too. There are two kinds of naming that usually happens in this context. One is that the focus of naming was culture (especially in earlier times), but today the focus has changed to the market. Though they use our region, it is not for the promotion of the region, but for market promotion of their product. But

²¹³ From personal interviews with Vadakkedath and E.G. Jinan.

²¹⁴ Meera Bai, personal interview, 11.01.2016.

²¹⁵ Balachandran Vadakkedath is a well-known literary critic from Manappuram. He is also part of the think-tank of Congress Party in Kerala.

earlier, the naming was a metaphor for self-respect, local consciousness and above all unity of the region.²¹⁶

But the dissent has reduced since there are other articulations that utilise the name of the region (such as the naming of collectives and naming of events) along with market-oriented articulations. The resistance seems to be towards marketing the region for profit.²¹⁷ The region also appears as a brand name, considered one among different expressions that people apparently accept and enjoy. In a different sense, the region is indeed a product, which is a little puzzling. Naming seems to be a cultural exchange that draws meaning in their minds. Commercialising the name makes the existence of the region a mere product towards a definitive end. It questions, literally, the being of the region which suggests multiple expressions and infinite manifestations.

3. Manappuram and its Multiple Prefixes

Manappuram is often spoken with a prefix, such as Chetuva Manappuram,²¹⁸ Nattika Manappuram,²¹⁹ Aala Manappuram,²²⁰ etc. The prefix

²¹⁶ “The main problem that the trade world faces today is finding representation. The representation should be a kind of historical representation that stimulates the market. Therefore, the trade world usually uses a place or culture as the representation. That is happening today. It is not to write a history of the place, but to sell the place...They found that when there is recognition for a region, then they needed to tap into its culture for the market”, Vadakkedath, personal interview.

²¹⁷ “Along with such economic initiatives a number of cultural activities have also been named after Manappuram. Cultural platforms like Manappuram Samskriti, Manappuram Kalasamithi, *Manappuram Times* have been named so as a visible resistance against the appropriation of the Manappuram name by capitalist ventures. It is normal that everywhere there would be a fragmentation of culture; it is an automatic cultural effect that follows. Writing is one such effect. There is an anti-culture along with every culture. It is almost like a sea that flows above with an undercurrent below. We cannot see the undercurrent but only the flow above. Society exists based on these two currents. One is outside; another is inside, which opposes the former. But the overall structure consists of both where culture exists. Those waves have come because it is a cultural region. That’s why the Manappuram Bank could even appropriate the name Manappuram and the same reason makes it possible for them to use such a name”, Vadakkedath, personal interview.

²¹⁸ “The older people call it Manappuram, sometimes stressed as Chetuva Manappuram,” Ajayagosh, personal interview, 12.01.2016.

²¹⁹ “People often use Chetuva Manappuram and Nattika Manappuram”, Ramadas, personal interview. Also, Vayanappillil, personal interview.

²²⁰ “It was also known as Chetuva Manappuram or Aala Manappuram,” Majeed, personal interview.

Chetuvay/Chetuva might have emerged due to the influence of colonial records. Chetuva Island was the term that was widely used in colonial records²²¹ and history books.²²² Remarkably, Manappuram does not appear as an island geographically even in the colonial period.²²³ The prefix Nattika appears after the firka division (a revenue category within a taluk in the colonial times) was instituted for implementing the statutory ration system in British Malabar during the colonial period.²²⁴ A large section of Manappuram was under the administration of the Nattika Firka in that particular period. Aala Manappuram seems to be a very recently introduced term and rarely used. Therefore, it might be the influence of the mental map; the mental map which was also influenced by the colonial discourse,²²⁵ and to a certain extent by the firka division under colonial rule.²²⁶

It seems that the name of the region continued to manifest without any change in all of these periods.²²⁷ But there was the selective use of prefixes like Chetuva and Nattika. It is apparent that island and firka are colonial,

²²¹ See Logan, Joint Commissioners' Report, Malabar Manual.

²²² Padmanabha Menon, History of Kerala and Kochirajya Charithram.

²²³ See Chapter 4.

²²⁴ "One of the changes happened when statutory ration system was implemented at that period...Nattika Firka had come into existence to implement the ration system. Nattika Firka consisted of 12 panchayats i.e. Aala, Kothaparamb, Mathilakam, Sreenarayanapuram, Perinjanam, Kaipamangalam, Edathuruthy, Valappad, Nattika, Thalikulam, Vadanapally, Engandiyoar," Thadikkaran, personal interview.

²²⁵ See Chapter 5.

²²⁶ Peethambaran said, "When we say Nattika Firka, it seems to cover the places from Aala to Chetuva. As I understand, Nattika Firka is a revenue division. The revenue division has the following structure: First district, then taluk. Firka comes under taluk." There are a few undertakings named after the Nattika Firka. For example, Nattika Firka Cooperative Rural Bank, Nattika Firka Beedi Worker's Trade Union, etc. For details, see Peethambaran, personal interview.

²²⁷ Manappuram is the term used in the letters written by the natives (subjects) in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, while the colonial officials used the term Chetuva Island. See Series files (Ernakulam: Kerala State Regional Archives). Chetuva Manappuram is the term often used in the letters of Cochin Raja. See chapter 6 for further details. The people continued their usage into the twentieth century. See *Innale* (Yesterday, 1985), a novel by E.V.G., *Ende Jeevithakatha* (My life story, 1989), an autobiography by V.K. Kumaran Master, and *Brahmasree Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar* (1981), the biography of Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar. "People constantly use Manappuram to name the region. People continued to use Manappuram even after the Nattika Firka was established," Thadikkaran, personal interview. And interviews with Ramadas, Mechery, Aasha and others.

definitive, and administrative categories. It might be for the same reason that people in Manappuram deny such categories in their day-to-day expressions and appropriate names such as Chetuva, Nattika, and Aala (places in the region) to the name of the region. It means that objective administrative remarks contextually influence the use of the name. Moreover, one could argue that such appropriation of place names as prefix not only appears to influence the region materially, but the continuing emphasis on Manappuram also maintains its abstractness.

People often pointed out that there was a change in Manappuram. They explained that Manappuram was under the Ponnani taluk in old Malabar (a part of Madras Province). Manappuram came under the Malabar district board, as part of Madras Province, and then Kozhikode district board. Similarly, earlier it was under the Ponnani taluk. Then, a new taluk emerged, that is Chavakkad taluk. At that point, Manappuram was shifted to Chavakkad taluk. When Chavakkad taluk emerged, Chavakkad Firka and Nattika Firka were under British rule.²²⁸

Manappuram was arranged and rearranged administratively in many forms, like revenue taluk, electoral constituencies, etc. at different times. Now it falls under two taluks, namely Chavakkad and Kodungallur.²²⁹ Simultaneously, it comes within three constituencies: Nattika, Manalur and Kodungallur.²³⁰ Except for Nattika, the other two do not exist in the mental map of

²²⁸ Peethambaran, personal interview.

²²⁹ “Then if we consider Chavakkad taluk, the panchayat after Edamuttam to Chetuva comes under Manappuram. But the rest of the panchayats – Elavally, Thaikkad, Guruvayur municipality, Orumanayur etc. under Chavakkad – do not belong to Manappuram. Chavakkad, the place itself, is not part of Manappuram. But Manappuram includes Edathuruthy, Kaipamangalam, Perinjanam panchayats, etc. which are under Kodungallur taluk,” Joseph, personal interview.

²³⁰ “Recently some reallocation happened in the constituent assembly. Manappuram was divided into many constituencies. Now Nattika and Valappad come under the Nattika constituency, but also includes Venginissery, Cherppu and so on, that are not part of Manappuram. Then Vadanapally went to Manalur constituency. Manalur does not belong to Manappuram. Engandiyoor is included in the Guruvayur constituency...Kaipamangalam has been included under Kodungallur”, Thadikkaran, personal interview.

Manappuram. Moreover, these constituencies not only divide Manappuram into three parts but also club parts of the region with many other places from each of the constituencies. People dislike such shuffling by the state, that there is no concrete administrative region or boundary. They are worried not only about losing the name of the region but also about the changes that would accrue to the mental map which they widely imagine would be disrupted.

4. In Search of an Ontological entity: Characterising Manifestation

People believe that this place has been called Manappuram for centuries;²³¹ the name Manappuram has existed since pre-modern times²³² and Manappuram, the region was called the same in earlier times.²³³ Many present it as a historical and old region.²³⁴ Manappuram is marked in their daily life as a place, which existed in the past or history. The elders emphasise the region's oldness with the expression of an "earlier Manappuram".²³⁵ They have their own reasons for connecting the region with history. It is very visible in Engandiyoor Chandrasekaran's delineation:

There are times when we search for our legacy and our past, and that is when we meet Manappuram. When we think of how our former generations lived, then our lone possibility is to connect with our culture, which is something we could access; which is something available in our *nadu* (region). What I mean is that we could have connected the culture only with the place. Manappuram still exists as Manappuram; we cannot possibly negate it. It is true that there is some change. However, we can understand Manappuram through an imagined standpoint from the past.²³⁶

²³¹ Thadikkaran, Joseph, Peethambaran, K.C. Krishnan, Ramadas, Ajayagosh, Ashraf, Jinan, and Vadakkedath, personal interviews.

²³² Thadikkaran and Joseph, personal interviews.

²³³ Majeed, personal interview, "In olden days, this place which lay between Aala and Chetuvay was called Manappuram".

²³⁴ "This area has been known as Manappuram since ancient times. It was even there in Tipu's time." See Ajayagosh, Chandrasekaran, and Thadikkaran, personal interviews.

²³⁵ Ajayagosh, personal interview.

²³⁶ Chandrasekaran, personal interview.

Manappuram appears as a culture in the everyday.²³⁷ It is indeed a culture that corresponds to memory here. Most of the time, memory appears as history and as the past. It signifies that the culture of memory relates to the past. But the incidents which refer to the collective past seem to be a recent past. The distant past does not seem to be widely available in their memory. Nobody recollected it except a few, based on informed knowledge.²³⁸ In contrast to the memory of Manappuram, it is thought-provoking that Manappuram “still exist”, in the present. Memory and everyday perhaps correspond, similarly complicating each other as well.

People from Manappuram usually converse about Manappuram as a sandy area.²³⁹ In C.K.G Vaidhyar’s words:

This *pradesh* (region), which lies between Chetuva and Aala is called Manappuram. People usually address this sandy area (*manalorapradesh*) as Manappuram. Outsiders also call this place as Manappuram and they address us as *Manappurathukar* (the inhabitants of Manappuram). East of us is the boundary of Kochi. The name Manappuram makes us proud. We carry it like the name of a star with pride. There is a junction called Kothaparamb on the south side of Manappuram, the whole area south of that junction became the Kodungallur municipal area.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ “It is a culture in itself”, Chandrasekaran, personal interview.

²³⁸ Balachandran Vadakkedath, personal interview, “Manappuram was once under Sharkkara Swaroopam”. Velayudhan Panikkassery, a historian, narrated, “Manappuram witnessed many wars between Cochin and the Zamorin. The Dutch were also an ally of Cochin many times. There was a Dutch fort at Chetuvay. Tipu possessed it and finally, it was taken over by the English.” Panikkassery, personal interview. The same information is available in the history written by Logan, Padmanabha Menon, and Achyutha Menon. The memory of Tipu is still present among the people, especially the information regarding roads and ponds which he built. The Dutch fort is known as Tipu’s Fort among them. The ruins of the fort still exist. From personal interviews with Rahman Set and Krishnan K.C.

²³⁹ Personal interviews with Vaidhyar, Mechery, Valappad, Pallath, Chandrasekaran, Krishnan, Ajayagosh and so on.

²⁴⁰ Vaidhyar, personal interview.

They generally delineate the region situated on this particular seashore that lies between Chetuva and Aala as Manappuram.²⁴¹ But they are quite sure that Manappuram, the word, is not merely a seashore or coastal belt. They are not willing to reduce Manappuram into its literal meaning. Krishnan. K.C.²⁴² described:

Manappuram is the usual word for a coastal belt. But I don't know if that is the word people use for coastal belts in south and north (of Kerala)? Here, we do not call the place beyond the Chetuva River²⁴³ as Manappuram.²⁴⁴ But what Manappuram specifically brings to mind is the place or area which lies between Chetuva to Aala, where we all live. I do not know how to explain beyond this.

People living from Chetuva to Aala, even when they inhabit one of the administrative villages under Kerala state, consider it as part of Manappuram or as Manappuram. For instance, Pallippuram *amsham* is a small unit of a village, but people in this area believe that they belong to the Manappuram region.²⁴⁵ The everyday expressions like conversations, rumination, and musings, etc. precisely bring up the being of the region and its boundary, its nature, its past and its culture.

In their everyday expression, there is a certain imagery that emerges about Manappuram. They find similarities in the cultural context, politics and

²⁴¹ Vayanapillil, personal interview, "This *pradesh* (region) is called as Manappuram. That means seashore...extends from Chetuva to Aala." Also see personal interviews with Ramadas, Majeed, Karthikeyan, Sasidharan, Vayanapillil, Thadikkaran, Joseph, Ashraf, and so on.

²⁴² Krishnan K.C is from Thalikulam, he is a broker who engages in petty real estate dealings in local area.

²⁴³ Chetuva River is the northern boundary of Manappuram.

²⁴⁴ The place after Chetuva River is also on the coastal belt, a seashore panchayat. It is named Kadappuram, Kadappuram is a common word for seashore in Malayalam. Similarly, there is a place near the seashore called Puthuvaipu (*puthuthayi kara vechuundayathu*, meaning newly emerged/made out of sea) after Kodungallur river/ Kottappuram puzha. Therefore, Manappuram and its neighbouring regions seem to have an interesting connection with the sea, while simultaneously having a connection with other regions.

²⁴⁵ Shashidharan, personal interview, 13.01.2016.

occupation across Manappuram.²⁴⁶ Manappuram was economically backward in the past, and in contrast, was culturally forward in the arenas of art and literature.²⁴⁷ They claim a literary and artistic legacy.²⁴⁸ It has been said that this is a place, which gave birth to artists and cultural figures like K.S.K. Thalikulam, Kunjunni Mash, V.S. Keraleeyan, Ramu Karyat,²⁴⁹ E.V.G, Chetuva Pareekutty,²⁵⁰ P. Baskaran,²⁵¹ and so on. Moreover, it provided a cultural space for them as well.²⁵² The region was also influenced by political events like the martyrdom of Sardar Gopalakrishnan.²⁵³ In short, the presence of famous personalities led the people to perceive the region as progressive in terms of art, culture and political views. Apart from the influence of the social sphere, the region has been marked by nature (the presence of the river and the sea), the emergence of the cultural environment and the progressive political atmosphere.²⁵⁴ People perceive themselves as being “very spontaneous, i.e. it becomes heated very quickly and cools down easily as if by a wave.”²⁵⁵

People who were unaware of the region were first introduced to it through objects and names of shops, and on certain occasions, they became familiar with it through events and speeches. They often learned the nuances of the

²⁴⁶ Mechery, personal interview.

²⁴⁷ See, Mechery, personal interview. “We have all kinds of progressive initiatives such as cultural, educational, art and literature, and welfare activities”, Peethambaran, personal interview.

²⁴⁸ Personal interviews with Peethambaran, Mechery, Chandrasekaran and Ramadas.

²⁴⁹ Ramu Karyat (1927-1979), was a renowned Malayalam film director from Chetuva. His film *Chemeeen* received the national award for the best feature film in 1965.

²⁵⁰ Chetuva Pareekutty (1848-1886) was a famous *mappilapattu* (a folklore Muslim song genre) writer from Chetuva in Manappuram.

²⁵¹ P. Baskaran (1924-2007), was a famous filmmaker and lyricist in the Malayalam film industry from Kodungallur. See Chandrasekaran, personal interview.

²⁵² “We have had a cultural environment supportive of poets, writers, like the film director Ramu Karyat, activists like V.S. Keraleeyan, and so on... Manappuram seems a big cultural centre, where the house of Ramu Karyat is located on the northern side and P. Baskaran’s house is on the southern side,” Chandrasekharan, personal interview.

²⁵³ The martyrdom of Gopalakrishnan takes on tones of self-sacrifice in the imagination of the common people and was a lock-up murder to the state. From personal interviews with Alli Ramadas and V.A.H. Valappad (01.02.2013). See also PhD thesis by K.V. Cybil.

²⁵⁴ Vadakkedath, personal interview.

²⁵⁵ Thadikkaran, personal interview.

name and being of the region after they engaged with certain events or gatherings, especially in the case of the women.²⁵⁶ However, there were rare cases where a few women, born and brought up in Manappuram, had not come across the term Manappuram in their childhood.²⁵⁷ Some of the women came to know about Manappuram after marriage and were familiar with Manappuram through their in-laws²⁵⁸ and events, which allowed them to educate themselves more about Manappuram by working at such events and for other public programmes.²⁵⁹ The few who were not part of public events and programmes were unaware of the details regarding Manappuram.²⁶⁰ Some of the men who were part of such collective platforms and who were from outside Manappuram were familiar with the name through some context or the other,²⁶¹ while a rare few were not familiar with it.²⁶² Therefore, such collective platforms and events seem important in the context of the region; the next section will uncover their relationship with everydayness.

²⁵⁶ “I already knew that this place was called Manappuram. But I was unaware it extended from Chetuva to Aala. I came to know such details regarding Manappuram in connection with the Manappuram Beach festival,” Aasha, personal interview, 16.01.2016. Also see, Liji Sujith, personal interview, 12.01.2013.

²⁵⁷ “I never knew this area was named Manappuram in my childhood,” Ramadas, personal interview.

²⁵⁸ “My house is at Kolazy. I came here after marriage. I heard about Manappuram, mostly from my father-in-law and mother-in-law”, Beena Ajayagosh, personal interview, 12.01.2016. But some of them, whose houses were in neighbouring regions, were already familiar with the name Manappuram even before their marriage. See Meera Bhai, personal interview.

²⁵⁹ “Initially I didn’t know that this place was called Manappuram, though my house is in Palakkad. I started hearing about it after attending public programmes”, Manjula Arunan, personal interview, 13.01.2016.

²⁶⁰ “I settled here at Manappuram because of marriage. I knew that this area was known as Manappuram. But I didn’t know much beyond that.” Liji Sujith, personal interview.

²⁶¹ “I am originally from Karanchira, the next shore after Edathuruthi. It belongs to the old Cochin state. The distance between us and Manappuram is a streamlet, a mere streamlet. We used to have breakfast at Kochi and lunch at Manappuram.” Sivan Karanchira, personal interview, 01.02.2013.

²⁶² “I am from Mullasserri. I came to Manappuram for my job. I heard about the name for the region after I reached here,” Joseph, personal interview. He had joined a co-operative bank in 1979. Now, after his retirement, he is temporarily working with the Manappuram Co-operative Society.

II. Animating Manappuram

The region also manifests in different ways other than the everyday expressions of naming (of shop and individuals), conversations, rumination et al. These manifestations are through everyday activities and the practices of collective platforms and various enterprises carrying the Manappuram name such as *Manappuram Times*,²⁶³ Manappuram Harijana Sangam,²⁶⁴ Manappuram Beedi,²⁶⁵ Manappuram Janakeeya Samithi,²⁶⁶ Manappuram Theatres,²⁶⁷ Manappuram Sisters,²⁶⁸ Manappuram Paura Samithi,²⁶⁹ Manappuram Samskriti,²⁷⁰ Manappuram Beach Festival,²⁷¹ Manappuram Social Welfare Sahakarana Sangam,²⁷² Manappuram Finance,²⁷³ and so on. These are organisations such as big and small business enterprises, a newspaper, a souvenir, a theatre troupe, a storytelling troupe, events and other collective platforms like cultural collectives/groups named after Manappuram.

This section looks at how everyday activities and practices of enterprises and collective platforms animate the region. I try to portray how everyday activities and practices make ‘live’ the manifested corporeal emergence of

²⁶³ *Manappuram Times* is a local bi-monthly newspaper begun by V.S. Keraleeyan. It was started in 1949 and stopped publication around in 1974. See Chapter 5 for details.

²⁶⁴ Manappuram Harijana Sangam was a collective platform formed against caste shaming and humiliation. See chapter 6 for a detailed discussion.

²⁶⁵ Manappuram Beedi, a small-scale local industry, used to make beedi. See Chapter 6 for details.

²⁶⁶ Manappuram Janakeeya Samiti was a cultural platform and is discussed in detail in a later footnote in this chapter.

²⁶⁷ Manappuram Theatres was a cultural collective, discussed in detail later on in this chapter.

²⁶⁸ Manappuram Sisters, a storytelling troupe, is discussed in detail later on in this chapter.

²⁶⁹ Manappuram Paura Samiti was a collective platform, discussed in detail later on in this chapter.

²⁷⁰ Manappuram Samskriti was a collective platform that published a souvenir under the same name. See Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion of the same.

²⁷¹ Manappuram Beach Festival, a carnival held in 2014, will be discussed later on in this chapter.

²⁷² Manappuram Social Welfare Sahakarana Sangam is a co-operative society that is discussed later in the chapter.

²⁷³ Manappuram Finance is a private financial company and will be discussed later on in the chapter.

Manappuram. To put it differently, how this corporeal emergence appears beyond the mere exist but is ‘alive’/‘live’ as a flourish, existence, care, craft and re-creation through everyday activities and practices of various enterprises and collectives. In addition, I look at how craft, care and recreation complicate everyday activities and practices. This section also looks at how memory and everyday connect with the animation of the region. It tries to analyse how the animation of the region and space are interlinked and how the animation of the region and space are mutually constituted in the context of the formation of the region Manappuram.

Jose Thadikkaran gives a brief account of such manifestations:

Apart from expressions like day-to-day conversations, Manappuram manifests in different ways. As we already know, V.S. Keraleeyan named his newspaper *Manappuram Times*. Similarly, we often used to go to the storytelling performed by Manappuram Sisters in our childhood. There was a person called Velayi, who had a shop where the storytelling rehearsals were held. The shop used to be situated near our school in Valappad. We used to peep into the shop to see their rehearsals, which he would normally not allow us to watch. We, the students, would imitate the gestures Velayi made while playing the drum, during our lunch break. There was a time when the feeling for Manappuram was all fired up; it was during the time of my father’s generation. At that time, there was a local theatre, which played professional dramas including N.N. Pillai’s plays. The Nataka Samithi (theatre) called MAS used to function well here. If my memory is correct, its expansion was Manappuram Arts and Sports society.²⁷⁴ Dramas used to play under the initiative of MAS at Kailas Theatre with tickets being sold for the same. My father was part of that theatre. In addition, I had often seen a beedi

²⁷⁴ There is a minor news item on Manappuram Arts and Sports Society in the *Manappuram Times* from October 1970.

called Manappuram Beedi in my childhood, even though I do not smoke.²⁷⁵

K.V. Peethambaran²⁷⁶ seems to agree with Thadikkaran:

...apart from Manappuram beedi, there was a gold loan enterprise called Manappuram Finance. Now it has developed into a private bank. There were many cultural forums/organisations that started and ended with the name, Manappuram; like Manappuram Kalasamithi, Manappuram Samskarika Kendram,²⁷⁷ and so on. And of course, Manappuram Samskriti, a *smaranika* (souvenir/memoir) that documented prominent personalities treasured by Manappuram, though they did not have the Manappuram tag attached to their name.²⁷⁸

V.A.H. Valappad²⁷⁹ and Varghese Mechery²⁸⁰ had similar views to those expressed by Jose Thadikkaran and Peethambaran.

The different enterprises and collective forums sometimes lasted for a long time or were short-lived. Some of them were well-established, while others worked intermittently. However, these are constantly emerging and manifesting at every moment of time. The manifesting circulates the name of Manappuram through various forums, and at different times, illustrating the region. Most of these enterprises and collectives do not have any connections with each other.²⁸¹ The enterprises (financial company, cooperatives societies and shops) and the collective platforms are examined to illustrate the

²⁷⁵ Thadikkaran, personal interview.

²⁷⁶ K.V. Peethambaran is a politician, who was the office-bearer of the Communist Party (CPI M).

²⁷⁷ Manappuram Samskarika Kendram is a collective platform and will be discussed later in this chapter.

²⁷⁸ Peethambaran, personal interview, 15.01.2016.

²⁷⁹ "There are different expressions of the name Manappuram for shops, cultural platforms etc." Valappad, personal interview.

²⁸⁰ Mechery, personal interview.

²⁸¹ "There is Manappuram Finance, which is famous in the financial sector. At the same time, there is Manappuram Foundation as well. Manappuram Foundation is a cultural and welfare platform started for different purposes." Valappad, personal interview.

animation of the region. Here the activities and practices of the enterprises and the collectives are classified based on their nature such as subsistence, flourish, recreation, craft and care. The concrete being of Manappuram is inclusive of the manifestation and embodied practices.

1. Subsistence²⁸²

The word subsistence is used here in the sense of a medium of livelihood and decent survival. Two instances of subsistence are exemplified here: Manappuram Tailors and Manappuram Cement Materials.

1.1. Manappuram Tailors

Manappuram Tailors is a small tailoring shop at Kaithakal centre run by Sathyadevan Thozhuthumparambil. He started it in 1998 after he had to come back from the Gulf due to illness. He named his shop after the region because:

This coastal area is generally called Manappuram; that's why we give such names. I have heard the name of the region since my childhood. This name was the first that came to my mind while I was thinking about starting a shop. I do not know the boundary of the region. However, *Manappuram desam* spreads from Chetuva to Kottappuram.”²⁸³

Sathyadevan has a wife, a son and a daughter. He learnt sewing/stitching from a tailoring shop near his house when he was ten-years-old after he completed his sixth standard. Sathyadevan explained the experience of having to start work at a young age, “It was important to learn handcraft skill for subsistence by that time.”²⁸⁴ After that, at the age of fifteen, he had gone to Mumbai for the same job in 1964 and continued there for nine years. He worked there in three shops one after the other.²⁸⁵

²⁸² Subsistence means here the way of life for a balanced livelihood that maintains the decent survival of one and his/her dependents.

²⁸³ Sathyadevan Thozhuthumparambil, personal interview, 23.12.2016.

²⁸⁴ Thozhuthumparambil, personal interview.

²⁸⁵ First, he worked in a shop owned by Dharmapalan, who was from his own *nadu*, and then he shifted to a shop run by a Tamilian. After that, he worked under a Kannadiga.

When he was working in Bombay, he joined an English night-school run by Ordnance Factory,²⁸⁶ at Ambarnath. Unfortunately, he could not continue his education because he had to leave the shop by 5 pm to attend the class. The shop owner expressed his dislike of Sathyadevan leaving work early to go to school. So, he could go to school for hardly one year. It stopped his schooling forever. He learned only to read and write English and learnt the meanings of some common words, but could not learn to speak and understand the English language. However, he learned Tamil,²⁸⁷ Marathi, Hindi and a little bit of Kannada. Then he went to the Gulf and continued to work in Sharjah for 23 years doing the same job. He went to the Gulf via Bombay by ship and reached there after five days. In the Gulf, he initially worked under Muhammad Ali from Chavakkad, and then he shifted to his elder brother's shop when he started a tailoring shop. In the Gulf and Mumbai, the payment was based on a completed piece; so, the workers used to work up to 8 pm, most of the time. On holidays, for entertainment, he used to go to see the beach and watch movies when he was in Mumbai and the Gulf. He says, "I heard that there was a collective in the name of Manappuram in the Gulf, but I couldn't participate due to the work schedule." Then he came back due to illness. He says, "Once I had high pressure and fainted in the bathroom and I came to know that the treatment offered there was very expensive when I went to the hospital. So, I came back from the Gulf."²⁸⁸

Thereafter, he started a single-room tailoring shop at Kaithakkal centre. He is the only staff in the shop. He opens the shop every day, even on Sundays. He closes the shop only if he has an emergency or needs to attend any function like a marriage. He makes pants, shirts, kurtas, and school uniforms: men's and boys' clothes. He gives the stitched clothes to another shop for making

²⁸⁶ The factory was manufacturing bomb covers for the military.

²⁸⁷ "There was a Gauthaman, a Tamil friend, who used to work with me in the shop and who taught me Tamil. I became fluent in the language by reading *Dinathanthi*, a daily newspaper which was being subscribed in the shop."

²⁸⁸ Thozhuthumparambil, personal interview.

the buttonholes and for sewing on buttons. He uses an electric machine as he used to do in the Gulf. He was used to working with a manual machine when he learned sewing and in Mumbai.

Regarding how his daily subsistence is made from tailoring, he says:

I used to get around Rs.15000 per month from stitching; I could somehow manage daily subsistence without profit or loss. I managed to provide education for my children from my savings from the Gulf. My son went to the Gulf after I returned.²⁸⁹

His son works in the fire and safety field in the Gulf and his daughter is a teacher, both of them are married.

1.2. Manappuram Cement Materials

Manappuram Cement Materials is a shop at Puthukulangara that does work on shutter slabs, rings, and so on and run by Hafsal. Initially, it was called Manappuram Slab Works. Hafsal says:

The shop was named as such to replicate the name of Manappuram which this area is generally known as. The people on the other shore of the river also call this area as Manappuram. Here, there is sand everywhere but on the other shore, it is red soil and clay. Earlier, we used to keep our materials in this sandy plain near the shop. Now lots of buildings are being constructed.²⁹⁰

The shop was started in 1986 by Abdul Rahiman and was bought by his relative Muhammad, Hafsal's father, in 1991. Hafsal says:

My father was a coolie worker in the shop. My father's wages were Rs.50 at the time. He saved money and bought the shop when Abdul Rahiman was going to sell the shop. He bought it for Rs.25000. There were ten coolie workers in the shop, and by then, their wages were 70. After he

²⁸⁹ Thozhuthumpambil, personal interview.

²⁹⁰ Hafsal, personal interview, 16.12.2016.

bought the shop, he continued his coolie work with the other workers. He looked after his family, including our mother and us three children, and managed our education, bank loan, rent, current bill, and so on out of this. He had a five-cent land which he had gotten as his share from his family.²⁹¹ And then, he built a house out of the savings from the shop.²⁹²

Hafsai joined this venture four years ago. He had joined for a degree-course after his plus-two and diploma in interior designing. But he could not continue his education because of the financial crisis in the family. His father trained him as a coolie in the field for two years and taught him how to deal with the customers. Then, his father slowly handed over the management of one of the franchisee shops which they had started at Chavakkad seven years ago. The shop at Chavakkad also has the same name. He said, “My father handed it over to me after he had the confidence that I was efficient in business.”²⁹³ He now takes care of the shop at Puthukulangara as well. In between, they bought a loading truck. Now they employ seven permanent workers besides office staff. They pay the main worker Rs.850 and Rs.750 to the helper. The shop offers material and labour for Ferro-cement work and concrete work.²⁹⁴ They either do contract or labour work or both together. They usually make a profit amounting to Rupees One Lakh per month after all the expenses; moreover, they would get forty-thousand during the off-season. Now Hafsai has started a petty house construction contract job as well. He said, “Now there is a house construction going on at Chavakkad, with a total budget of thirteen lakhs. My top-level work only went up to fifteen lakhs.”²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ Hafsai, personal interview, “My grandfather (father’s father) was not financially sound, but my grandmother’s family was somewhat in a good position. So, they got forty-eight cent as the share of my grandmother. But when the financial crisis came, they sold that property and bought another fifteen-cent of land. My father got the five-cent as his share from that property. Even my grandmother’s family was in a good position, but my father and his siblings led the life of the poor.”

²⁹² Hafsai, personal interview.

²⁹³ Personal interview with Hafsai.

²⁹⁴ Ferro-cement for septic tanks, fish tanks, water tanks, cupboards, garden ponds and so on; and concrete work on wells, pillars, overflow tanks and so on.

²⁹⁵ In the context of Kerala, these are low-budget house constructions because labour charges are very high in Kerala, Hafsai, personal interview.

The Manappuram Tailors and Manappuram Cement Materials are the means of their existence. It supports their livelihood and ensures their survival. It not only helps their sustenance but also provides a decent means of subsistence for the people. This means of subsistence stitches and moulds not only their everyday life but rather the subsistence of the region.

2. Flourish²⁹⁶

The cooperative activities of the Manappuram Spinners and Weavers Association and the financial activities of Manappuram Finance are discussed to explicate flourishing.

2.1. Cooperative(s)

Manappuram Spinners and Weavers Association

Manappuram Spinners and Weavers Association is a registered charitable trust located at Kothakulam in Valappad panchayat.²⁹⁷ It started in 1948 under the initiative of some freedom fighters, especially K.P. Gopalan, from Valappad.²⁹⁸ C.K.G. Vaidhyar was also part of the Association in the beginning. Originally, it had started as an unregistered organisation. It was taken over by the Khadi Commission and later shifted to the State Khadi Board.²⁹⁹ The Association initially did spinning, and later extended to weaving textile. Now, they have 15 spinners and 6 weavers, all from the locality. Some years ago, it closed and then reopened. The board members are from Kalamuri and Kaipamangalam.³⁰⁰ Recently they have started outlets at Triprayar and at Guruvayur. The current secretary stated, “Now we have been allowed to open outlets anywhere in Chavakkad. That means we can open outlets within the boundary of Chavakkad taluk, from Guruvayur to

²⁹⁶ Hereby flourish I mean a prosperous act which imagines a promising and vibrant hope.

²⁹⁷ It is the central part of Manappuram.

²⁹⁸ A photograph dated 9.12.1990 shows the president and executive committee at that time.

²⁹⁹ Sreedharan (ex-secretary), personal interview, 16.01.2012.

³⁰⁰ Southern part of Manappuram.

Kaipamangalam.”³⁰¹ Chavakkad taluk does not envelop the entire area of Manappuram as mentioned before. It is up to Kaipamangalam, which is not the end of Manappuram and includes other places which are not part of Manappuram. The interesting point is that some initiatives emerged with the name of the region. But the same region is not considered as an administrative category while the name of the initiative tries to invoke administrative records³⁰² as a representation of the same region. The committee tries to work within an area imagined and put together by the mental map. The ex-secretary explained, “Manappuram is a place which is situated from Aala to Chetuva in South Malabar. We selected the board to represent the entire region.”³⁰³

Manappuram Social Welfare Co-operative Society

It is a cooperative society which was formed in 2011 at Chenthrapinni. The working area covers two taluks of Thrissur district: Chavakkad taluk and Kodungallur taluk. Members of the society are from these two taluks. The society has 400 members right now. They have Manappuram as part of the name of the society, even though the working area covers places from Guruvayur³⁰⁴ to Kodungallur. Most of the branches are in Manappuram, which they envisage to be from Aala to Chetuva,³⁰⁵ but it stretches out of Manappuram.³⁰⁶ The society works for the welfare of the common people, especially in Manappuram. Most of the members of the society come from middle-class and poor backgrounds. The main activities of the society are advancing loans, providing savings accounts, fixed deposit facilities and

³⁰¹ Sreedevi (secretary), personal interview, 18.01.2012.

³⁰² A record titled *Weaver's Day book* was found from there.

³⁰³ Sreedharan, personal interview.

³⁰⁴ Guruvayur is a place situated in Chavakkad taluk, but it is beyond the Chetuva River, the northern boundary of Manappuram.

³⁰⁵ Vayanappillil (the president of the society at the time), personal interview, 12.01.2013. The director board has 10 members including the president and the secretary. The board members belong to different communities: Muslim, Christian, Hindu (1 Dalit and others Thiyyas). Among the board members, three are women, one Muslim and two Thiyyas.

³⁰⁶ Joseph, personal interview, 12.01.2013. He is a retired cooperative bank employee, who worked as a temporary staff that came in to help the secretary at the time of the interview because of his experience working in cooperative banks.

chitty.³⁰⁷ They also run a Nanma Co-operative store (retail outlet run in collaboration with Consumer Fed). They sell subsidised groceries as per the directions of the Consumer Fed. There are 3 women workers in the store, who are Nair (manager), Thiyya and Dalit.³⁰⁸ The store started in 2012. The Society also started a Neeti Medical store (Manappuram Neeti Medicals), and a Home Appliances showroom at Chentrappinni (Manappuram Home Appliances).³⁰⁹ The society has political affiliations like any other co-operative society; especially the president and the secretary are officially part of the Congress Party.³¹⁰ They do different kinds of jobs like real estate brokerage.

2.2. Finance

Manappuram Finance

Manappuram Finance is an established and registered non-banking financial institution. Initially, its name was Manappuram Bank and it was started in 1949 as a local chit-fund by V.C. Padmanabhan from Valappad; over time, the gold loan became the main activity. It was developed by his son, V.P. Nandakumar. V.P. Nandakumar resigned from his job at the bank and took over the chit business after his father's death in 1986. The Manappuram bank became the Manappuram Finance Public Limited Company in 1992 when the banking regulation act was implemented.³¹¹ When Nandakumar joined Manappuram bank, the capital was at five lakhs, business estimated at twenty-five lakhs and they only had a handful of staff. Now the business is worth over 12000 crores, with 23000 employees, 9000 crores worth assets, and 3400 branches across India. Because of Nandakumar's efforts, it became a pan-Indian company.³¹²

³⁰⁷ Liji Sujith (secretary of the society at the time), personal interview, 12.01.2013.

³⁰⁸ Prabita, Ajitha (both are salesgirls) and Rekha (manager), personal interviews, 12.02.2013.

³⁰⁹ Vayanappillil, personal interview. Also, see advertisement notice of Manappuram Social Welfare Society, 12.01.2013.

³¹⁰ Joseph, personal interview.

³¹¹ Karthikeyan (staff of Manappuram group), personal interview, 01.02.2013.

³¹² Personal interviews with Pallath and Ramdas.

Nandakumar decided to retain the Manappuram name for the finance business because of his own emotional attachment to his father and the region. He revealed, “I decided to continue using the name because my father had been running this for several decades.”³¹³ He uses the name of the region for his enterprise, his business launch pad was the region, and he built up a credible business in the region. Therefore, there is an emotional connection and the notion of credibility behind the decision to continue the name. “Because of my emotional connection with the region, we still continue our headquarters at Valappad, a rural area in Kerala. Otherwise, we would have shifted our headquarters to Mumbai,” he said. The Manappuram group runs many financial institutions as subsidiaries of Manappuram Finance. They are the following: Manappuram Finance,³¹⁴ Manappuram Jewellers,³¹⁵ Manappuram La Beaute at Chalakkudy and Valappad, Manappuram Insurance, Manappuram Agro Farms, and so on.

Manappuram Healthcare Limited, a subsidiary of the Manappuram group, runs MA care Gynaecology and Infertility Centre at Valappad and Peringottukara, Medical clinic at Valappad and Manappuram Speciality Dental Clinic at Valappad. They have started minilabs across Manappuram “with the intention of making available modern health facilities in rural areas.”³¹⁶ Manappuram Foundation is a charitable trust under the Manappuram group started as part of their corporate ethics. They implemented the Janaraksha Manappuram Arogya Pariraksha Padhathi (Free health protection programme for people), which also offers family

³¹³ Nandakumar (Managing Director of Manappuram Finance), personal interview, 07.03.2013.

³¹⁴ Manappuram Chits and Limited, Manappuram Fund limited, Manappuram Asset Finance Limited, Manappuram Gold Loan, Manappuram Insurance Brokers Private Limited are the firms under this category.

³¹⁵ Manappuram Jewellers has 10 branches across South India. Except for the one branch at Valappad, there is no other branch in Manappuram. There are branches in Bangalore and Tamilnadu. Later the name was changed to Riti Jewellery, under the Manappuram Jewellery Limited (Notice of Manappuram Jewellery).

³¹⁶ Nandakumar, personal interview.

counselling. The beneficiaries are “BPL families from Chetuva to Eriyad panchayat which covers all the places in Manappuram.”³¹⁷ They have also been running the Sarojini Padmanabhan Women Empowerment Food Security Programme from around 2010 onwards. The Manappuram Foundation provides free insurance security to 1.5 lakh people from BPL families in the coastal area. They fund a Pakal Veedu (a day-care centre for old-aged people) at Thalikulam.³¹⁸

The cooperative societies and financial initiatives offer prosperity and well-being to the people in the region. They imagine a promising future for the region by providing job opportunities and services to different classes of people in Manappuram. It projects the successful economy of the region but does not depict the grey economic areas of the region. Moreover, these enterprises produce a network of labouring classes and mutual cooperation along with a thriving economy. Therefore, cooperative and financial activities, in fact, provide opportunities for the region and the people to flourish; therefore, the region.

3. Re-creation³¹⁹

There are two kinds of recreation discussed in this context. One is the carnival called the Manappuram Beach Festival and the other is a cultural event organised by Manappuram Cultural Foundation. It shows that festivities and celebrations are significant and integral to the formation of the region and re-creates Manappuram.

3.1. Carnival

“The Manappuram Beach festival”

The programmes of the *Manappuram Beach Festival 2014* were scheduled for four days at the Kazhimbram beach. In the invitation poster for the ‘Manappuram Beach Festival 2014’, organisers wrote:

³¹⁷ Biju (staff at Manappuram Clinic and Pharmacy), personal interview, 01.02.2013.

³¹⁸ Biju, personal interview.

³¹⁹ Recreation here means enjoyment with relaxation from temporal fix and exposes an enchantment with the past.

“The wide coastal area, which lies between the Arabian Sea and Canoly Canal from Chetuva to Aala... Manappuram, where history sleeps! Yes, it is the old southern Malabar province.

The children of Manappuram, who awaken to the endless roar of the Arabian Sea, set your schedule for the 4-day conference from the date of the royal birth of Jesus. A programme brimming with human love will bridge caste, gender and religious differences. The Aala-Manappuram Beach festival is not a mere get-together. But it is an occasion to get to know each other, to become the affectionate hand that supports during a fall. It offers a great model for virtuous companionship and thus become the lighted lamp of humanity and mercy.

We start with a variety of programmes such as discussions on the beautification of the seashore and taking new steps in the area of medical service and social work on the soft sands of Manappuram, which carries the great heritage of Thrissur, the cultural capital of God’s own country. We invite everybody to the venue, the sandy plains of Kazhimbram beach, to become the wavelets of the festival, which will be conducted on sea and shore on the dates of 25, 26, 27, 28 December. Expect to be electrified with rapture.³²⁰

The news about the festival was advertised by flex, announcements, scrolls on television channels, and other posters. The venue, Kazhimbram beach, is in the southern part of Manappuram. There were three entrances to reach the main open stage where the seashore faces land. The decorated arch-shaped entrance looked like a combination of stone carvings and mural art. The first entrance “welcomed” people into the “Manappuram Beach Festival ’14”, with a board pasted with photos of public figures, political figures, film stars and artists who would be the guests at the programme. The board also had a list of the main programmes. The second entrance looked like the elevation of a traditional two-storied Kerala house. In that structure, they had put up a

³²⁰ From the Manappuram Beach Festival brochure.

poster on which was written, “The August Heritage of Manappuram (Aala-Chetuva), the Manappuram Beach Festival 2014 on 25, 26, 27, 28 at Kazhimbram Beach”. From that entrance, the first view was of a metallic *sreekolam* (gold-plated caparison) and a large decorated parasol usually used in festivals. These are ornaments used atop elephants at rituals and festivals. Nevertheless, there was no elephant in this case.

The last and main entrance that directed people to the venue had a very noticeable welcome board on which was written, “Welcome to Manappuram Beach Festival”. The entrance was shaped as if there were steps going from the two sides towards a platform made with pandanus leaf mats. The logo printed on the board and the poster at the entrance was of the horizon with a man on a boat in the sea looking at the sunrise on an island with a single coconut tree. The shadow of the sunrise falls on to both the island and the sea.

Most of the programmes were held in the evenings. Every day, people including men, women, children and the old-aged would crowd the venue irrespective of caste, class, or religion. There were different programmes/items such as various shows (flower shows, pet and fish shows, fruit and agricultural exhibitions), food festival, kids’ amusement park, journey (short helicopter ride, sea voyage, horse and camel riding), cultural programmes (musical concert by the Thamarassery music band and Thattakam western band, and dance performances), fireworks, and sports contests (Mr. Kerala Body-Building Contest and Women’s Volleyball). There was a medical camp, and medicines were distributed as part of the festival. There was another programme venerating departed poets of Manappuram, particularly Kazhimbram Vijayan and Kunjunni Mash³²¹ and a memorial for Tharanga Murali.³²² Along with the remembrance of Tharanga Murali, there was a poets’ meet where around 50 poets gathered. A cultural

³²¹ Held on 26 December 2014.

³²² Held on Friday, 25 December 2014.

conference and Ramu Karyat Memorial conference were organised on the last day of the festival. The memorial programme was held to “revive the memory of a genius who brought the name of Manappuram to the outside world.”

The festival was also notable for the event which felicitated artists, sportspersons and honoured veteran labourers who had retired from fields such as fishing, coconut tree climbing, mat weaving, beedi making, etc. Competitions were organised related to the fields that the labourers had worked in called, “The olden-times games”. The games thus organised were casting net, coconut-leaf weaving, pandanus mat weaving and fishing with tackle. The “olden” in the games were traditions quite contrary to the cultural images exhibited at the entrance. The images at the entrance, like the metallic *sreekolam* and the decorated parasols,³²³ symbolise the pooram, the temple-related festival³²⁴ and a tradition of Kerala.³²⁵ The exhibition of these artefacts appears as a symbolic representation of the festival and suggests the association of the beach festival with the traditions of Kerala.

At the same time, “olden-times games” signify a different tradition that links to a different cultural location but perhaps do not suggest a distinct tradition. It adds a new tradition, possibly imagining an equal time-space with traditions already in existence in the culture of Kerala. The horizon visualised in the logo offers a new horizon of the tradition of labour and the *avarna* world. The games are not mere games but they are related to the labour engaged in by the *avarna* castes like Mukkuvas, Muslims,³²⁶ Ezhavas, and Dalits. The games

³²³ Except the *sreekolam*, the other ornamental artefacts are used during church festivals and *nercha* festival in mosques. *Nercha* festival is usually celebrated in mosques which have *Jaaram* (tomb of the Sufi saints) as well.

³²⁴ Unlike the other rituals and ceremonies in temples, Pooram is a well-known temple festival attended by people across communities and gender. Normally, Pooram is attended by the *avarnas*, except the Thrissur Pooram, which though attended mostly by a male crowd, the women, especially the subaltern women, also attend it.

³²⁵ In fact, these artefacts of the Pooram are usually exhibited along with other artefacts symbolising heritage such as that of Kathakali, Kalari and so on in the public and cultural spaces of Kerala.

³²⁶ Most of the Muslims belong to the OBC category in Kerala. In this context, many of the fishermen belong to the Muslim community.

allowed people belonging to every caste to take part in it. In actuality, these occupations were not always associated with a particular caste, and people from different castes engaged with these. These occupations were clearly being felicitated in the carnival. Even though it offers respect to such manual occupations, it suggests a certain caste generosity pushing them to continue doing such jobs.

Manappuram Cultural Foundation

The Manappuram Cultural Foundation is located in Nattika panchayat and was started by Anil Pulikkal³²⁷ in 2010. Its area of work is limited within the boundary, Chetuva to Aala.³²⁸ It is a registered organisation with people from Manappuram, especially the youth. The collective intends to form a platform that would fully utilise the youth energy available in the cultural field of Manappuram. There are around 100 members in the collective. There are three women in the executive committee. The collective includes different kinds of people such as politicians, people who work with various community organisations and activists. It was very active up to 2012, and meetings were conducted every two months. They had a temporary office set up whenever programmes were conducted.³²⁹ The collective organised cultural events like award functions, music shows and a Cartoon Caricature Study Camp.³³⁰

³²⁷ Anil Pulikkal is a politician, he is also active in the public sphere in Manappuram. He was the panchayat president during the time of the interview. He is one of the founders of the Manappuram Cultural Foundation.

³²⁸ “We are focusing on Manappuram, which is our region, right? That means the boundary of Manappuram is in between Chetuva and Aala. So, we also focused on the same,” Anil Pulikkal, personal interview, 20.02.2013.

³²⁹ Personal interviews with Pulikkal and Valappad.

³³⁰ It was inaugurated by the film director, Priyadarsan, followed by a music show by Unni Menon, a singer. At this function, they gave the Young Business Excellency award to Jenny Antony, a migrant businessman, M.D. of V-serve group from (Chenthrapinni) Manappuram. They organised a cartoon caricature study camp for children in July 2010 with the corporation of the Kerala Cartoon Academy. The school children, numbering around 100, participated in the camp. The camp was inaugurated by the famous cartoonist, Yesudasan. From personal interviews with Pulikkal, Valappad, the notice of the inauguration of the Manappuram Cultural Foundation, and the notice of the Cartoon Caricature Study Camp.

There was another fest organised by the Manappuram Cultural Foundation. They organised the Triprayar Fest on 11, 12, and 13 November 2011. The Fest was celebrated continuously on three evenings. On the first day, a comedy show was staged with a music concert where mainstream singers like Sayanora and Biju Narayan led the performance. There was a dance performance by movie actors Remya Nambeesan, Veena and Kripa. On the next day of the Fest, there was a live comedy-show contest; ten leading comedy/mimicry troupes participated in the show. On the last day, the audience was enthralled with a dance performance by the movie star, Lakshmi Gopaldaswami, and a *thayambaka* (solo performance with drum) by an upcoming artist, Mukil P. Sunil. There was a bodybuilding show also as part of that. The inaugural day of the Fest was alluring with the presence of cine stars like Dileep, KPAC Lalitha, and Innocent. They also honoured Siddique, the famous film director of the Malayalam film industry. Politicians like MLA Geetha Gopi³³¹ and MLA P.A. Madhavan³³² participated in the honouring function. The Fest also honoured the famous Ayurvedic Cardio-Physician, Jayathilakan and prominent businessmen from Manappuram like M.A. Shanavas,³³³ C.P. Swalih,³³⁴ Noorudhin Sha,³³⁵ and Davis Edakkalathoor.³³⁶

The festival added a new popular culture of recreation and festivities in the formation of the region. It has rendered the imagination of the region simple, light, normal and it also makes the labour of imagination enjoyable. It engaged a large and common populace in the formation of the region. Festivals bring to the forefront the importance of cultural figures and their contribution to the public. It introduces or informs the cultural domain of the region to the public; it is like a slow transfusion of the cultural discourse

³³¹ Member of Legislative Assembly from Nattika at the time. She is a member of the Communist Party of India.

³³² Member of Legislative Assembly from Manallur at the time. He is a member of the Congress Party.

³³³ Managing Director of M.K. Silks.

³³⁴ Managing Director of Aasa group.

³³⁵ Managing Director of Sha advertisers.

³³⁶ Managing Director of Blue Den group.

among the public. Such a process allows the public to associate with these cultural figures, identified here as regional figures. It locates or relocates imaginations of the region. Festivals seem multiple sites of different cultures, tastes, places and times. It is a combination of performance, arts, discussions, and entertainment; multiplicities of the carnival. It is a transit space; of the mobility of the human body, animal body and machine body; of sound; of smell; of visuals where the region comes and goes, projects, eliminates and recuperates in the delight of the festival. Festival suggests a temporal pause or temporal leap beyond the temporal 'order' of the everydayness and imagination of the region. It makes the region a multitude. It exposes the enchantment of pastime, which in fact explores the past time through "remembrance of poets and artists" and "olden-times games". It allows revisiting the past and returning to the present by passing the linear temporal order of the everyday. Here one can clearly understand the momentum of the re-creation of the region by the unsettled movement of bodies, objects and forces, and unconditional flux of sensory experiences. In short, the festivities and celebrations indeed animate the region; it seems a re-creation of the region.

4. Craft³³⁷

The craft here is constituted by literary and performative creativity. There are two kinds of crafts: I analyse here literary (Manappuram Kalasamithi and Manappuram Sahityolsavam) and performative (Manappuram Sisters, Manappuram Karthika and Manappuram Theatres) crafts.

4.1. Literature

Manappuram Kalasamithi

Manappuram Kalasamithi was a collective started in 1950 which was very active during that time. The collective was started by people who were interested in writing, art, literature and performative arts. They were from

³³⁷ Craft here means the production of artistic creation and value, concerned with compassion and aesthetics.

different parts of Manappuram. For instance, C.V. Jayadevan Master³³⁸ and Deerapalan Chalippatt³³⁹ were from Vadanapally, Ramadas from Kaipamangalam, E.V.G. from Perinjanam, Trimoorthis Mash³⁴⁰ from Padinjare Vembaloor, Rahman Set and Ramu Karyat from Chetuva, Valsan Pokkanchery and Habib Valappad from Valappad, and Pushpangadan Mash³⁴¹ from Thalikulam. They were very active in the Manappuram Kalasamithi.³⁴² They used to write scripts and perform dramas on stage. Every year, they organised theatre festivals and announced a cash award for the best performance. In 1955, they organised a three-day theatre festival³⁴³. In that festival, the first prize was awarded to the drama, *Naam Manushyaranu*, (We are Humans), written and directed by E.V.G.³⁴⁴ and they also published literary books under the banner of the Manappuram Kalasamithi.³⁴⁵ In the front page of a literary work, *Nazhikakallukal* (Milestones) (1951), under the title ‘two words’ the publishers have written, “We, Manappuram Kalasamithi, submit our first collection, *Nazhikakallukal* by E.V.G, to the world of readers with the good intention of highlighting artists from Manappuram by providing

³³⁸ Jayadevan Master was a school teacher; he used to act in plays.

³³⁹ Deerapalan Chalippatt, a poet, was a school teacher.

³⁴⁰ Trimoorthis Mash was a school teacher; he was interested in folksong, *Kathaprasangam* scriptwriting and so on.

³⁴¹ Pushpangadan Mash is from Thalikulam, and was a school teacher and a tutor in a parallel college. He was part of many of the collectives on Manappuram.

³⁴² Pokkanchery, personal interview.

³⁴³ According to a note on accounts from 1956, the total amount they had spent for the festival was Rs.860. They had taken their share as Rs.170 and the donation received as Rs.690. They published the scripts and spent Rs.70 for the same and invited speakers for that festival. They spent Rs.88 on that and utilised Rs.26 to buy a gift. The note on accounts of the theatre festival organised by the Manappuram Kalasamithi on 5.02.1956 was found in E.V.G.’s personal collection.

³⁴⁴ Jinan, personal interview. The drama was published by Current Books. It can also be seen in the explanatory notes in the photo album and photos of the same drama in the albums of E.V.G. There is specific mention in the first page of *Naam Manushyaranu*, the drama script written by E.V.G., that it received first prize for acting in the Manappuram Kalasamithi’s theatre festival in 1955.

³⁴⁵ I found a copy of *Nazhikakallukal* (Milestones), a collection of stories, written by E.V.G, published in 1951 and which was the first book published by Manappuram Kalasamithi. I could not find whether they continued with their publication efforts.

them with encouragement and help.”³⁴⁶ Women also used to act in dramas.³⁴⁷ They were not only engaged in the cultural and literary programmes but were also involved in activities that dealt with the various social and pressing issues faced by the region. For example, this collective was very active at the time of the cholera epidemic.³⁴⁸

They used to conduct meetings in different places. In the initial phase, they had been gathering at Thrithalloor (north part of Manappuram). Then, they held meetings in Perinjanam (south part of Manappuram). At other times, they gathered at Triprayar (central portion of Manappuram).³⁴⁹ However, this could not continue and the group stopped functioning after six to seven years.³⁵⁰ After that, one more organisation emerged named after Manappuram.³⁵¹ They also used to meet at Triprayar and organised drama festivals. Valsan Pokkanchery was part of the new collection as well. They performed a number of dramas in 1996 and 1997. They organised a conference of poets and artists from Manappuram in 2000. Additionally, they felicitated 100 artists at that conference. That collective worked for 18 years.³⁵²

Manappuram Sahityolsavam

Manappuram Sahityolsavam (Manappuram literary festival) was an event that was organised for five consecutive years (1996-2000) under the initiative of a collective of writers in Manappuram. The aim of the festival was to locate and nurture the writing culture in Manappuram. It focused mainly on

³⁴⁶ This was found from E.V.G.’s personal collection at his home. Rahman Vadanapally, the writer, remembered the Manappuram Kalasamithi and E.V.G. He recollected, “Manappuram Kalasamithi had given the opportunity for geniuses from Manappuram to grow and develop in the ‘50s and ‘60s; E.V.G was its president.” Vadanapally, personal interview.

³⁴⁷ Jinan, personal interview.

³⁴⁸ Pokkanchery, personal interview.

³⁴⁹ Jinan, personal interview.

³⁵⁰ Jinan and Pokkanchery could not recollect the exact year.

³⁵¹ Manappuram Samskarika Kendram. See, Pokkanchery, personal interview.

³⁵² Pokkanchery, personal interview.

remembering late literary figures from Manappuram and revisited their writings and creations. For instance, the festival revisited writers like K.S.K. Thalikulam, E.V.G., S.P. Kadavil,³⁵³ V.S. Keraleeyan, and Ramu Karyat. The festival was usually organised for three to four days. The seminars organised as part of the festival consisted of discussions and studies on economic, cultural, and socio-political aspects of the history of Kerala in general and of Manappuram in particular. There was a conference that discussed the state of literature, art, poetry, drama and folklore in Kerala, one of the central themes of the festival. Prominent literary figures like M.T. Vasudevan Nair, Anand, Rosy Thambi, Akbar Kakkattil, and M.K. Sanu participated in the festivals and conferences in different years.

The Manappuram Sahityolsavam was organised from 1996 to 1999 at Triprayar. In 2000, the next year, it was organised at Mathilakam to commemorate E.V.G.³⁵⁴ E.G. Jinan, creative writer and son of E.V.G.³⁵⁵ described the Manappuram Sahityolsavam at Mathilakam thus:

There were separate sessions for novels, stories, poetry, plays, and children's literature which was scheduled over four days because E.V.G. worked on different genres of literature. The Festival was a literary solidarity of Manappuram; it aimed to bring together and encourage people who had potential in art and literature and tried to bring out that creativity from the depths of the region. We wished to organise it every year but couldn't continue.

It was a platform beyond political associations. It integrated most of the writers of Manappuram. The main organisers of the festival were Vadakkedath (a well-known literary critic) from Triprayar, Peethambaran (a politician) from Nattika, Soman Thamarakkulam (a cultural activist) from Mathilakam, and Deerapalan Mash³⁵⁶ (a creative writer) from Vadanapally.

³⁵³ A creative writer from Manappuram.

³⁵⁴ Vadakkedath, personal interview.

³⁵⁵ His focus is on children's literature.

³⁵⁶ He was the convener of the festival.

There were women present in the events of the forum, but not in the executive body.³⁵⁷ Often women would be active³⁵⁸. The platform would have to stop due to some personal limitations on time.³⁵⁹

In fact, the festival was intended to also recharge memory and revitalise the works of writers of the bygone era. Vadakkedath emphasised the need to rekindle our memory of writers, “If we considered the case of *Innale* (yesterday), the novel which presents the political condition of Manappuram during a certain period of time as the central theme, then Manappuram is the central character in the novel. Therefore, the remembrance of E.V.G., its author or someone who writes such a kind of novel is important.”

The background of the literary festival needs to be mentioned at this juncture. There was an Akam Samskarika Vedi (literary forum)³⁶⁰ that worked in Manappuram in the 1980s. Akam aimed to find people who had a cultural and political aptitude and to create a platform for them. Manappuram Sahityolsavam, in some sense, is a continuation of this. Vadakkedath pointed out that collectives like Anganam³⁶¹ and arts clubs were present in every village. He observed:

Manappuram had assimilated a rich theatre culture from such *kalasamithis* and arts clubs. Therefore, arts and literary activities developed here similar to that in other places or more than in other places. Kazhimbram Vijayan, S.P. Kadavil, P.K. Gopinathan Mash, Bappu Valappad, E.V.G. and K.S.K. were engaged in writing plays.

³⁵⁷ Vadakkedath, personal interview.

³⁵⁸ “My wife Meera was very active in the festival. And there were a few other supportive women”, Jinan, personal interview.

³⁵⁹ Vadakkedath, personal interview, “It stopped over time when I became busy with elections.”

³⁶⁰ Balachandran Vadakkedath was the chairman of the forum.

³⁶¹ Anganam was one such literary forum that shifted its headquarters from Manappuram to Thrissur a year after it started.

Manappuram also has a rich literary tradition, like the writings of K.S.K. Thalikulam, E.V.G, and P. Baskaran and so on.³⁶² Similarly, there was a commemoration committee³⁶³ for E.V.G. at Mathilakam. For two years, they organised a few events to panegyrised E.V.G. The chairman of that committee was Vadakkedath. It was begun by Hamsa Kakkassery, a Gulf migrant and writer from Mathilakam. So, the fund for that programme was sponsored by gulf migrants. Such ideas developed and actualised became the festival of the region that travelled even out of the region. Here, there is a longstanding culture of putting together collectives in the name of Manappuram.³⁶⁴

Hence, the background of the Manappuram Sahityolsavam is the prior existence of the commemoration committee and cultural forums in Manappuram. And it emerged out of the presence of writing talent, creative cultural practices and support of the migrants. Manappuram Sahityolsavam is an expression of the region. It illuminates the difference and the uniqueness of the region from other places and explicates its rich and intrinsic literary culture. However, it is also an attempt against reduction into being bounded, against the tag of being local, against parochialism, and against framing literature within the boundaries of caste, region, religion and political affiliation.³⁶⁵ For the people, Manappuram might be a particular region. The

³⁶² Vadakkedath, personal interview.

³⁶³ There are numerous and separate committees formed to keep the memory of different writers alive across Manappuram.

³⁶⁴ Jinan, personal interview.

³⁶⁵ “E.V.G. was branded the epic writer of Manappuram after he wrote *Innale* (yesterday), the novel and K.S.K. Thalikulam is often known as the poet of Manappuram. There is no doubt that people are passionate about K.S.K. Thalikulam. In Kerala, everybody is familiar with his poem, *Ammuvinte Attinkutty* (The Lamb of Ammu). So, he is not just the treasure of Manappuram. Writers and poets should not be limited within a single region or place. For example, Thakazhi, also known as the epic writer of Kuttanad, is simultaneously a world-renowned writer. Literature should not be framed within borders. If it is framed, writers would be reduced to a single place. Then it is not possible to enter the mainstream. Writers may face difficulties in reaching out to the world if they are located in remote areas. For people from southern districts, it is easier to project themselves and they probably have a support system that helps them to advertise their work. In the case of people who are reserved and hesitant, they would be limited by their location. But authors with a different style of writing manage to reach out to a wide audience. Balachandran is one such. People from different communities cooperated with organising the festival. But there were political allegations by the Marxist party that we had given its administration to the Congress Party

literary festival is an attempt of the particular to connect with the universal. Particular seems precisely a focal point to the universe as well, an entry into the world. While its form appears as particular, its content is perhaps universal.³⁶⁶

4.2. Performance

Manappuram Sisters

Manappuram Sisters, a *kathaprasangam* (story-telling) troupe was established in 1970 at Valappad and started to perform on public stages in 1971. The troupe spent a year rehearsing for the performances after its inception. It continued performing for eight years until 1978. They staged five stories – *Vidhi* (Fate), *Aparadhini* (Culprit), *Sandhyagrahanam* (Twilight eclipse), *Swargamthedi* (In search of heaven), *Thulasithara* (Stand for Thulasi) – in those eight years. They performed *kathaprasangams* not only at Manappuram but also at different places in Thrissur and neighbouring districts such as Palakkad, Ernakulam and Kozhikode. They have performed in temples, churches, and clubs and so on. The troupe included two story-tellers, *asan* (trainer), manager, and orchestra players. This troupe used instruments like harmonium, tabla, bulbul violin, flute, clarinet and even the electric guitar at times. The story-tellers in the troupe were two Dalit women – Ambujam and Ramani, who were Vettuvass by caste. The other members of the troupe also belonged to Dalit communities such as Paraya, Panan, Mannan, Vettuvan and Pulaya, except the violinist and clarinetist, who were Christians from outside Manappuram. The rest of the troupe members were from different places in Manappuram.

because E.V.G. and we were all communists, while Vadakkedath was Congress. But I am not interested in that. E.V.G. has been appropriated by one single group.” Jinan, personal interview.

³⁶⁶ “We have been putting up collectives for many years in Manappuram. But the approach of the festival is on literature in general sense”. Jinan, personal interview.

The performance of two artistes called Chingavanam Sisters,³⁶⁷ whom they had listened to at Njattuvetty temple, Chooloor (a place in Manappuram) was the inspiration behind the conception of the troupe. They were attracted to the genre of storytelling after watching the performance of the Chingavanam Sisters.³⁶⁸ The idea to start a *kathaprasangam* troupe was proposed by P.V. Velai, the *Asan*, and he discussed his plan with O.K. Velayudhan, the manager. Then they approached the girls – Ambujam and Ramani, who were 21-years and 20-years of age – with the idea. Ambujam and Ramani liked the idea and with encouragement from *Asan* who helped them, taught them storytelling and supported them, they entered the field. *Asan* and the manager told others, “If others can perform a story in our *nadu*, then why can’t we train our children, from our own region, to perform a story? The story-tellers should be somebody from the subaltern background.”³⁶⁹ They decided that the troupe should be named after the region arising out of the thought that “we do not need to imitate others.”³⁷⁰ The thought and idea were actualised through the formation of the troupe. The Manappuram Sisters performed stories that were socially relevant, which included romance and tragedy. It seems they did not perform stories from the puranic genre. Their first attempt *Vidhi* was written with Manappuram as the backdrop.

Manappuram Theatres and Manappuram Karthika

Manappuram Theatres is a theatre troupe formed by Ashraf Manappuram and Kazhimbram Vijayan in 1979. The theatre troupe performed both professional and amateur dramas across Kerala in places like Kozhikode, Manappuram, Palakkad, Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and so on. They had performed in almost all the places in Manappuram like Kaipamangalam, Chenthrappinni, Triprayar, Edamuttam, Chetuva, Vadanapally, and so on.

³⁶⁷ Chingavanam Sisters were two women story-telling artistes popular at that time. They were not from Manappuram.

³⁶⁸ Ambujam (one of the performers of Manappuram Sisters), personal interview, 02.05.2012. Ramani, the other performer, had passed away.

³⁶⁹ Ambujam, personal interview.

³⁷⁰ Ambujam, personal interview.

Their dramas were usually performed in temples and churches. Among those dramas, nine were scripted by Ashraf Manappuram³⁷¹ himself and directed by Kazhimbram Vijayan, Balan Ayyampilly, A.R. Thilakan,³⁷² and Kedamangalam Sadanandan,³⁷³ except the one which was directed by Ashraf himself. Some eminent figures in the field of theatre had worked³⁷⁴ in the backstage of Manappuram Theatre. There were many male artists from Manappuram³⁷⁵ but female artists³⁷⁶ from the region were very rare in Manappuram Theatres. Ashraf observed that the negligible presence of female artists may be due to the narrow attitude towards theatre among the Manappuram public. However, he brought in many female and child artists to the amateur theatre field.

Manappuram Theatres was active for seventeen years. By then, it had an office at Kazhimbram. However, it has not been active since 1997, after Manappuram Ashraf became unwell and had financial issues.³⁷⁷ The Manappuram Theatres does not enjoy its former status and other professional groups perform their dramas. Professional troupes are invited and they play once in two months.³⁷⁸ The public is informed of the programme through

³⁷¹ He wrote fourteen scripts for plays.

³⁷² Balan Ayyampilly and A.R. Thilakan are famous theatre directors from Kerala.

³⁷³ He is, in fact, a renowned story-teller from Kerala, but he directed one play on Ashraf Manappuram's insistence.

³⁷⁴ The lyricist was Mullanezhi, the famous poet, and the musician was Madhavan Chennamangalam.

³⁷⁵ Kannan Pallipram from Chenthrappinni, Basheer Chetuva, Trippakkulam, Kodungallur Krishnan Kutty, and so on. There were some artists from outside Manappuram that had acted in the theatre. For instance, Maniyan Menon from Irinjalakkuda. From Ashraf, personal interview.

³⁷⁶ Radhamani from Kazhimbram used to act in the theatre. Ashraf, personal interview.

³⁷⁷ "We needed a minimum of two lakhs rupees to perform a drama without counting in the cost of transport. Because of illness and financial issues, it came to a stop," Ashraf, personal interview.

³⁷⁸ Many professional troupes had been invited and had performed at the Bhavana Theatre at Valappad. Most of them were invited through his circle of acquaintances. They charge only around Rs.12,000 to Rs.20,000. Now the theatre troupe has become almost meaningless without the presence of Manappuram Ashraf. From Ashraf, personal interview.

notice and tickets are sold for the plays.³⁷⁹ According to him, the market for professional theatre has declined due to the increasing market for music concerts (*ganamela*), unavailability of female artists,³⁸⁰ and rules related to sound regulation in public spaces after 10 pm.³⁸¹ He also trains and directs the amateur drama artists near his home.³⁸²

Manappuram Karthika, another professional theatre troupe, was formed in 1996 at Chenthrappinni, with Ammas Venu as manager. He started the troupe due to his intense passion for and experience with theatre.³⁸³ He chose the name for the troupe by combining the name of the region, Manappuram with his *janmanakshatram* (birth star), *Karthika*. Manappuram Karthika is an established troupe in Kerala. They are financially well off³⁸⁴ and progressing.³⁸⁵ They have performed a total of eight dramas including *Padayorukkam* (mobilisation for war), *Amudan*, *Vagbadacharyan*, *Kuttanum Kurumbanum* (Dear boy and naughty boy), *Golden Beach*, *Ravanan*, *Kuriyedathu Thathri* and so on. Most of them are commercial successes and

³⁷⁹ There was one notice for the play “*Makkal Mahathmyam*” (Gravitas of progeny) by Manappuram Theatres being performed at the Bhavana Theatre at Valappad in Thrissur on 28.02.2013.

³⁸⁰ Female artists are now more interested in acting in television serials than the theatre because of the attractive pay package and an easier job. From Ashraf, personal interview.

³⁸¹ Ashraf recalled the good times of professional dramas, “The spectators including women and children used to come with mats and flambeau around 9 pm. They would return around 12 am.” Ashraf, personal interview.

³⁸² “There is one drama rehearsal going on that will be performed during the occasion of Shivarathri. They are Harijans. But I am confident about them. I am training them; the story is also mine, *Thazvarayile Rahasyangal* (Secrets of the Valley), a family story”, Ashraf, personal interview.

³⁸³ “I have been interested in theatre since my childhood. I also worked in a theatre troupe. In between, I went to the Gulf. But the passion for theatre called me back. If we were not interested in the theatre, there were a number of ways to make money instead of getting constantly stressed in the theatre field”, Ammas Venu, personal interview, 01.02.2013.

³⁸⁴ They have their own vehicle, a rented office and a rented house for the purpose of providing rest and refreshments to the artistes while they have programmes in Thrissur district. From Ammas Venu, personal interview.

³⁸⁵ Their budget for the first drama was one lakh rupees in 1996, but the budget for the eighth drama was five lakhs.

received awards including state awards.³⁸⁶ Well-known scriptwriters and directors³⁸⁷ from Kerala write and direct the dramas which they perform. The artists are drawn from different communities and different places.³⁸⁸ The dramas are performed across Kerala in temples, in churches, in clubs and in programmes backed by political parties. They were invited to Goa and the Gulf, but they could not go there. They present contemporary issues through mythical and historical stories.³⁸⁹ Their scripts speak about social issues such as the caste system, patriarchal domination³⁹⁰ and a few take up the subaltern perspective which seems a counter-narrative to the mainstream Hindu mythology.³⁹¹

The region is creatively reproduced through this collective consciousness of the artists. It is not only a revival of the memory of earlier writers and their work but a reinventing of the writing culture and writing style. Here literary and performative articulations of voluntary collectives are produced by memory, human creativity, and a web of regional and trans-regional linkages in an intensive fashion. These discourses not only generate textual significations for the imagination of the region but also produce contextual intersections of human relations on the soil for animating the region. The

³⁸⁶ For example, *Vagbatacharyan* performed in 1500 stages. *Kuriyedathu Thathri* received the Kerala State Award for Best Actor and Actress, *Vagbatacharyan* and *Ravanan* received the State Award for its script. From Ammas Venu, personal interview.

³⁸⁷ “Our first play, *Padayorukkam* was scripted by Dinesh Pallath, the famous serial writer, and it was directed by Njarakkal Sreeni. *Amudan* was directed by Kumarakam Regunath; then *Vagbhatacharyan* and *Ravanan* were directed by Payyanoor Murali. *Kuriyedathu Thathri* was scripted by Hemanth Kumar, and direction was by Manoj Narayanan. They are all very famous in the theatre world,” Ammas Venu, personal interview.

³⁸⁸ They belong to Peruvannan, Kanakka, Ezhava, Aashari, Muslim, Namboothiri and Nair communities. They work as porters, drivers, painters, brokers etc. in different places in Manappuram and outside.

³⁸⁹ *Amudan*, *Vagbatacharyan*, *Ravanan*, *Kuriyedathu Thatri* are mythical/mythological and historical stories.

³⁹⁰ “Our drama *Amudan* was against the caste system. *Amudan*, the protagonist is the son of Pakkanar, the character from the mythological *Parayipetta Panthirukulam* (The ten castes birthed by Parayi, the lower caste). He went to the Brahmins to learn, but they burned him. Similarly, our drama *Kuriyedathu Thatri* was against patriarchy, abuse and hypocrisy,” Ammas Venu, personal interview.

³⁹¹ *Ravanan* has been introduced as an ethical figure in their drama, *Ravanan*. He fights Raman and his accomplices to bring justice to his sister who was attacked by them. From Ammas Venu, personal interview.

writing and performance are the repertoires of the aesthetic and compassion that craft the animation of the region.

5. Care³⁹²

Care is expressed through *aadaravu* (Honour), *aadaranjali* (Homage) and *anumodanam* (Felicitation) practices of temporary collectives.

5.1. *Aadaravu* (Honour), *Aadaranjali* (Homage) and *Anumodanam* (Felicitation)

There are very temporary, fleeting collectives begun with the Manappuram name, such as the Manappuram Samskarika Kutayma,³⁹³ Manappuram Paura Samithi, Manappuram Pauravali, Manappuram Sahitya Sathass, and Manappuram Janakeeya Samithi.³⁹⁴ When they begin to function, they are

³⁹² Care is a meaningful act which is to carefully treat and consider the soul and the body (of self and other) as worthy.

³⁹³ There was a news article which communicated that the collective condemned the threat (by Sangh Parivar) against M.T. Vasudevan Nair, well-known creative writer and Kamal, the film director. The meeting was inaugurated by Balachandran Vadakkedath, and presided over by the poet, C. Ravunni. Public figures and writers like Engandiyoor Chandrasekaran, Engandiyoor Karthikeyan, E.K. Thomas, E.G. Jinan, P.N. Sujind, Souparnika Triprayar, Mani Sarang, Jose Thadikkaran, and Sivan Karanchira participated and talked in the meeting. See, *Mathrubhumi* (6 January 2017).

³⁹⁴ Manappuram Janakeeya Samiti is a collective located at Puthukulangara. It started roughly in July 2011. It has a 9-member executive committee and a total of 25 members. The organisation includes people belonging to different caste, gender and political parties. They claim that there are women members in the organisation and 5 of the women members are active. However, it does not seem to incorporate the women in their executive committee. Their president is a Muslim and a Congress Party member. The treasurer and general secretary are rebel communists, a Muslim and a Dalit. The organisation is presently working for the development of one of the places in Manappuram. The members are drawn from 4-5 wards in Thalikulam grama panchayat. They built a bus stop shelter at Puthukulangara, and on top of the bus stop, they fixed a name board saying, Manappuram Janakeeya Samiti. They conducted a free medical camp for skin diseases. They would like to organise programmes such as a seminar on diabetics and free camp for women's diseases. They wish to start a reference library. The general secretary asserts, "This is solidarity against monopoly in the health sector". A.G. Suresh, the treasurer explained about progress, development and transformation, "We want progress, but not development". He has his own definition of progress, which he expounded, "When the basic issues are eliminated, then transformation will happen and that is development. Transformation means being educated, being able to stand on one's own feet. For example, an agricultural labourer would not want to teach his children agriculture labour as a profession". For them, transformation is not only related to mere economic transformation but also addresses the cultural capital, self-respect and autonomy of the self. They have their own explanation for naming the organisation thus. Noushad remarked, "Manappuram is an old name, that's why we used the same name. The

very active and robust. But these collectives become inert later, or they regroup or re-form under a different name. These collectives usually gather for a condolence meeting to pay homage to public figures on their demise or to felicitate someone who had spent substantial labour for the manifestation of Manappuram, had written a book, gotten an award, won in the sports and arts fields or to honour veteran public figures, craftsman/labourers, and artistes.³⁹⁵

Manappuram Paura Samithi (Manappuram Citizen's Association)

Manappuram Paura Samithi is a collective contextually and temporarily put together by Valsan Pokkanchery, Bappu Valappad, Sivan Karanchira and Jose Thadikkaran. When I asked about Manappuram Paura Samithi, Jose Thadikkaran recollected:

Yes...in fact we formed that Samithi for a temporary purpose, meaning we had to organise one felicitation. So, we organised one event and we used that name. The name Manappuram is usually used here whenever we organise any important cultural programme. We also had another intention in using the name Manappuram; that no one should forget or erase the name from their memory.

The Manappuram Paura Samithi, thus, emerged for one event to felicitate someone. After the event, they did not gather for any other meeting under the banner of the Manappuram Paura Samithi. Jose Thadikkaran commented, "If there is any urgency, we make a temporary committee. But most of the time, the name we use for the *samithi* is related to Manappuram."

name of our collective is the name of our place. Manappuram is the place situated between Chetuva and Aala. There is no politics in that name. The intention behind using the name was to protect the old harmony; and that if we use that name everybody would accept it. There was a lot of popular struggle that happened in Manappuram as well." From interviews of A.G. Suresh (28.01.2012), and Noushad (28.01.2012).

³⁹⁵ Vadakkedath observes, "Recently there are some platforms or forums called Manappuram Samskarika Samiti and Manappuram Samskriti. They are a kind of temporary set-up for book releases and to organise felicitation programmes or condolence meetings." Vadakkedath, personal interview.

Manappuram Pauravali (Manappuram Citizenry)

Manappuram Pauravali is another collective that organised the event which honoured M.A. Yusuff Ali when he received the Padma Shri.³⁹⁶ The event was organised on 28 May 2008 at the Triprayar centre. Politicians from different parties were invited and there was a cultural programme after the main function. The organising committee included people from different places in Manappuram, most of them were Ezhava and Muslim men. The executive committee included women. As part of the event, they inaugurated an office for the Manappuram Pauravali organising committee. V.A.H. said:

Manappuram Pauravali tried to connect people from Kodungallur to Chetuva and have them participate in the event. People like Rahman Set from Chetuva and P.V. Muhammed from Aala participated in the programme. Only then did it become the programme of Manappuram. People from Chetuva to Aala including women participated in the event.³⁹⁷

Valappad explained, “All these *samithis* formed and functioned in order to meet the need of the hour. If we organise one event in the name of Manappuram, it will garner popularity, meaning and importance. It becomes colourful and receives attention.”

Manappuram Samskarika Sathass and Samskarika Kendram

Manappuram Samskarika Sathass was formed in 2010 for conducting cultural activities. This collective usually gathers for condolence meetings or to pay homage when someone passes away, or to felicitate and honour someone. Sivan Karanchira gave examples of the condolence meetings held on the demise of Dr K.K. Rahulan and Vayala Vasudevan. It also meets for discussions on social and cultural issues. They had organised one event on 27

³⁹⁶ The title was given as the “Magnificent felicitation to Padmasree Usafali M.A by the auspicious Manappuram (Aala-Chetuva) Pauravali.” See, Alhind News (21 May 2008).

³⁹⁷ Valappad, personal interview.

May 2011 to honour eminent personalities from different fields in Manappuram. The programme felicitated a traditional architect, businessmen, bodybuilders, journalists, social workers, doctors, singers and artists. They commend both young and old people.³⁹⁸ There are around fifteen members³⁹⁹ (but there are no women in the collective). They belong to the Viswakarma (OBC), Dalit, Thiyya (OBC), Christian, and Muslim⁴⁰⁰ communities.

Other than felicitation programmes, the collective also scheduled the book-release of *Sneha Sandesam* by Bappu Valappad and published by Lella publications. There was a talk delivered by Prof K.U. Arunan on *Natakasahithyathinte samakaleena prasakthi* (The contemporary importance of theatre literature) during that event.⁴⁰¹ Additionally, they once collected funds to help a friend who was ill.⁴⁰² Valsan Pokkanchery and Sivan Karanchira remembered that the Manappuram Samskarika Kendram was a collective that had been active. They had organised many programmes including discussions on books and talks on current issues. A big event to honour 100 artists at the Priyadarshini Auditorium was held in 2000. Manappuram Samskarika Kendram was instrumental in bringing together different people from Manappuram; it “brought in unity among them.”⁴⁰³ The late T.C. Divakaran and the late Jayadevan Master were the main force behind the collective.⁴⁰⁴

Vadakkedath observed about these collectives, “I don’t think that they are connecting with the root of Manappuram, unlike the Manappuram Sahityolsavam.” Nowadays there is a tendency to honour business magnets

³⁹⁸ Pokkanchery, personal interview.

³⁹⁹ V.A.H. Valappad, Valsan Pokkanchery, B.K. Janardhanan, Jose Thadikkaran, P.S.P. Naseer, Bappu Valappad, Anil Pulikkal, K.K.A. Latheef, A.V. Balakrishnan, P.K. Khalid and so on are the active members.

⁴⁰⁰ Sivan Karanchira, personal interview, 01.02.2013.

⁴⁰¹ Sivan Karanchira, personal interview. Also see brochure of the event dated 24.05.2011.

⁴⁰² Valappad, personal interview.

⁴⁰³ Personal interviews with Pokkanchery and Karanchira.

⁴⁰⁴ Valappad, personal interview.

from Manappuram. For example, they honoured V.P. Nandakumar (Managing Director Manappuram groups), M.A. Yusuff Ali (Managing Director of Lulu group). However, some of the people mark their dissent with such trends, “Nowadays people are organising events on the spur of the moment under the Manappuram name for economic benefit”. However, there are opposing views on such dissent.

Yusuff Ali is an international business magnet; similarly, Manappuram finance has attained high status. Both of them have advanced the Manappuram name beyond our borders. Moreover, the literary and cultural activities are concentrated in some spaces; it does not include everybody.⁴⁰⁵

Here we can see that there is an extension of the felicitation of literary, social and cultural figures to the felicitation of business figures as well. This might disengage with the sacredness of a region that attaches itself to cultural and social icons. Thereafter, felicitation extends into the economic and political arena.

V.A.H. Valappad explained the temporary nature of these committees:

These *samithis* do not have a permanent or fixed nature. None of them is registered. At one time, somebody would organise an event for temporary purposes under the name of the Manappuram Pauravali, Manappuram Paura Samithi or Manappuram Samskarika Sadass. Next time, another event may be organised by another group.

The collectives are not consistent in their existence. They seem to exist on a floating platform where the same people gather under different names. Sometimes it is a transit space where different people gather and disperse under the same collective for different events. The *samithis* seem to start as well as end with a programme. They exist in the space of temporality. The

⁴⁰⁵ Valappad, personal interview.

nature of spontaneous collectives formed to honour, pay homage and felicitate seems impermanent. That is how the activities of these collectives possibly care for the ‘impermanent’ body, but they also care for the ‘eternal soul’, or rather they (collectives) might consider the soul itself as being ‘impermanent’. In this context, eternal and impermanence equally matter to the collectives. Therefore, care seems to arrive here as an eternal impermanence.

The honour, homage and felicitation paid/done by the collectives are the primary tenets of care. Care is the inherent desire of every being. Care not only takes into consideration the very materiality of the body or its ideal form of the soul, rather care treats the soul and body of the self and the other as worthy in this context. Furthermore, while thinking from the above insights, care not only emphasises the inevitability or irreducibility of the material body but rather it is preoccupied with the corporal absence of the being as well. Therefore, care arrives here not only by being attentive to the pragmatic purity of the self; rather it is essentially the relation of the self with the other. Care does not necessarily find the pragmatic essence of the self in this context unlike its occidental experience because the caste system, the Indian experience of power,⁴⁰⁶ prevents the relationship of the self with the other. Therefore, care certainly concerns itself with the self and the other in this context. Care perhaps defuses the distinctions between the self and the other; it would evaporate the boundaries dividing the self, the other and space that may carefully animate the region.

Apart from the perceived corporeal emergence, the region is animated through the flourishing, existence, re-creation, craft and care. The animated region exists and flourishes through various enterprises and collectives; it re-creates through carnival and festivities. It dramatically presents its crafted

⁴⁰⁶ Arun Asokan theorises Indian caste system as Brahmanic power in his unpublished paper “Brahmanic Discipline: Caste, Subject hood and question of Power”, presented at Manipal University on 9th December 2014.

aesthetics, and carefully treats its soul and body. It transgresses from its mere corporeal existence onto 'live', spirited corporeal presence.

Everydayness, one of the core concerns of this chapter, has been theorised significantly in academic discourse. Scholars have deployed substantial intellectual labour on everydayness as a fundamental of human existence. In the theorisation of Christine Thompson (1983), everydayness is a systemic process of typification of human life through daily routines, habits, customs and obligations. She delineates:

The term 'everydayness' refers to the mode of being, the attitude towards reality, which typifies our 'normal' participation in the life-world. Much of daily life is bound to the routine and the habitual, the customary and the obligatory. We live unreflectively in the everyday, easily and complacently conforming to those canons of behaviour deemed suitable by popular consensus. (67)

In *Being and Time* (2001), one of the iconic philosophical works of the 20th century, Martin Heidegger formulates this concept with critical scrutiny (149-169). He uses this concept to delineate the existence of human beings in the world, in his neology being-in-the-world. His formulation of this concept is very complex. Therefore, many readings about the Heideggerian everydayness exist in the sphere of knowledge.⁴⁰⁷ Christine Thompson argues:

⁴⁰⁷ For a few scholars, Heidegger's everydayness of *dasein* (human beings) is equivalent to *dasein*'s concern with the ready-to-hand, which means lives consist of dealing with utensils. Countering this view, Alexander Von Schoenborn argues, "Everydayness is a phenomenological construction by Heidegger of the where-from of the ontological genesis of theoretical inquiry as a mode of existence. This where-from is characterised by the fact that, within it, the understanding of Being remains wholly implicit and thus obvious. The difference between Being and beings does not become apparent and everydayness is, in this sense, an indifferent mode of existence. Because of this in-difference, moreover, *dasein* is unable to distinguish properly between the various modes of truth, especially the privative modes, and thus rests in a further indifference as to what is truly manifest and what is not" (Schoenborn 1972, 103-109).

Heidegger viewed everydayness primarily as a limitation of being, an inauthentic or fallen state in which the individual abdicates responsibility for choice in all but the most trivial matters, seeking refuge in the anonymous ‘they’. Heidegger’s descriptions of our insatiable appetites for distraction, our craving for the novel and the bizarre, and our fascination with idle talk resonate in many of the most unforgiving critiques of popular culture. For Heidegger, everydayness is omnivorous and oppressive, a barrier between human beings and their realisation of self and world (Thompson 68-69).

Henri Lefebvre and Levich are theorists who critically engaged with the concept of everydayness (1987). For them, everydayness is a common denominator of all existing systems such as judicial, contractual, pedagogical, fiscal, and police that connects and joins together all these systems. In his formulation, everydayness reproduces past by its repetitiveness. They further argued that it functions through the interrelations of two modes of repetition that are cyclical and linear in nature. While cyclical dominates in the domain of nature, linear dominates in the sphere of rational. “The everyday implies, on the one hand, cycles, nights and days, seasons and harvests, activity and rest, hunger and satisfaction, desire and its fulfilment, life and death, and it implies, on the other hand, the repetitive gestures of work and consumption” (Lefebvre and Levich 10).

In modern life, these two modes of repetitions are masked from human beings by their normalised nature. Contrary to the identical virtuality of yesterday and today, change is happening day-by-day. However, this change is pre-programmed by systems. Then he argues that modernity is a surface that covers the monotonous disposition of everydayness by offering illuminative art, fashion, events and news stories without eliminating its repetitiveness. Even the non-everyday spectacles of modernity such as violence, death and catastrophe also are conditioned to

play within a structure. “Modernity and everydayness constitute a deep structure that a critical analysis can work to uncover” (10 -11).

Here one can understand everydayness as a system that predetermines and delimits all potential transformation. However, by critically approaching the insights of these theorisations this section attempts to unearth the profound effect of everydayness on the formation of Manappuram and the possible promise in the interrelation between memory and everydayness in the formation of the region, Manappuram.

The routine of everyday and its “unreflective”, “normal participation” are complicated here with recreation, craft and care. The carnival traverses beyond the temporal ‘order’ of everyday by a temporal pause and temporal leap. The carnival allows revisiting memory and returning to the present; it is, in fact, a linear temporal shift. The crafting and its aesthetic creativity offer contemplation that bypasses the mechanical, “repetitive” routine order of everyday. The fleeting, temporary collectives propose care. The eternally impermanent might be elusive to the temporal order. One could argue that manifestation and animation of Manappuram precisely rupture the “inauthentic” and “pre-programmed” everyday anticipations of the administrative state.

Conclusion

The everyday expressions such as naming (of shops and persons), everyday conversation, rumination and everyday creativity manifest the region. Similarly, the everyday activities and practices of various enterprises and collectives animate the region. It has given flesh to the idea of the boundary, configured the regional personalities, mapped history, and portrayed a culture for the region. It necessarily draws the corporeal body of the region. It probably allows to perceive the manifested Manappuram. In short, the corporeal existence of Manappuram emerges through everyday expressions like chatter, colloquy, oratory, interior monologue, and creativities in the

intimate space. The corporeal existence becomes a corporeal presence through the flourishing, existence, re-creation, care and craft (of various enterprises and collectives) that animate Manappuram. Therefore, the region, Manappuram seems to arrive here as a material reality. Manappuram appears as a material reality precisely through the manifestation and animation of the region by the people.

Similarly, it appears as a memory as well. The region as a material reality seems quite in contrast to the region as a memory. Therefore, the appearance of the region and its corporeal presence sounds complex in this context. It arrives as memory, nostalgia for the region. The everyday ruminations and recollections and the nostalgia about Manappuram render the region as a memory. At the same time, the region as a memory that is always recollected, ruminated over and reminisced about produces the region as nostalgia in the everyday. Manappuram has been “always kept in mind” of the people as a memory that has been passed down through the generations. The memory of the region imagines that it had apparently existed in history. The region that existed in history was preserved through the memory of generations and manifested through imagination. In some sense, memory perhaps imagines a disembodied region. Therefore, memory exemplifies the region as disembodied, certainly incorporeal, contrary to the corporeal existence of the region. Manappuram here is nostalgia; something that is lost or rather imagines it as lost, therefore it also indicates as a disembodied region.

Memory draws hidden/abstract boundaries of the region through remembering and demonstrating. Here it might be insightful to untie the complexities of the region’s appearance by bringing in arguments from Sumathi Ramaswamy’s work on Lemuria (2004), where she discusses place-making and imagining; loss and disenchantment of modernity. She depicts Lemuria as “a lost place from a lost world”. She explains that it is a lost place world, “a paleo-place world belonging to a time before our own, it is no longer

part of our time and no longer at hand, and hence is lost to our present” (6). In short, it is a lost place before our world and before our time, it had “once existed but there is no more”. She argues it is a lost place made in the wake of the disenchantment of modernity. Ramaswamy adds that modernity not only obsesses with “progress and advance” but is also preoccupied with “loss and disappearance” (1). Lemuria reappears only through the imagination of its place makers. Similarly, Lemuria is no more out of their imagination; therefore, it is not possible for them to “seeing, possessing and dwelling” there in the “fabulous” continent. Place makers’ enchantment makes “it reappears as lost” (6).

Nostalgia possibly presupposes loss. Loss, in fact, is a faculty of memory. Loss sounds like a perpetual imaginative idea that convinces that there is a loss, a loss of material. The remembering and ruminating are happening in the present; therefore, memory is an artefact of the present as well. Loss and material existence are the two sides of everyday; of the present. Here loss signifies hope as well. Because the very idea of loss perhaps precedes the being of the object, being of identity, being of the region. Here loss is a present absence in the context of Manappuram. Loss mediates through nostalgia. Nostalgia on loss is probably a modern project. Therefore, loss itself may be the enterprise, of the present, and of modernity. Memory arrives here as a nostalgic production of loss and the imagination of the region seems a nostalgic reproduction of loss. Therefore, the memory and memory of the region might be an aesthetic; it seemingly manifests through language and image. Loss seems not erosion, but possibly an erotic avatar. Therefore, loss appears as a pleasure⁴⁰⁸ existing in the present, of modernity. Paradoxically, Manappuram appears to still “exist” in the present, contrary to the imaginative memory on the idea of loss. On the one hand, it suggests that the region is extant. But on the other hand, Manappuram becomes a memory without lost

⁴⁰⁸ Sumathi Ramaswamy observes, “apprehensions of loss may be a source of pleasure and hope” (8).

its physicality or without lost its physicality Manappuram became a memory; therefore, the memory of Manappuram might be not about erosion, but rather about erotic. Manappuram, the region, is a multitude with the simultaneity of historical, geographical, political, economic as well as social aspects. The region is also spiritual because it also arrives through the everyday meditative space.

Manappuram might be extant and still exist but not as a material, not as an administrative category. Moreover, it is not a lost land, and is still alive in the everyday; in the present. Manappuram might not have disappeared in erosion rather erosion has left out/created its material, the sandy stretch. Like Lemuria, one cannot see Manappuram, but unlike Lemuria, people from Manappuram could “possess and dwell” in Manappuram beyond the statist physical administrative notion. In a nutshell, Manappuram does not appear as a material or a corporeal existence. Contrarily, it remains on its material sand, which is one of the constituents, which/where they “possess and dwell”. Such a complex paradox renders it enchanting. It engages with modernity in a very complex way and in a way, it always tries to be in the present. Manappuram might not entangle with the disenchantment of modernity, or rather it conceals itself in the disenchantment of modernity. Manappuram is retrieved through memory and the everyday discourse of the region. The people “possess and dwell”, therefore belong in that retrieved region. Though Manappuram is probably not a given entity and seems not “(it is) there” as Heidegger suggests, resultantly it is possibly difficult “to be there”. Consequently, it is not a given but it always appears and disappears or rather it neither appears nor disappears. It necessitates fleshing out and retrieving Manappuram constantly through memory and the everyday. Manappuram, then, ruptures the meaning of place as we conceive it in our time.

In another sense, memory perhaps incarnates Manappuram. It may not necessarily be a recalling of the memory of something, which already exists

administratively, historically, or materially, rather it is a fleshing out of the body of the region by recollecting and ruminating. Memory might form the body of the region, which is incorporeal. This means Manappuram is possibly embodied through memory. Hence, every day and memory make the region as a corporeal presence and incorporeal absence or corporeal absence and incorporeal presence. Here, in fact, it erases the distinction between memory and material reality; or it is on the fringes of memory and material reality. Memory may transgress its boundary in the past and the present, or the idea of the past would be diluted in memory and in the present. This implies that time has probably melted down in memory. It has perhaps diluted the distinctions between the real and construct; the memory and present; the past and present, the time and space as well. Here, the everydayness and memory make the region as embodied disembodiment and disembodied embodiment which perhaps complicate the binary between the mental and material or the real and construct.

Chapter Three

Histories and Configuring Power: Discourse of Lease and the Emergence of Sovereign, Kingship and Subject in Manappuram

Introduction

Power is one of the essential elements and interesting themes of history at any temporal juncture. It also seems significant in the formation of Manappuram. In this chapter, I attempt to explore the discourse of lease to understand the configuration of power in the context of the region. And I try to elucidate how the discourse of lease produces the idea of sovereignty, kingship and subject in the context of Manappuram that interconnects colonial modernity and traditional authority. How power interrelates with ownership of land, and the fiscal and juridical system is subsumed within this framework. I try to look at how the sovereignty determines the control over the mobility of subject and object. Furthermore, I endeavour to illustrate how the idea of the native is contested in the field of power within the realm of colonial modernity and traditional authority. To uncover the intricacies of power through the discourse of lease I look at the letters of the natives (the Cochin Raja and the inhabitants of Manappuram) and colonisers (Dutch and English); and the treaties, and agreements from the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries. For that purpose, I went through archival sources⁴⁰⁹ such as the unpublished archival manuscript, *Series Files (1684-1869)*,⁴¹⁰ and published archival documents such as *Saktan Thampuran, Terenjodutha Bharana Rekhakal* (Saktan Thampuran: Selected Administrative Records),⁴¹¹ as well as *A Collection of*

⁴⁰⁹ I collected the manuscripts from the Kerala State Regional Archives – Ernakulam and Kerala State Regional Archives – Kozhikode over a period of four months.

⁴¹⁰ *Series Files (1684-1869)*, unpublished files from Ernakulum Regional Archives.

⁴¹¹ *Saktan Kerala State Archives Bulletin: Saktan Thampuran, Terenjodutha Bharana Rekhakal* (Saktan Thampuran: Selected Administrative Records), vol. I, issue 2, ed. J. Rejikumar, (Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala State Archives Department, 2010).

*Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance relating to British Affairs in Malabar.*⁴¹²

Most of the letters are the correspondence between the Cochin Raja and his officials; some are letters from the inhabitants of Manappuram, and also a few letters from colonial officials, in both English and Dutch. These letters (the letters in the *Series Files (1684-1869)* [hereafter *Series Files*] and the letters in *Saktan Thampuran: Selected Administrative Records* [hereafter *Saktan Records*])⁴¹³ were written in early Malayalam (before the standardisation of the Malayalam language). Some of the letters were in Tamil and Dutch, and a few among them were translated into Malayalam and English. Most of the letters in the *Series Files* and *Saktan Records* were from the 17th and the 18th centuries and a few were from the early 19th century.

I found 45 letters which were readable and seemed to be useful sources for my research in the *Series Files*⁴¹⁴ and 15 letters from the *Saktan Records*.⁴¹⁵ Some of the letters were very difficult to read since they were brittle and blurred. Most of the letters were dated in the *kollavarsham* (Malayalam era in Malayalam numerals in *vattezhuthu* script) and some of them were not dated. I use Perumpadappil Swaroopam or Cochin for the Princely State of Cochin/Kochi Rajyam and Perumpadappu/Perumpadappil Thampuran or Cochin Raja for the King of Cochin interchangeably, since the letters, especially by the natives, use these titles. The titles Nediyrippu Swaroopam

⁴¹² A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance relating to British Affairs in Malabar, edited with Notes by W. Logan (Madras: Superintendent Government Press, 1951). (Hereafter A Collection).

⁴¹³ Apart from the letters, the *Series Files* include treaties, proclamations, agreements, deeds and other documents. The *Saktan Records* consist of proclamations, treaties and other records.

⁴¹⁴ I collected four hundred letters from the *Series Files* and I have used 45 letters among these for the thesis.

⁴¹⁵ The letters from *Series Files* and *Saktan Records* were translated by me.

or Zamorin are used more commonly for the Samuthiri at Calicut (Kozhikode).⁴¹⁶

1. Lease and Contestation: (un) Configuring the Power – King, Subjects and Sovereign

A chronological account of the lease of Manappuram would be a good place to probe the history of the region. Achyutha Menon notes in the *Cochin State Manual*, “the Chetva Island, exclusive of Cranganore and Pathinettarayalam, was leased to Cochin for one year on a rental of Rs.40, 000 a few months before the treaty of 1790 was signed [...] lease was renewed for two years in November 1791 and again for 10 years in 1793 on the same rent [...] lease was cancelled in 1801” (135).⁴¹⁷

After the defeat of Tipu in 1792, the whole of the Malabar region, including Chetuva Island, was passed into the hands of the English East India Company. Since the English were not prepared to administer these regions, they decided to lease out these places. The English planned to lease out even Samuthiri’s country.⁴¹⁸ Consequently, they leased the island of Chetuva to Perumpadappu

⁴¹⁶ Achyutha Menon, in *The Cochin State Manual* (Ernakulam: Cochin Government Press, 1911), observes that Cochin “was originally known as Perumpadappu Nad, and the ruling family is still spoken of as Perumpadappu Svarupam. It is so called after the village of the same name in Ponnani Taluk of Malabar, which is said to have been the original seat of the family and where the coronation ceremony of the kings of Cochin used to be performed till the middle of the seventeenth century” (2). He further explains, “Nediyirippu Svarupam or the Zamorin’s family is similarly named after Nediyirippu, a village in the Ernad Taluk, and Trippapil Svarupam or the Travancore ruling family after Trippapur, a village about five miles to the north of Trivandrum” (2).

⁴¹⁷ See *Cochin State Manual*. See also “Purport: An agreement entered into between the Cochin Raja and East India Company regarding the transfer of Chetuvay for rent basis to a period of one year at the rate of Rs. 40,000”, T-5, dated February 1792, *Series Files 1684-1869* (Ernakulam: Government Press, 1968). (I have copied titles which were written on the original archival files as such as title here.)

⁴¹⁸ The *Joint Commissioners’ Reports 1792-93* (Cochin: State Archives Department, 2010) notes, “Mr. Farmer to set aside the government of the Zamorin, or at least, to break his power as well as that of the extensive gradation of Rajahs claiming under him, by letting out the country to four or five of the principal among these latter [...]” In accordance with this, Calicut, Kooremnaad, Betutunaad, Chowghat, and Ernaad alone were leased to Zamorin. Chowghat included Chowghat, Neringanaad and Carempoya. This hints that the English planned to lease out the Samuthiri’s country also. It also reveals that Chetuva was not included among those *naadus*. See *Joint Commissioners’ Report* 136.

Swaroopam (Cochin) since the Cochin Raja had been demanding it. Mr George Powney, who authorised the transaction on behalf of the Government of Madras, after the “conquest of the Island of Chetwai” by the English East India Company, permitted the first and second request of the Raja of Cochin to lease Manappuram to Cochin. Both leases were granted for Rs.40000 by the English on the condition that the Cochin Raja must carry out the “duties” for the “welfare of the inhabitants and ryots”⁴¹⁹ and must be “attentive to the cultivation and improvement of the land.”⁴²⁰

According to the treaty, Chetuva Manappuram was leased to Cochin on the condition that the lease was “exclusive of *cherical* land” (private land of rajas and chiefs. *Malabar Manual* 501, 728). The treaty between the English and the Perumpadappu Thampuram indicated that “the island Chetuva Manapooram, exclusive of the *cherical* lands of Pudeatara, Alum and Kaura, out of which the last is the Raja’s temple of Trevangecolum and the pagoda Teriparattu, the Honourable the Governor-General in Council has directed shall be leased to the said Raja for the space of ten years on the terms and conditions hereunder specified.”⁴²¹

The last lease that Cochin tried to obtain from the English⁴²² in 1793, which is referred to in these letters of natives and colonisers would explain the

⁴¹⁹ Ryot is “an Indian cultivator; peasant”. T. Ramalingam Pillai, *English-English-Malayalam Dictionary* (Kottayam: D.C. Books, 1986) 770.

⁴²⁰ Logan, *A Collection* XCIX, C, and CIV. Also see, “Chetuva Dweep Kuthakayayi Nalkiyathu Sambadhicha Kathu” (Letter regarding lease of the island of Chetuva) 19.5.966, in “Series File: 383 (1790)” 22, and “Chetuva Dweep Kuthaka Sambandhicha Vishadeekarana Kurippu” (Description regarding lease of Chetuva Island), 19.5.967, in “Series File: 383/2 (1792)” 29. Both these files are cited in *Saktan Records* and on the first lease agreement entered as T-5, in “Purport: An agreement entered into between the Cochin Raja and East India Company regarding the transfer of Chetuva for rent basis to a period of one at the rate of Rs 40000/”, in *Series Files, February 1792* 1968.

⁴²¹ Logan *A Collection*, LXXXIII, 225. See also, “English East India Companykku Malayam Pravishya Labichathu Sambathicha Rekha (Document regarding English East India Company obtaining Malayam Province), dated 19.5.967- 1791,” in “Series Files: 383/1,” *Saktan Records* 26.

⁴²² Before the lease system came into being the Nadus were “managed” by their chieftains. According to Logan in *Malabar Manual*, “During the first years of the Honourable company’s government, each Nad was respectively managed [...] by its hereditary chieftain

complexities of the lease specific to Manappuram. The letters on the lease can be divided into four kinds: the first set of letters includes the appeals by Cochin to the English to obtain the lease. The second set discusses the efforts of Cochin to get the (evidence of) consent for the lease from the inhabitants. The third set deals with the inhabitants' requests to the English to lease Manappuram to the Cochin Raja. The fourth set of letters expose court dealings; the opposition or agitation of inhabitants and other agencies against the decision of leasing Manappuram to Cochin. Furthermore, some of the letters also open up discussions on customs duty and the right of judicial administration in relation to the lease. In fact, these letters do not exclusively deal with the individual matters mentioned above; rather, all these aspects appear to be interlinked in the letters.

1.1. Consent and Dissent: Kingship and Subject

How Perumpadappu Swaroopam obtained the lease will be delineated in this section. The Perumpadappil Thampuran (Raja of Cochin) tried to make sure that he would not lose the lease on Chetuva Manappuram for any reason. Perumpadappil Thampuran applied numerous times for the lease to be granted for a third term through his office-bearers.⁴²³ He explains that if he loses the lease he would be “insulted” and “even cannot face others who are similar” to him in the future. It would be an intense blow, especially if the loss of the lease happened because he had felt this earlier when they “cancelled the lease during the last lease period”. It is visible in the letter of Perumpadappu Swaroopam:

[...] this system of management was gradually abolished. On the winding up of the first or joint commission of Bengal and Bombay officers who controlled the district during 1792 and part of 1793, a supervisor with two superintendents under him constituted the executive authority. This system remained in force till May 1796; when a second commission was sent down to execute the office of supervisors. This commission continued till Malabar was transferred from the Bombay to the Madras presidency in 1801” (625).

⁴²³ See “Series I, 352/78, List XLI, Bundle:18,” Series Files 1684-1869 (Trivandrum: Government Press, 1966). This letter was written by Cochin Raja instructing office bearers to ensure that Cochin would not lose the lease. See also “Series I, 352/64, List XLI, Bundle: 18,” in Series Files.

I have received and read the letter which you (Vamana) sent through *anjala* (old postal service) from Kozhikode. The matters such as the communication with the dewan (minister) and the *kudikal*⁴²⁴ from Manappuram regarding my lease of Manappuram, and the dewan's suggestions to produce the *ola* (letter) in the name of some *kudikal*, Airoor Kovil and so on, you had already informed me. Therefore, you have to tell Dewan Ayyannayan that though he (Dewan) already know about the good and the bad among the *kudikal* from Manappuram, he might also know that what they are saying against me is due to their envy. You should also remind him that the lease should not be lost and make sure that it is given to me as per Dewan Ayyannayan's promise. It is also important to keep the promise because it had already been decided in the terms of the discussion with him after you went to Kozhikode. The same has already been informed to the *kudikal* who were brought to Kozhikode. Moreover, tell him that though his promise has been given publicity, I cannot face my equals and contemporaries if the lease is not granted to me, or diverted somewhere else. You have to inform him in addition that I have already been insulted in front of the *kudikal* from Manappuram and the outside public when they cancelled the lease during my last lease period. Therefore, it would be a big insult if the lease were to be given to one other than me; and though I trust the Dewan, he has to take care to convince Stevens and the *kudikal*. He needs to get the consent from the *kudikal* by convincing them as well. Howsoever it is done, the lease should reach us and they should try to write the agreement soon.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁴ There is one word in Malayalam, "*kudima*" which indicates "a species of perpetual lease of land." Menon, Cochin State Manual 524. There is another word "*kudiyana*" which means "inhabitant, subject – who pays revenue direct to government, not less than one hundred and fifty thousand". Logan, Malabar Manual, vol. 11, appendix XIII, cxcvi. But the same word "*kudiyana*" means "tenants" in the *Cochin State Manual* (524). Here, in this context, he uses the word *kudikal* which might have been drawn from *kudima*, and therefore indicates inhabitants or subjects who pay tax directly.

⁴²⁵ "Purport: Instruction for the further negotiation to seem the lease of Chetua and on promise to procure officials of approval from leading ryots Aylool Thampuran and others", "Series I no 355/12 list XLII-B Bundle 20", Series File. The letter written by the Cochin Raja was addressed to his *karyakkara*, one of the office bearers.

Perumpadappil Thampuran firmly instructed the *sarvadhikaryakkar* (minister)⁴²⁶ to negotiate the lease of Chetuva Manappuram and ask for a reduction of lease amount and exemption from toll.⁴²⁷ While perusing the above-mentioned letters, one can discern that the lease of Manappuram was an issue of “prestige”; the possession of the region through the lease had social and cultural import. Perumpadappil Thampuran concludes the letter by reminding the minister to get the lease written in such a way that it would include customs duty at tolls. Cochin’s concern regarding the loss of the lease also reveals that there were constraints or oppositions to obtaining the lease.

Procuring the Consent: Effort to Attain the Lease

It is significant that it was not easy for Cochin to renew the lease for a third term in 1793. Stevens, the southern superintendent and judge on the civil case at Cherpulassery,⁴²⁸ was determined to grant the lease of Manappuram to Cochin, but by the time he received the instructions from Bombay, the lease could not be signed without the consent of the inhabitants of Manappuram.⁴²⁹ Therefore, the English instructed Cochin to produce consent letters from the inhabitants as written evidence of their approval of the lease. Consequently,

⁴²⁶ The letter which is written by Cochin Raja in a similar fashion can be found in “Series File 383/107, dated 1.2.970, (1794)”, Saktan Records; see also “Series File 1684-1869, M I, 1.2.970.”

⁴²⁷ “Purport: Acknowledges letter to enclosures including a sketch map of Chetwa Island, the lease of which including customs will be negotiated for, if order to do so - the letter contend negotiation for lease amount and toll exception”, “Series I no 357/4 list XLIV Bundle 22; date 31 Chingam 970 (1794),” Series Files.

⁴²⁸ The commissioners established “two separate courts of enquiry and justice” with the insight of “settling the affairs of the Malleam have, in view to a just arrangement and ultimate settlement of the country, and to the preservation of the rights of all the company’s subjects in the ceded countries”. The first court dealt with revenue or landed properties – the claims of the Raja and other principal land holders; the second court dealt with all “other subjects” of claim. See “A Proclamation” (1st January 1793), A Collection, XXIV 172. The Joint Commissioners noted that the court was to “be placed in charge of two superintendents, under one supervision or general magistrate for the coast [...] the superintendents to preserve the peace to administer the justice, and to justice the revenue [...]” See Joint Commissioners’ Report 207.

⁴²⁹ “Series 1, No: 354/74, List XLII-A, Bundle: 19,” Series Files.

Cochin managed to produce some letters in court, including those from Airoor Thampuran and Pazhenchery Nair,⁴³⁰ whom they considered very important.

When Cochin tried to submit the consent letters, Stevens refused to accept the letter written by Airoor Thampuran because it was not addressed to Stevens, but the Dewan of Cochin. Hence, Stevens recommended that a consent letter should be produced in the name of Airoor Thampuran and his “*kudikal*” or subjects.⁴³¹ Therefore, the Dewan suggested that Cochin should get a consent letter from “any one of Airoor Thampuran or at least from their branch of Vellangalloor”.⁴³² From this, it is possible to infer that Cochin was less confident about getting a consent letter from Airoor Mootha Thampuran, who lived at Manappuram during the time, compared to the Airoor Thampuran who stayed at Vellangalloor, which belonged to Cochin. Cochin tried to modify the letter from Airoor Thampuran in their favour. The letter seems like a counter letter to the granting of the Manappuram lease to Cochin.⁴³³ They also produced Payenchery Nair’s letters written by Payenchery Mannathaparambatha Ittythayyan Nair and Chappunny Nair “at Chetuva Manappuram” to Stevens. In the consent letter, Stevens was requested “to give” (*kodukkuka*) “Chetuva Manappuram” to “Perumpadappil Valiya Thampuran”.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ See “Purport: Send copies of certificates sent for approval from *ryots* of Chetuva, including Ayloor Kovil”, “Series 1, No: 355/15, List XLII-B, Bundle: 20,” [Series Files](#). See also “Purport: Some certificates of consent from the inhabitants of Chetuva enclosed others will follow,” “Series 1, No: 355/13, List XLII-B, Bundle: 20”, [Series Files](#).

⁴³¹ “Purport: This letter written by Cochin Raja’s agent addressed to the Raja which reported this content”, “Series 1, No: 354/69, List XLII-A, Bundle: 19,” [Series Files](#).

⁴³² “Purport: 1) acknowledges of remittance for which a receipt will be forwarded 2) Accounts with Capt. Broun not settled since some inhabitants still complain of the lease of Chetuva Island to H.H and certificates of approval are yet to be obtained from Ayloor Tampuran”. From “Series 1, No: 354/114, list XLII-A, Bundle: 19,” [Series Files](#).

⁴³³ “Purport: It consequence of the news spread that the representation of opposition would increase that 50 extra people are coming along with Airoora Mootha Thampuran’s letter and one of the Airoora Thampuran apart from the 100 representation of already produced”, “Series 1, No: 354/61, List XLII-A, Bundle: 19”, [Series Files](#).

⁴³⁴ See “Purport: Inhabitants’ letter to the English East India Company, request to give Chetuva Manappuram to Cochin Rajavu Thirumanassu”, “M-115,1180, 8.3.970,” [Series Files](#).

It seems as if the English sought a certain kind of authenticity prior to the granting of the lease. Accordingly, they stipulated that Cochin produce the consent letters as evidence. Authenticity and evidence are the two signposts of modern legality. The modern logic of authenticity is not only grounded in evidence but is mathematical as well. Therefore, the authenticity of the evidence could only be validated through a sufficient number of consent letters. Consequently, Cochin was advised to procure at least ten or twenty consent letters and it was even increased to a hundred consent letters from the inhabitants because news arrived that 50 people were coming along with Airoor Thampuran, and they came with a letter of Airoor Mootha Thampuran opposing the granting of the lease of Manappuram to Cochin.⁴³⁵ The evidence demanded by modern legality set the tone for an atmosphere of contestation among the parties to produce evidence. In fact, they “secretly” procured and produced these pieces of evidence of consent.⁴³⁶

There were different strategies planned to obtain consent letters from the inhabitants. The above letters make it clear that Stevens had suggested and Cochin Raja had attempted to procure the consent letters, especially from Airoor Thampuran, his *kudikal* and the Pazhanchery Nairs. Perumpadappu spent money as well for the same purpose. For instance, they paid off the English officials and the *pramanis* (chiefs)⁴³⁷ among the inhabitants of Manappuram like Airoor Mootha Raja.⁴³⁸ Apart from this, they gave money

⁴³⁵ “Purport: A junior Nair of Pazhancheri Tarawad Chitwa Manappuram with several others to be followed by Ayloor Tampuran and others. Mr. Stevens against the lease of these to H.H - their certificate of approval must be proved,” “Series 1, No: 354/82, List XLII-A, Bundle 19,” Series Files. Also see, “Purport: Refers to the letter to H.H. regarding the further development of the Chettuva lease, negotiations after dealing of the letter of approval from Aiyroor Tampuran addressed to Mr. Stevens and give more information on the latter point”, “Series 1, No: 359/9, List XLIV-A, Bundle: 22 (9 Thulam970),” Series Files.

⁴³⁶ “Series 1, No: 354/50, list XLII-A, Bundle: 19,” Series Files.

⁴³⁷ Logan notes that *pramani* means “chief, influential person – village arbitrators in the time of the Rajas, respectable inhabitants”. Malabar Manual, vol.11, appendix: XIII, ccxxv.

⁴³⁸ “Purport: Letters of approval from Ayloor Tampuran and others addressed to Mr. Stevens and others before the lease of Chettuva”. The letter shows that Cochin was afraid that Airoor Mootha Thampuran may change his word. Accordingly, as per the Dewan’s suggestion, they planned to give money to Airoor Mootha Thampuran; they gave money to Stevens as well, “Series 1, No: 354/101, List XLII-A, Bundle: 19,” Series Files.

to certain officials to persuade the inhabitants to give evidence. They tried to get consent letters through their own *pravruthiaras* and *karyakkaras*,⁴³⁹ officials who had been posted in Manappuram and who had houses there.⁴⁴⁰

They approached some inhabitants, including Muslims, like Kuttyali⁴⁴¹ and Moitheen Kutty for the same purpose.⁴⁴² Moitheen Kutty convinced some of the inhabitants to provide consent letters for granting the lease of Manappuram to Perumpadappil Swaroopam. He assured the Dewan of Cochin that:

I have called and advised the *kudikal* from Manappuram. They have replied to me that they do not have any issue with the lease of the country (Manappuram) being granted to Perumpadappu Thampuran and that they were forced to go against him due to pressure by Cheriye dathu Nair and Kunji Panikkar [...] I will bring the inhabitants back if they do leave

⁴³⁹ Menon 151. Karyakkara means “minister”, C. Madhavan Pillai, NBS Malayalam English Dictionary (Kottayam: Sahitya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangam, 1999), 242. Menon notes that there was a shift that happened in the system of administration in Cochin in 1762, after the expulsion of the Zamorin. It introduced a new system instead of “feudalism” and it had divided the *Rajyam* into *Kovilakattumvatukkal* or *Taluk* under *Karyakkaras* in the place of *Nadus* under chiefs. As per the new system “all administrative powers were taken away from the chiefs and vested in officers appointed by the king”. Similarly, “these *Taluks*” were “subdivided into *Pravrittis*, the unit of administration” placed under *Parvatyakaran*. Logan described the *Pravrittikaran* as “the native collector of the revenue of a *Hobali* or subdivision of a *Taluk* or district, of which there are in general form, 9 to 15 to a district. It is rather a modern term substituted for the ancient term of *Pravrittikaran*”. Malabar Manual, vol.11, appendix: XIII, ccxxv.

⁴⁴⁰ In “Purport: 1) Acknowledges remittance for which receipt will be forwarded, 2) Accounts with Capt. Broun not settled some inhabitants still complain of the lease of Chetuva Island to H.H and the certificates of approval need to be obtained from Ayloor Tampuran”, “Series 1, No: 354/114, List XLII-A, Bundle: 19,” Series Files. “Cochin seeks to get consent letters from 4 to 8 people through Annapattara Karyakkara and Chathu Menon Pravruthiara, both of whom were office bearers of Cochin at Manappuram, and Karumbayil Sankara Menon, who had one “*kuppada*” (Subjects in the kingdom referred to their house as “*kuppada*” when they spoke to higher powers like Raja).”

⁴⁴¹ There is a letter that shows that the Dewan of Cochin and others convinced Kuttyali, brother of Karukakkaran Moopan, and they hoped that he would send some consent letters from the inhabitants. In “Purport: Refers to the letter to H.H [...] regarding the further developments of the Chetuva lease, negotiations after dealing of the letter of approval from Aiyroor Tampuran addressed to Mr. Stevens and gives more information on the latter point”, “Series 1, No: 359/9, List XLIV, Bundle: 22 (9 Thulam 970),” Series Files.

⁴⁴² “Purport: Letter of Ambalathu Veetil Moitheen Kutty to Kochi Dewan Ayyannayyan regards on lease Chettuva Manappuram to Perumpadappu Swaroopam”, “M.75”, Series Files.

Manappuram if Manappuram was leased to Perumpadappu Thampuran as they threatened. Therefore, no need to wait to make the decision on the lease because of any kind of doubt as to whether they will leave here and that any complaint may emerge regarding that. I do not have any issue if you have to question me if I cannot bring back the *kudikal*.⁴⁴³

The letter shows that Kuttiali and Moitheen Kutty had influence over the inhabitants, or some of them were under their power.

The agency of these letters and the attempts of Cochin to convince the inhabitants explicitly reveal that Airoor Thampuran and Pazhenchery Nairs might have had ascendancy on the region to have had opinions on the lease. Apart from that, the Muslims might have been a discernible population in Manappuram at that time.⁴⁴⁴ The direct interaction of the Muslim inhabitants with the Raja or his representatives and the colonisers reveal this. They appear to have been *pramanis*. Moreover, it should be remembered here that *pramanis* acted as arbitrators at that period of time. They had an influence not only in the economic and political sphere but also in the social sphere.

Apart from these, there was an interesting consent letter submitted to Stevens by a group of “inhabitants” from “Chetuva Manappuratha, Pazhencheri Nattil” which requested: “If Chetuva Manappuram would be given to Perumpadappil Valiya Thampuran from respected Company, he will protect us very well. Therefore, we all request that it would be better if you give Chetuva Manappuram to him as a lease.”⁴⁴⁵ The letter was written by the following people: Karuvatta Achaman, Kanjirathare Krishnan, Ayirura

⁴⁴³ “Purport: Letter of Ambalathu Veetil Moitheen Kutty to Kochi Dewan Ayyannayyan regards on lease Chettuva Manappuram to Perumpadappu Swaroopam”, “M.75,” Series Files 1968.

⁴⁴⁴ Shaminatha Pattara, Samuthiri’s minister, also tried to get Manappuram through Moosa Vadakkan. See in “Purport: 1) H.H lease that at the instigation of Swaminatha Pattar and Ikkanda Panikkar, some ryots Chetuva have gone to Mr. Stevens to protest against its lease to H.H 2) Remittance of Rs.12,500”, “Series 1, No: 355/10, List XLII-B, Bundle 20,” Series Files. Also see “M1, Series Files_(165, 970 Kanni) – copy of letter which was written to Kizhakkemukham Sarvadhi Karyakkar”, Saktan Records.

⁴⁴⁵ M-115, 1181, Series Files 1968.

Kelu, Tachappilly Ezhuvan Kunjappan, Kadayil Mundane, Manjaparambil Konni, Edacheri Meethiyan, Aalakkatta Ammathu, Thulunadan Hydrose, Chekku, Valiya Aaliammu, Kavungal Kunjammu, Kottapuratha Kadakkodaikkava and so on; Vatanappally Kadakkodiyil, Arakatty Echakkan and others; Pallathu Aaruketty Tripran and so on; Kodyapuzha Aaruketty Kelan and Panikkaveetil Athreman. Those who did not have land had difficulties in writing letters to the authorities. But, this group of people also wrote a letter to Stevens in the context of procuring the consent. The people from “Chetuva Manappuratha, Pazhencheri Nattil” could be considered as *kudikal* (inhabitants) of Manappuram.

What piques one’s interest about the group letter mentioned above, written by “inhabitants” who introduced themselves as people from “Chetuva Manappuratha Pazhencheri Nattil”,⁴⁴⁶ is that it reveals another configuration of representation in the formation of the region. From the family names/surnames, it is obvious that they were Muslims and lowered-caste communities such as Mukkuvas and Thiyyas. Unlike the other accounts, this group letter was not an individual representation but a collective one. They appear as a collective⁴⁴⁷—formed either during these processes of discourse or were already in existence there.

There could be two motives for such a manifestation of the discourse. One could be that they were considered disrespected individuals; less worthy of respect and whose individual opinion had no value in the order of both colonial legality and within the native norms. They were possibly considered as mass/mob, and not as individuals. The mathematical validation of evidence would convert the individual to a mere number. In the context of the Census and colonial enumeration techniques, Arjun Appadurai theorises that numbering of the population itself became a tool of power in colonial

⁴⁴⁶ M-115, 1181, *Series Files*.

⁴⁴⁷ I will discuss about the complexities of this collective in detail later.

modernity.⁴⁴⁸ Therefore, they were represented as a group, mass, or mob. Secondly, a collective representation, in its “real” sense, may have been produced by the process of the legal discourse of lease, even though, the manifestation of collective is not visibly exhibited here.

Similarly, traditional authorities like Perumpadappu Swaroopam and Dewan Ayyannayan also played important roles as portrayed by the representation of the above-mentioned group in this context. The demand of Perumpadappu Swaroopam and the suggestion of Dewan Ayyannayan with regard to the consent letter and their directions to hierarchically order the consent of inhabitants, therefore, lead to the inhabitants being distributed hierarchically. In short, it renders the inhabitants into numbered entities suggested by colonial modernity; similarly, the inhabitants appear in a graded hierarchy that operates through traditional authority. Such hierarchy was possibly proposed by the native social order of caste and religion.

On the one hand, the colonial modern apparatus and legal decisions through the discourse of lease cause the authority of the inhabitants over the land to be lost. The argument of Gunnel Cederlof about the early modern Nilgiri, that shows how the idiom of colonial legal discourse reshaped and redefined colliding claims of inhabitants over land and resources into a legal grid, has certain distant similarities with this context.⁴⁴⁹ On the other hand, in this milieu, one could argue that the legal discourse might have reduced various kinds of possessions of those communities into mere land ownership in Manappuram. It would obliterate the traces of their multiple possessions. Or, they could at least emphasise their claim over the ownership of the land. This

⁴⁴⁸ See Arjun Appadurai, “Numbering in the Colonial Imagination,” *Orientalism and Post Colonial Predicament Perspectives on South Asia*, eds. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van deer Veer (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

⁴⁴⁹ Gunnel Cederlof, *Landscapes and the Law: Environmental Politics, Regional Histories, and Contests Over Nature* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019).

was because some of the *kudikal* might not have been holding the *jenmam*⁴⁵⁰ right over the land, or they might have been under different landlords at different times.

However, these communities foster a subject position by the writing of the letter which is enforced by the legal discourse. One can interpret the subject position as the subject position in the opinion-making for and against the lease, the agency of a letter, or a subject position among *kudikal* (inhabitant) and agency of consent, or being a “subject” itself. Being a “subject” indicates one’s own subject position, self (subjectifies) which means something other than objectified. However, the term subject is used in a quite different sense as well, that it is the “subject” under one ruler, and it is governed. Nonetheless, the colonial and native discourse translates the *kudikal* from “inhabitant” to “subject” of Airoor Thampuran. In brief, both colonial and native discourse transmuted those communities as “subjects” under Airoor Thampuran within the juncture of legal discourse on lease. In fact, their subject position as *kudikal* seems to be convoluted in a sense that it is problematic to translate and even to transcribe them as subjects (of Airoor Thampuran) or as something else. In addition, one could try to decipher the subject position of *kudikal* as a collective. The collective possibly relates to its representational configuration of Muslims and lower-caste communities (such as Mukkuvas and Thiyyas). That means, the configuration of the *kudikal*, the group, consisted of non-Hindu and non-savarna⁴⁵¹ communities (Mukkuvas and Thiyyas). Here the *kudikal*, the collective apparently unwrap a sign on the public in Manappuram. Therefore, one could conceivably

⁴⁵⁰ Jenmam means birth, birth right, hereditary proprietorship, freehold property. This is the Sanskrit form of Dravidian *peru* (birth, birthright), landed property of a *jenmakkaran* or proprietor. See *Malabar Manual*, Vol. 2, clxxii.

⁴⁵¹ Savarnas are people who fall within the varna system. There are four varnas - Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras as per Varnasramadharma. In Kerala, the system was slightly different and the Nairs were the Shudras. Ezhavas and Mukkuvas were generally considered as lower caste and categorically, Ezhavas and Thiyyas come under the OBC (Other Backward Caste) and Mukkuvas or Dheeveras come under the OEC (Other Eligible Caste). Kerala Muslims generally come under OBC category.

suggest that the collective there formed a public, but also that it was perhaps an *avarna*⁴⁵² public.

Moreover, the voices of women and Dalits are not present⁴⁵³ within the written representation of the *kudikal*. It indicates that they were absent; this absence from sight seems to be a reflection of the caste system where the lower caste people were considered as “unseeable” (*kandukoodathavar*). In this context, the Dalits do not visibly seem to be considered as *kudikal* in general, as they are *avarnas*. They might or might not be part of the collective (maybe even out of the discourse of lease/colonial modernity). Colonial modern modalities and native traditional authorities would not bring them into the public domain of power – juridico-political power. It might be also because they were deprived of the private domain of power-land ownership, or their ownership was possibly concealed by the traditional native authority. This restricts them from the possibility of becoming subjects – the modern, legal subject. It could be argued that they are outside the governed, which seems quite over-eroticising their subjecthood. This probably places them outside of the modern, outside of the temporal, relegated to beyond the temporal. Nonetheless, the rest of the *avarnas* became subjects, perhaps translated as lesser subjects in the juridico-political power structure.

Furthermore, it can be observed that both the order by the native ruler (Raja of Cochin) as well as the direction of the colonial officials to procure consent letters indicated the graded status of the inhabitants in the process. In fact, one can see that Cochin sought to get the consent of Airoor Thampuran primarily, whom they titled “*Thampuran*” (Raja), the most important inhabitant. Next,

⁴⁵² *Avarnas* are people outside the *varna* folder. Generally, they are the Dalits, Ezhavas, Thiyyas, Pulayas, and Mukkuvas. These were the ex-untouchable castes in Kerala. Among the untouchables there were two divisions one was unseeable (*kandukoodathavar*) and another was untouchables (*thottukoodathavar*). The Dalits in particular were the unseeable category in the context of Kerala. See, Baskaranunni, Pathonpathamnoottandile Keralam (Kerala in the Nineteenth Century), (Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya academy, 1988).

⁴⁵³ The word “Dalit” was not used for lower caste people in that period.

they tried to get the consent of Pazhenchery Nair, who was referred to as “*aavakayil okkeyum pramanamayittullavan*” (important inhabitant among chiefs).⁴⁵⁴ It was only later that they approached the *kudikal* (common inhabitant/subjects). The titles, such as *thampuran* (Raja), *pramani* (chief), and *kudikal* (common inhabitants or subjects) indicate not only their political location but also their social positions. The *thampuran* was usually part of the Samantha community,⁴⁵⁵ *pramanis* were Nair, and the *kudikal* were constituted by Mukkuvas, Thiyyas and Mappilas in this context and indicate their caste and religion which appropriated them into the social hierarchy. Additionally, communities such as Muslims, Ezhavas and others appear to have held power in Manappuram even though they were not considered as *pramanis*. This brings up the question: Why were the Muslims, Thiyyas and fisher-folk not considered *pramanis* though they had a measure of arbitrary power and land holdings as revealed by these records?

Here both political and social positions are arrived at hierarchically. It can be observed that in this context the social and the political are interconnected and are hierarchical as well. Therefore, it could be argued that both the social and the political co-constitute power that produces kingship and subjects. It is also apparent that this discourse arranges political positions according to social positions, and simultaneously, the political orders the social as well.

In fact, Cochin Raja introduced some of the inhabitants as “*okkeyum pramanamayittullavarthane*” (All are *pramanis*), though he picked out the Pazhenchery Nairs as “*vakayil okkeyum pramanamayittullavan*” (The most

⁴⁵⁴ “Purport: Some certificates of consent from the inhabitants of Chetuva”, “Series 1, No: 355/13, List XLII-B, Bundle:20,” [Series Files](#).

⁴⁵⁵ Achyuta Menon notes, “The Samantans are said to have sprung from the union of Kshatriya males with Nayar females. The caste is not indigenous to Cochin, and those who have returned themselves as such are either natives of British Malabar or are Nayar aristocrats who have of late begun to like to be considered superior to the ordinary Nayars in caste” (257). Logan observed, “The Malayali chieftains all claim to be of the Samantha caste, with the exception of one or two who claim Kshatriya rank” (264). He continues, “But they are classed as Sudras” (221). [Malabar Manual](#), vol. 1.

important among chiefs).⁴⁵⁶ Except for Airoor Thampuran and Pazhenchery Nair, the others were not mentioned in the Cochin Raja's letter. It was not possible to find individual letters written by others among the collection of consent letters. The agency of consent is classified, among the letters, as those who have a greater presence, those who have a lesser presence and those who have no agency of consent. For instance, the emphasis on Airoor Thampuran and Pazhenchery Nair is very evident. Furthermore, there were very few letters which represented the *kudikal* who belonged to the communities of Mappilas, Thiyyas and Mukkuvas.⁴⁵⁷

Deposing the Dissent: Protest against Lease

Besides, there were some protests and agitation against granting the lease of Manappuram to Perumpadappu Swaroopam (Cochin).⁴⁵⁸ Twenty inhabitants, including Pazhenchery Nair and Kottekatta Kelu Menon, travelled to Calicut to convince Stevens that they were against the granting of the lease of Manappuram to Perumpadappil Swaroopam. They said that if the English insisted on going ahead with the lease, they would leave the "*rajyam*". They even proposed to pay the lease amount themselves.⁴⁵⁹ The following day, the intensity of representations escalated quite dramatically:

The Pazhenchery younger Nair, the other *kudikal* (inhabitants), and more than a hundred people including Nairs, Mappilas and Ezhavas from

⁴⁵⁶ This I found among one of the covering letters which was written by Cochin Raja among the Bundle of consent letters that was send by the Raja to Mr Stevens. I could only find the covering letter which included one bundle of approximately 8-10 consent letters. "Purport: Some certificates of consent from the inhabitants of Chetuva enclosed other will follow", "Series 1, No:355/13, List XL11-B, Bundle:20," [Series Files](#).

⁴⁵⁷ For instance, there are possibly two letters from "common" inhabitants among these consent letters from inhabitants. These were the letters of Moitheen Kutty and the letter from a group of inhabitants from "Chettuva Manappuratha, Payencheri Nattil" mentioned earlier.

⁴⁵⁸ "Purport: H.H lease that at the instigation of Swaminatha Pattar and Ikkanda Panikkar, some *ryots* from Chetva have gone to Mr Stevens to protest against its lease to H.H", "Series 1, No: 355/10, List XLII-B, Bundle 20," [Series Files](#). Also see "Purport: The certificate of approval from Ayloor Raja of lease of Chetuva to H.H should reach in time to defeat the plot of it", "Series 1, No: 354/69, list XLII-A, Bundle 19," [Series Files](#).

⁴⁵⁹ "Purport: One Payencheri Nair and Kottekattaa Kelu Menon and some others in Chetuva protested against it lease to H.H and certificate of approval of leading inhabitants such as inhabitants of Ayloor family, etc.", "Series 1, No: 354/74, List XLII-A, Bundle 19," [Series Files](#).

Manappuram, were produced in front of Stevens at the Calicut court. About thirty people prostrated at Stevens' feet, cried and repeated the appeal that they would run away if he gave Manappuram to Perumpadappil Swaroopam. They also complained that he made them suffer during his thirty years' lease period. After listening to all these, Stevens made them leave by telling them that nothing would happen that would cause them to worry; so, they could go that day and come back the next morning. Stevens informed me once they left that it was difficult to give *sheema* against the appeal of many of the *kudikal*. If he did it for the sake of money, it would be a disgrace to him if they repeated this in front of Dangini Saipu when he came. It was heard that around fifty people had come along with a Thampuran, one among them was from the Airoor Kovilakam with the letter of the senior Airoor Thampuran. But Dewan Ayyannayan told me that he would send them back saying that Manappuram was not going to be given on lease. And he told me that he would try again for us if we could produce consent from a hundred *kudikal* and a letter in the name of the senior Airoor once again.⁴⁶⁰

Even the reassurances by the Cochin Dewan did little to appease them. When the agitators would not listen to the Dewan, Stevens himself tried to pacify and assure them that the difficulties the people had faced under the last term lease of Cochin would not be repeated. However, even Steven's words did not conciliate the people.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶⁰ "Purport: A junior Nair of Pazhancheri Tarawad Chitwa Manappuram with several others to be followed by Ayloor Tamporan and others. Mr Stevens against the lease of these to H.H - their certificate of approval must be proved", "Series 1, No: 354/82, List XLII-A, Bundle 19," Series Files. Mr. Stevens feared that this incident would be repeated in front of Mr. Duncan. He thought that if he favoured Cochin for money it may adversely affect him.

⁴⁶¹ "Purport: a) Acknowledges remittance for which receipt will be forwarded, b) accounts with Capt. Broun not settled some inhabitants still complain of the lease of Chetwa Island to H.H and certificates of approval to be obtained from Ayloor Tampuran", "Series 1, No: 354/114, List XLII-A, Bundle:19," Series Files.

Cochin also attempted to win over Kottekatta Kelu Menon, make him their ally⁴⁶² and force him to write a consent letter in their favour.⁴⁶³ But such efforts proved futile. The Cochin Dewan duly contested Payenchery Nair's demands, alleging that the grounds for Nair's disagreement were his (Nair) intention to get the "*nad*" for himself.⁴⁶⁴

Thereupon, both Pazhenchery Nair (nephew of Pazhenchery Mootha Nair) and Kelu Menon tried to convince the English that the claim and the evidence produced by Cochin were not "factual". In addition, they alleged that Cochin had given representation to "*airoora cheruthayitta oruthampuran*" (one petty *Thampuran* from Airoor Kovilakam) and "*nayarudevakayil oruthan*" (one distant relative of Pazhenchery Nair) instead of *the* Airoor Thampuran and *the* Pazhenchery Nair.⁴⁶⁵ They contended that it was a false representation by labelling it "petty" (one inconsequential Thampuran from Airoor Kovilakam) and "distant" (relative of Pazhenchery Nair) instead of original and direct representation. They probed the authenticity of the claim by arguing that Cochin had produced "fabricated fact" and "false representation". However, the English decided to give importance to the words of the elders (Airoora Mootha Thampuran and Pazhenchery Mootha Nair). Though he was a nephew of Pazhenchery Mootha Nair, Stevens told him, "I would consider the matter only if Pazhenchery Mootha Nair tells me and you can leave now"

⁴⁶² "Purport: One Payenchery Nair and Kottekattaa Kelu Menon and some others in Chetuah protested against its lease to H.H and certificate of approval of leading inhabitants such as inhabitants of Ayloor family etc", "Series 1, No: 354/74, List XLII-A, Bundle 19," Series Files. Kelu Menon strategically escaped from their attempt to convince him, and he responded that he himself was willing but it would not be fair when everyone around him opposed the idea of the lease.

⁴⁶³ "Purport: Representation by ryots in Chetwa Islands by Pazhacheri Nair, Kottekatta Kelu Menon, etc. regarding lease of the same to H.H", "Series 1, No: 354/61, List XLII-A, Bundle: 19," Series Files.

⁴⁶⁴ "Purport: One Payenchery Nair and Kottekattaa Kelu Menon and some others in Chetuah protested against the lease to H.H and certificate of approval of leading inhabitants such as inhabitants of Ayloor family,etc." "Series 1, No: 354/74, List XLII-A, Bundle: 19," Series Files.

⁴⁶⁵ "Purport: Representation by ryots in Chetwa Islands, Pazhachery Nair, Kottekatta Kelu Menon, etc. regarding lease of same to H.H", "Series 1, No: 354/61, List XLII-A, Bundle:19," Series Files.

and he added, “If I see you here again, you will be tied and dragged till you reach there (up to Manappuram).”⁴⁶⁶

The inhabitants lodged a complaint against Perumpadappil Thampuran saying that during the three years when he had held the lease, they “had not been allowed to cut down trees for the purpose of housing and temple constructions”. They were compelled “to sell coconut, paddy, etc. at the price fixed by Cochin and [had] to carry those things by themselves up to the seashore without coolie”, and had been forced to do “*oozhavela*” (compulsory work).⁴⁶⁷ There were a few additional complaints that the joint commissioners received.⁴⁶⁸

However, there were counter representations given by those in favour of Perumpadappu. One such letter was written by Pazhenchery Mannathaparambatha Ittythayyan Nair and Chappunny Nair (both were Pazhenchery Nairs) “at Chetuva Manappuram”, addressed to Stevens, at

⁴⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁶⁷ “Purport: One Payenchery Nair and Kottekattta Kelu Menon and some others in Chetuah protested against it lease to H.H and certificate of approval of leading inhabitants such as inhabitants of Ayloor family, etc”, “Series 1, No: 354/74, List XLII-A, Bundle 19,” Series Files. Even during the third granting of the lease, the English received complaints from the inhabitants against Chathu Menon, *pravruthiara* appointed by Cochin at Manappuram. The allegation was that “Chathu Menon was collecting more money than the revenue; and he did not properly consider a complaint reported to him by the inhabitants on a murder at Manappuram”, in “Series I, No: 357/70, List XLIV, Bundle: 22,” Series Files.

⁴⁶⁸ The joint commissioners explained, “the ryots complained that the Raja had levied from them 15 percent more than was collected in Tippu’s time [...] ; to enforce their payment of which he placed them in the sun, or in the water, or in irons; besides all which, he compelled them to pay for the waste land; took from them their cattle, fowls and other property without paying; seized one-third of deceased person’s estates; and prevented the Mussulmans from performing the rites of their religion and had, in resentment for their having formerly complained to Major Dow, laid heavy fines on them”, in Joint Commissioners’ Report 294. The English East India Company also warned Cochin Raja and he promised further that such kind of difficulties as complained by the inhabitants would not be repeated. From, Joint Commissioners’ Report 294. Due to the injustice to the ryots the Commissioners proposed the need to post a “native officer on the part of the Company” to observe the violence against ryots. However, the Cochin Raja did not agree to this proposal by the Joint Commissioners (436). Moreover, the Commissioners observed that the Chetuva Island was “naturally very fertile” island and had undergone “unwarrantable devastation” due to timber cutting during the lease period of Cochin. They underscored that “Chetwa Island would be ruined and deserted before the expiration”, Joint Commissioners’ Report 160.

Cherpulassery Thukkidi court. They requested the English “to give” (*kodukkuka*) “Chetuva Manappuram” to “Perumpadappu Valiya Thampuran” and also tried to disqualify their nephew’s protest against the lease. They said that there was “no need to consider the nephews since they were not obedient to the elders”.⁴⁶⁹

The parties consenting to or dissenting to the grant of the lease had come from either the family of Airoor Thampuran or that of Pazhenchery. This discourse on the lease lent agency to Airoor Thampuran and Pazhenchery Nairs who were portrayed as “powerless”,⁴⁷⁰ “very little use nowadays”,⁴⁷¹ and “ordinary proprietors of estates”⁴⁷² in the Dutch period. In addition, Perumpadappil Swaroopam marked Airoor as “*Thampuran*” and Stevens also agreed to such a designation by recommending the consent letter be obtained from Airoor “*Thampuran*” and his *kudikal*. Close examination of the discourse on the lease shows that Airoor Swaroopam had prominent determinacy in providing consent or dissent on the lease. Even if Pazhenchery Nair played a significant role in the discourse, it is obvious how this discourse positioned Airoor Thampuran as the “Raja” of Manappuram – the area once ruled by four equally powerful petty chiefs including Pazhenchery Nair and Airoor Thampuran according to the Dutch records. This complicates the positioning of Airoor Thampuran as the “Raja” of Manappuram. The processes of the discourse of the lease located Airoor Raja as the “Raja” of the whole of Manappuram; it is probable that the discourse itself introduces an idea of a “Raja” or king for the region.

However, he would have been a Raja of Manappuram, but without holding Manappuram. Though the agitators showed a willingness to pay the lease amount for the “Island of Manappuram”, the very core of the discourse on the

⁴⁶⁹ “Purport: Inhabitants’ letter to English East India Company, request to give Chetuva Manappuram to Cochin Rajavu Thirumanassu”, “M-115,1180, 8.3.970,” [Series Files](#).

⁴⁷⁰ A. Galletti, “Memoirs of Gollenesse”, [The Dutch in Malabar](#) 63.

⁴⁷¹ A. Galletti, “Memoirs of Moens”, [The Dutch in Malabar](#) 142.

⁴⁷² [The Dutch in Malabar](#) 137.

lease discussed only the consent and dissent issue regarding the lease to Cochin. It does not discuss the agitators' willingness and how they could participate in an equal status while negotiating the lease. It shows that Airoor Thampuran could sway the consent and dissent of the people, but had no power over the territory, perhaps because Manappuram was not a territory at that time. Hence, it seems complicated when read in line with our informed knowledge about the connection between king and territory.

Furthermore, one could argue that colonial, legal and political discourses reinforce certain 'traditional' power structures which seem to be socially and culturally established in and on the formation of a region. Though the Hindu Rajas' and feudatories' power seem nominal in the Dutch records, why do the Dutch and the English consider the visibly upper castes to be traditional custodians of this region? Are the land rights and traditional powers of these Hindus constituted by the collaborative relationship between colonial orientalism and Brahmanism?

In addition, the letters of *kudikal*, Airoor Thampuran and Pazhenchery Nairs reveal that they all addressed themselves from "Chettuvay Manappuratha" or "Manappuratha" (at/from Manappuram). Their assertion seems like the emergence of the category "native". The presence of the English and the Dutch had, in fact, already produced the binary of the coloniser and the native. The discourse on the lease which emphasised land ownership allowed the status of "native" to the native state of Cochin as well through the lease of Manappuram. The consent and dissent letters allow us to see the multiple claims on 'native'; for instance, the letters by the *kudikal*, Pazhenchery Nairs and Airoor Thampuran. Paradoxically, the colonial and native discourse in the context of the lease install the traditional power as 'native' by the configuration of Airoor Thampuran as Raja. But the assertion and subject position of the *kudikal* complicate the category of the native. As Bourdieu rightly said, the discourse of lease seems a field where different actors come

from different habitus and compete with each other with their social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital in the field of lease to legitimate their ‘native’ status.⁴⁷³ In addition, the ownership of the land accessed through the lease positioned Cochin as “native”. But quite interestingly he owned the land without being bound, that was quite contrary to the context of ‘indigenous’. Usually the indigenous appears to be without land but seem always to be attributed to being bound.

The language of the letters is very important in this context. In contrast to the modalities of the legal language, the usages in the letters of the inhabitants were slightly different. In the letters of the inhabitants, including that of Airoor Thampuran, Pazhenchery Nair, and the common inhabitants, they use the word *kodukkuka*⁴⁷⁴ rather than legal words such as *kuthaka* by Cochin and *lease* by the English. The Malayalam noun *kuthaka* can be translated as “the monopoly”, but here it stands for lease. The word, which the inhabitants have used, ‘*kodukkuka*’ (instead of *lease* and *kuthaka*), means “to give”.⁴⁷⁵

The word *kuthaka*, a noun, which could be either the subject or object, in that sense seems quite categorical, definitive. Here, Manappuram, the region appears as *kuthaka* suggesting that the region is an object. It is visible that in the discourse of the language between the Raja and the English that has legal tones, the region figures as an objectified, definitive category. In contrast, the verb *kodukkuka* represents an action, not an end, and therefore is not definitive, but is perhaps relational;⁴⁷⁶ and could even be read as a process. It is thought-provoking that, for the inhabitants, Manappuram is not an object

⁴⁷³ See P. Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”, Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education, ed. J. G. Richardson (Westport CT, Greenwood, 1986) 241-258.

⁴⁷⁴ “Purport: Copy of the statement regarding the transfer of Chetwa Island to Cochin”, “M-1, 970,” Series Files. Also see “Purport: Letter of Ambalathu veetil Moitheen Kutty to Kochi Dewan Ayyannayyan regarding lease of Chettuva Manappuram to Perumpadappu Swaroopam”, “M-75,” Series Files.

⁴⁷⁵ See Malayalam English Dictionary (Kottayam: D.C. Books, 2011).

⁴⁷⁶ The give and get – *kodukkalvaangal* – was important in the barter system in pre-modern societies. *Kodukkalvaangal* is still prevalent in moral economies.

of lease like it is for the others. Rather, the inhabitants were also part of the entire legal discourse. Nevertheless, one can see that language is not completely legal. Therefore, the region itself arrives at in a different sense, probably as a process.

Apart from these direct manifestations of the claims by Cochin and others, the lease also exposes different disguised manifestations of claims over Manappuram. To elucidate, the Samuthiri moved against the lease⁴⁷⁷ while concurrently, Cranganore was attempting to collect “*aravari*” (a kind of tax) from Manappuram.⁴⁷⁸ Similarly, despite the complaint of Samuthiri against the Cochin Raja, Samuthiri’s minister Shamunatha Pattar and Ikkanda Panikkar also attempted to make claims on Manappuram for Samuthiri. Shamunatha Pattar and Ikkanda Panikkar met the inhabitants of Manappuram and encouraged them to depose against the grant of the lease to Cochin.⁴⁷⁹ They even tried for the same through some Muslims like Moosa Vadakkan.⁴⁸⁰ These attempts disclose the hopes of the native Rajas of dismantling the power of the Europeans and repossessing the contested region. Hoping for this unlikely event, the native Rajas employed the strategies of “tax collection” and lodging “compliant against the encroachment of other parties”

⁴⁷⁷ “Purport: 1) H.H lease that at the instigation of Swaminatha Pattar and Ikkanda Panikar some *ryots* Chetuva have gone to Mr. Stevens to protest against its lease to H.H. 2) Remittance of Rs.12,500”, “Series 1, No: 355/10, List XLII-B, Bundle 20,” Series Files. Also see, “M I” for copy of letter which was written to Kizhakke Mukham Sarvadi Karyakkar “Series Files 165; 1 Kannimasam 970”, Saktan Records. The Samuthiri had complained against the Raja of Cochin saying that there were “undue encroachments in the *Talook* or *Sawkar* of Chowghaut” in the context of the lease of “Chetuva Island”. See Joint Commissioners’ Report 161.

⁴⁷⁸ “Series 1, No: 352/79, List XLI, Bundle 18,” Series Files. The document shows that Padinjare Kovilakam (Kodungalloor) had sent people to collect *aravari* (a kind of tax) from Manappuram. Cochin objected to this. Cochin argued that “though Manappuram (is) under the company, Padinjare Kovilakam (Cranganore Raja) does not have the right to do so”. They asserted, “If they would do the same thing in Edathiruthy and Triprayar, Thirumanassau (Cochin Raja) will not allow to do”.

⁴⁷⁹ “Series 1, No: 355/10, List XLII-B, Bundle: 20,” Series Files. Also see, “C-120, Reserved Files,” The Chetwaye Island 8. It notes, “The Zamorin, though down and out, did wish to see that the claims of Cochin were not admitted [...] Panicker of the old Pazhancheri Nayar family was the *kariakar* of the Zamorin at Chowghat and he did his utmost to organise opposition against the territory being even leased to the Raja of Cochin”.

⁴⁸⁰ See “M I,” “Series Files 165; 1 Kannimasam 970,” Saktan Records, for a copy of the letter which was written to Kizhakke Mukham Sarvadi Karyakkar.

as a prerequisite that constantly acted as a presupposition of claim over a region. Through these claims, the native Rajas contested among themselves within the limited sovereignty provided by the English in terms of “lease”. In this context, one could probably pose the question of whether the native Rajas made any attempt to expand or prevail over the limited sovereignty granted to them by the English through the lease of Manappuram? How Cochin did so in the context of the lease is quite fascinating. The revenue from the *cherical* land was being collected by Cochin, while the company themselves was collecting revenue from the leased area in Manappuram. By doing so, Cochin not only tried to protect their right to revenue collection from their *cherical* land but was also indirectly protesting against the agreement of the lease (with the English) which exempted the right of *kanagovi* (customs duty) and Adalath (judicial administration) in Manappuram. I look in detail at how Cochin negotiated and the English responded to the right to *kanagovi* and Adalath in the next section.

1.2. Customs Duty and Judicial Administration: Question of Sovereignty

Certain remarks in the letters elucidate how Perumpadappil Swaroopam tried to include customs duty in the lease⁴⁸¹ and argued for the right of judicial administration.⁴⁸² While looking through the letters, it becomes apparent that the rights to customs duty and judicial administration were politically and economically important to Cochin.

Demanding Customs Duty: Fiscal system and Right to Mobility of Subject and Object

⁴⁸¹ “Series I, No. 352/60, list XLI, Bundle:17,” [Series Files](#). Also see, “Series I, No. 352/64, list XLI, Bundle:18,” [Series Files](#).

⁴⁸² Cochin Raja argued for the right to judicial administration over the leased property. He argued that the lease was approved for 10 years as specified in the *Kabulnama* (agreement) of the lease of Manappuram. Consequently, the English had permitted the lease except for the right to Adalath and *kanagovi*, but things had continued the way it had been practiced before. So, Cochin accused Dharman Saipu (Drummond, who was Sub Collector of Chavakkad) of taking an unfavourable position towards Cochin.

Perumpadappil Swaroopam relentlessly appealed to the English⁴⁸³ for exemption from customs duty and toll at Edathuruthy.⁴⁸⁴ In fact, the company received an order from Bombay⁴⁸⁵ that the lease shall be permitted only if the amount of the toll was increased. It specified that if Cochin wanted any modification, they would have to convince the authorities within four months.⁴⁸⁶ However, according to the conditions of the lease, transactions of goods for the personal use of Perumpadappu Thampuram, which carried his certified writings, were exempt from customs duties.⁴⁸⁷ After the sanction of the lease for a third term, it continued as it was but consequently the English prevented Cochin from availing of the exemption on customs duties and obstructed the movement of goods unlike in the former lease period. Cochin's paddy and rice were wedged at Edathuruthy due to the blocking of goods for customs duty.⁴⁸⁸

Cochin had to appeal to the English many times for exemption from customs duty imposed upon them. Cochin argued that they were not asked to pay customs duties at Edathuruthy during the period of "Situa and Paponetty" (places) under the Dutch, nor did they have to pay any duties to Hyder and Tipu.⁴⁸⁹ They repeatedly brought up this issue in almost all the

⁴⁸³ "Series I, No. 352/60, List XLI, Bundle:17," Series Files 1966. Also see, "Series I, No. 352/64, List XLI, Bundle:18," Series Files 1966.

⁴⁸⁴ There was a toll at Edathuruthy, a place now situated at Manappuram.

⁴⁸⁵ Malabar was under the Bombay Presidency until 1801. Malabar Manual 625.

⁴⁸⁶ "Series I, no. 354/33, List XLII-A, Bundle19," Series Files.

⁴⁸⁷ "English East India Companykku Malayam Pravashya Labichathu Sambanthicha Rekha" (Document regarding Company getting Province Malayam), "19.5.967, 1791 (Series Files: 383/1, 27)," Saktan Records. According to the condition of the third lease, it was shown that "the collection of the customs shall remain with the Honourable company's officers excepting goods belonging to the Raja, which shall be exempted from duties provided that the Raja shall certify that such goods on which he claims exemption are bona fide his property", A Collection 225.

⁴⁸⁸ "Purport: Negotiation regarding customs demand, Edathuruthy, visit from Commissioner Cochin to Mr. Stevens, his object is not clear, 2. Complain from Chetuva Manappuram of maladministration by H.H's agents", "Series I, No: 357/70, List XLIV, Bundle: 22," Series Files.

⁴⁸⁹ See "Purport: A letter of the Raja of Cochin written to the lord Governor of Madras", "E24," Series Files. The letter was written in Dutch and translated into English by Fr. C. D. Gereon. See also "Purport: H.H has no fear of the discontinuance of Chetuva lease while under the company's protection", "Series I, No: 355/41, B.20, List XLII-B, dated 23, Thulam 711," Series Files. See also "Series I, No: 352/64, B.18, List XLI," Series Files 1684-1869.

correspondences.⁴⁹⁰ In fact, the demand for exemption from customs duty indicated an explicit rejection of customs duty imposed on them by the English. It also defended their right to claim (customs duty on) Manappuram.

With regards to the toll at Edathuruthy, Cochin insisted that they had equal rights over the river which they shared with the English. Therefore, they argued that the toll at Edathuruthy was not fair. They asserted, “with regard to the toll which is being gathered at Edathuruthy by the company’s servants, we have to inform your Excellency that the lands lying to the west of the river of the named place belong to the company and those that lie to the east bank of river belong to us, and consequently the right over the river, we also jointly share with you”.⁴⁹¹ Here, the dispute appears to be not a mere appeal for exemption from customs duty, rather, it is also a claim on the river by which Cochin attempted to argue for their right over the river bank. In fact, the claim on the river and the riverbank suggests that the claim was extended to the region and its natural boundary. The English did not compromise on their decision but finally suggested that they would allow goods of Cochin to pass. However, they accentuated that, as per the order which came from Bombay, the submission of a list of goods along with its price was required.⁴⁹²

Also see, “Alpathi Chunkam Thukayil Pakuthy Swaroopathileku Varuvanulla Sangathikku Vivaram” (The matter related to earnings of Swaroopam from half income of Alpathi tax) in, “Series Files 349, 27.6.976-1800”, Saktan Records 84.

⁴⁹⁰ The letter of Raja of Cochin in reply to Mr. Flower who had requested to get some rice for money. Cochin used it as an occasion to pressurise for toll exemption. “Purport: Supply on sale 72000 moodas of rice Mr. Flower was ordered to store to be got from Northern Taluque and to be exempted from Company’s customs along with the stores for H.H at Edathuruthy”, “Series I, No: 38, List: vol. III, 1 to 5(163),” Series Files. See also in, “Series I, No: 352/79, List XLI, Bundle: 18,” Series Files. In addition, there were problems related to toll collection. Toll collection at their toll centres on the river bank was being disrupted. Cochin often complained that their tax collectors at Puvattumkadavu and Pallivattathu (on the Cochin river side) were interrupted by tax collectors of Manappuram.

⁴⁹¹ See “Purport: A letter of the Raja of Cochin written to the lord governor of Madras”, “E24,” trans. C. D. Gereon, Series Files.

⁴⁹² “Series I, No: 357/76, list XLIV,” Series Files; “Series I, No: 357/56, List XLIV, Bundle: 22” (24 Vrishjikam 76), Series Files.

It is visible here that toll duty – the colonial economies of revenue – restricted the mobility of people and prevented them from crossing the river. In fact, it limited the (physical) mobility of object (things) and bodies (subject) across the river, which means that it regulated the mobility to cross the region, and fixed the mobility of the region itself. Furthermore, this fixing of mobility by revenue delimits the region, proposing that the region is perhaps a closed entity which restricts the flow of subjects, objects and the power of the region itself.

In addition, the nature of revenue appears here as a form of customs duty⁴⁹³ in opposition to the earlier period where revenue took the form of gifts and protection.⁴⁹⁴ Customs duty (*chungam*) existed during the pre-colonial

⁴⁹³ The letters show that Manappuram was exempted from customs duty at Dutch period though they used to collect such revenues in their time. Gollennesse explains that tolls, rents on gardens and lands, and taxes were the company's revenue. But the list of revenue does not show toll at Chetuva and Paponetty (except dues on passing vessels at the Fort of Cranganore). The years of revenue are marked as 1741-1742 in "Memoirs of Gollennesse" (71). In Moens' period they could not collect revenues from those places because Chetuva and Paponetty were not under the Dutch but under Hyder Ali.

⁴⁹⁴ Achyuta Menon also describes the early revenues in Cochin. According to him the *naduvazhis* paid revenues to kings as follows, "succession fee or *purushandaram*", "a small annual tribute called *andukachcha*", or "an annual contribution for special protection variously called *rakshabhogam*, *changatam*, *palam*, etc." Apart from that, the *madambis* (a baron) had to pay "*kettutengu* [...]" a cess levied on three percentage of the coconut trees in the garden. See Menon 63. See Logan also, who explains, "former revenues of the Raja in Malabar" included "*ankam*" (fight), *chungam* (customs upon imports and exports), *ela* (the systematic usurpation of estates [...] of neighbouring Rajas or *naduvazhis* or other chiefs who might be incapacitated due to poverty or some other cause arising from governing), *kola* (violence), *charadayam* (forced contributions levied by Rajas for particular emergencies), *tappu* (blunder or "fines levied by *naduvazhis* or *desavazhis* from their inferiors by Raja themselves for accidental, unintentional crimes"), *pila* ("fine levied in the same manner for intentional crimes"), *purushandaram* (succession duty), *pulayattupenna* ("or degraded women were a source of profit to the Raja; outcastes, not exclusively but chiefly of the Brahman caste, they were made over to the Rajas to take care of. As a compensation for their going astray again, the family of the outcaste were in the habit of offering to the Rajas as far as 600 fanams or Rs.150. The Rajas then disposed of them for money"), *ponnarippu* (gold sifting), *attadakkam/attaladakkam* ("property entitled to *anaduvali* or *desavali* or an *adiyan* [vassal] or any person who held lands in free gift dying without heirs"), *adimappanam/talappanam* ("the yearly payment of 1 and 2 *fanams* which every *adiyan* was obliged to pay to his *tamburan* or patron, whether he was Raja, *naduvali*, *desavali*, or other great man"), *changatam* ("whenever a person wished to place himself under the special protection of a man of consequence, he paid [...] *changatam* or companionship or association, making sometimes an assignment on particular lands for the payment"), *rakshabhogam* (protection), and *kalcha* (offering, gift), See Malabar Manual, vol. 11, appendix xiii, ccxxviii to ccxxxi.

period, though it was restricted to export and import.⁴⁹⁵ At the same time, certain kinds of relations were evidently implicated in most of the earlier forms of revenues⁴⁹⁶ which were in the form of gift and protection. In contrast, the colonial revenues mostly depended on ‘things’ like land, salt and toll (water source). Hence, the nature of revenue which materialised took away from the revenue in the colonial period. However, a close analysis of the early revenue model shows that the native relations maintained through gifts and protection were delimited through socio-cultural mechanisms such as the caste system which were retained through hierarchical relations.⁴⁹⁷ In the caste system, mobility was restricted through the relation of the self with the other, and subject with the object.

Right of Death and Life: Demanding Judicial Administration

The argument put forth by the Perumpadappu Thampuran (the Raja of Cochin) in the letters for the right of judicial administration over the leased property is remarkable. Cochin argued that in the *kabulnama*⁴⁹⁸ of the lease

⁴⁹⁵ See Logan who also explained about *chungam* (custom upon imports and exports) as the “former revenues of Raja in Malabar”, (vol. 11, appendix: xiii, ccxxviii to ccxxxii).

⁴⁹⁶ For example, the joint commissioners stated that Samuthiri had collected *chungadam* (protection money), *purishandrum* (shares of deceased person’s estates), *trevakarchy* (presents) from Manappuram till 1715 (428).

⁴⁹⁷ But it could not possibly function at full strength physically in Manappuram. Manappuram was only 4 km in width and its openings towards the sea and river on both sides would not allow hierarchical relations to properly function here. However, it was limited not only because of these reasons but also due to the nature of labour in which communities who inhabited the land were involved in. Majority of the inhabitants belonged to Dalit, Ezhava, Mukkuva and Mappila (Muslims) communities. Both Mappilas and Ezhavas were involved in trading also. Moreover, Ezhavas were Ayurveda practitioners, toddy tappers, and a few of them were boatmen and had to connect with both the river and the sea. For the Mukkuvas, who were involved in fishing, they needed access to both these sources. Vettuvass and Mappilas were often involved in fishing. In the case of the Dalits, the majority of the population was Vettuvass and Kanakkans. They were skilled in technologies like salt-making (Vettuvass) and shell burning (*Kakka Neetuka*). The Vettuvass were also involved as agricultural labourers related to the coconut palm and its products, and they were involved in the making of raw materials for crack fire out of *panachi* (*Diospyros Malabarica* or Indian Persimmon) fruits; and the Kanakkas were also boatmen involved in river fishing. Therefore, the geography and their labour were outside the traditional caste system (for instance trade and technology like salt-making, making raw material for crack fire and shell-burning seem quite different from conventional caste jobs) which allowed these *avarna* castes to bypass the physical constraints of caste. Caste did not exist in its conventional form of labour in Manappuram, but untouchability was practiced even among the *avarnas*.

⁴⁹⁸ Contextually *kabulnama* means agreement (of lease).

of Manappuram, the lease was approved for 10 years, and subsequently, the English had permitted the lease excluding the Adalath and *kanagovi*, but things had continued the way it had been before. Cochin accused Mr Drummond (sub-collector of Malabar who was in charge of Chavakkad) of building an Adalath Chavadi (a subordinate court), at Chetuva Manappuram and for posting a person to administer judicial proceedings on civil cases. Cochin Raja complained that it would affect him badly, that his orders were not being shown respect and that no one would pay him revenue after the building of the Adalath Chavadi at Manappuram. The Raja worried that Drummond's action of sending people to collect revenue was directly linked to his revenue loss. Therefore, he appealed to eliminate the Adalath Chavadi from the region.⁴⁹⁹

However, the English refused the demand to remove the Adalath Chavadi.⁵⁰⁰ Additionally, the English responded that they had built the Adalath Chavadi at Manappuram with "consent from Jennapatanam" in order to address the complaints of the inhabitants (of Manappuram). Therefore, they stated that there was no possibility of the removal of the *chavadi*.⁵⁰¹ The conditions of the lease also specified that "the authority of the judicial courts established by the late commissioners shall be in force throughout the districts of

⁴⁹⁹ The Cochin Raja's letter, addressed to Mac Leaord, the principal collector, informed him that Cochin had already given a representation (complaint) on civil jurisdiction right over Chetuva Manappuram and customs duty at Edathuruthy to Mac Leaord, and this particular letter was meant to be a follow-up enquiry on the same. See "Purport: H.H.'s agent visited Mr. Mac Leaord, who after recharge of first meeting replied: 1. Further, representation regarding civil jurisdiction over Chetuva is unnecessary and unprofitable; 2. Mutual tariff question will be settled after conference with H.H who contrary the last Bombay administrator newly introduced". "Series I, No. 357/60, List XLIV-B, Bundle: 22, dated 11 thulam 77 [977], 1801," Series Files.

⁵⁰⁰ See "Purport: Through Nanjappaiyen and Samu Muthaliar, Cochin gained admittance to the Commissioners and negotiated over Chetuva customs demand etc. and their replies are repeated", "Series I, No: 357/56, List XLIV, Bundle: 22, dated 24 vrischikam 76," Series Files 1968. See also "Alpathi Chunkam Thukayil Pakuthy Swaroopathingaleku Varuvanullasangathikku Vivaram" (The Letter Written to Mr. Clive, Governor Madras), in "Series Files: 349, 27.6.976, 1800," Saktan Records 85-86.

⁵⁰¹ "Purport: Agent of negotiation with the commissioner regarding land or a territorial question. Ferry right at Poovathumkadavu; civil administration in Chetuva, and customs demand at Edathuruthy", "Series I, No: 357/76, List XLIV, Bundle: 22," Series Files.

Chetwah Manapooram”.⁵⁰² In fact, the Adalath Chavadi or local judicial courts had been established across Malabar⁵⁰³ following the *Joint Commissioners’ Report* as part of their wishes “to modernise the traditional system of criminal administration [...] they adopted a civil code on 12 June 1793 for the administration of justice in civil cases” (13).

When there is no right to judicial administration, there is no meaning or advantage of holding a lease. Therefore, after the construction of the Adalath Chavadi, nobody showed respect to the orders of Perumpadappu Swaroopam and no one paid revenue to him. In addition, this brings to the forefront that judicial administration and revenue collection are not only interlinked with each other but are also connected to the power of the king. That the English built an Adalath Chavadi in Manappuram while Cochin was still collecting revenue is of utmost importance here. Though the fiscal system and judicial administration were important in the context of sovereign power, these two activities happening simultaneously need to be taken note of. The act of the English of building an Adalath Chavadi in Manappuram during the lease period to Cochin seems like a claim of sovereignty on the region. Or it was that the English wanted to signal that they could reclaim their sovereign power on the region at any time. Cochin’s defence against such an attempt by the English was to express dissent on that claim and to try to emphasise their own sovereign claim on the region. This then offers the presence of double sovereigns in the region.

These letters also throw light on how colonial, legal discourse enters a region and modernises the traditional system of law of the region and constitutes its

⁵⁰² A Collection LXXXIII, 225. See also, “C-120,” The Chetwaye Island (8) where it is marked that “The Raja tried to get a perpetual lease of the tract and, failing this, for thirty years including customs. Eventually a lease for 10 years, excluding civil, criminal and customs jurisdiction, was secured”.

⁵⁰³ The joint commissioner had “appointed seven local *darogas* as subordinate courts of the superintendents at Cannanore, Quilandi, Tirurangadi, Ponnani, Palaghat, Tanur and Chetwai”. In the letters, the subordinate court mentioned locally was called “Adalath Chavadi”. Joint Commissioners’ Report 12.

modern subjects. Moreover, it shows how the law is implemented and institutionalised through the building of the Adalath Chavadi and how the subjects are formed through the “start of proceedings”. In short, what it does is to transform the identity of *kudikal* from inhabitant to subject, who is legal and governed. It shifts legal agency from traditional to colonial practices, necessarily bringing in a conflict of power.

The presence of the judicial administration demands the right of juridical proceedings over the people of Manappuram. It deals out protection and punishment over civil and criminal issues. It could be argued that the demand for judicial administration is like a demand for the right to life and death of the people. Michel Foucault theorises this power of the sovereign and he elucidates:

The sovereign exercised his right to life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing; he evidenced his power over life only through the death he was capable of requiring. The right which was formulated as the ‘power of life and death’ was, in reality, the right to take life or let live. Its symbol, after all, was the sword.⁵⁰⁴

Read through the framework of Foucault, we can see that here denial of Adalath administration to Cochin not only prevented Cochin from gaining access to the right to life and death but also negated the very possibility of the Cochin Raja holding sovereign power over Manappuram. The denial was materialised through the construction of symbolic structures. Here the Adalath Chavadi is the symbolic structure of modern legality and modern power. Therefore, building the Adalath Chavadi appears not merely as a signification of the “modernisation of the traditional system”; rather it is an attempt to formulate a symbolic metaphor for the power over life and death of the people of Manappuram.

⁵⁰⁴ See chapter "Right of Death and Power over Life" in Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. I (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978) 136.

Right over the mobility of subject and object and right to the life and death of the people are seemingly two markers of sovereignty. The discourse of the lease allowed Cochin the ownership of land even though it was temporary. Nevertheless, it denied the right over the mobility of subject and object and right to life and death to Cochin. The ownership of land, the right over the mobility of subject and object, the right to life and death might have proposed sovereignty on the region in the context of the lease. Here one could argue that the inhabitants of Manappuram were not under both of these sovereigns⁵⁰⁵ and the legal apparatus until the moment of Cochin's lease proposal for Manappuram was made and colonial mediation was done for the lease. Consequently, the lease raised a new problem in the larger predicament of the claim: the question of sovereignty over the region. It may be concluded that the discourse that arose out of the lease was an attempt to establish sovereignty over the region.

But the same discourse on the lease, especially the agreement of the lease and the complaints of the inhabitants restricted Cochin from embracing the right over the mobility of subject and object, and the right to life and death. Therefore, it would have prevented Cochin from embodying sovereignty. The English posed a sovereign claim on the region by restricting the fiscal and juridical power of Cochin. In fact, here sovereignty appears to be without the possession of land or territorial power in the case of the English. They exercised their sovereignty through claims on juridical power and the right to mobility of subject and object. However, even while Cochin was holding the territorial possession it had to struggle to obtain juridical power and right to the mobility of subject and object which were essential to achieve sovereignty. Here, in this particular context, sovereignty is definitely defined by fiscal and juridical power. And beyond that, sovereignty is complicated

⁵⁰⁵ There was no raja who had power over the entire Manappuram region to exercise a unified traditional legal practice in the region.

with the right to mobility of subject and object. Hence it seems as if the right to mobility of subject and object is one of the decisive factors determining sovereignty in the context of Manappuram.

Notwithstanding the different claims and evidences, the lease was cancelled by a proclamation signed by J. H. Oliphant, the then commissioner, on 17 September 1801, where he mentions that since the Cochin Raja had “failed to fulfil the condition of lease” it had been cancelled and the revenue collection of Chetuva Island had been assigned to Mr Drummond (assistant collector of Malabar).⁵⁰⁶

Conclusion

The discourse of lease fabricated the status of *pramanis* (chiefs) and *kudikal* (subject); it also ordered inhabitants under a graded structure of status possibly triggering the idea of kingship. Though Airoor Raja was positioned as a king through the discourse of lease, in one sense, the consent and dissent, especially the negotiation on the lease by Cochin and by the English, reduced the Airoor Raja to a merely numbered inhabitant who, among others, had to express consent or dissent on the lease of Manappuram being granted to Perumpadappu. The status of Cochin as a prime ‘native’ and the position of Airoor Thampuran as an inhabitant seems to reduce the number of actors in the realm of the contest for sovereignty. Cochin and the English remained the main actors who competed for sovereignty over Manappuram during early modernity. It also shows the possibilities of having multiple sovereign claims and the presence of sovereignty during the early colonial period which is quite contrary to what transpired in the late colonial period. In short, the discourse of lease, in fact, proposes both a native sovereign and a colonial sovereign.

One could argue in this context that the discourse of lease, in fact, produces ideas such as kingship, subject, and sovereign within the historical milieu of

⁵⁰⁶ A Collection CCXXXI.

the region during the period. Hence it is possible that the emergence of kingship, subject and sovereign configure the power of the region. Here the configuration of power is constituted by tenets such as ownership of land, fiscal power and juridical power. Apart from the possession of land, control on revenue, and right to life and death, the power is preoccupied with the right to mobility of subject and object. These appear as the essential elements for determining power.

In addition, in the discourse of lease, the possession of the land of the region is too complex to be reduced to terms of kingship, subject, and sovereign. The possession of the land of *kudikal* would have been complicated based on changing landlords and *jenmam* right. The Airoor Raja is presented in the discourse of the lease as a king but he does not possess the land, rather he is seen only as a witness. He is placed as a king of Manappuram, without the possession of *rajyam* in the context of the lease. Nonetheless, the discourse of the lease positioned the Airoor Thampuram as a mere Raja in the ‘past’ by denying him possession of land, and it generated the presence of a sovereign in the modern ‘present’. Cochin was apparently a sovereign—a native sovereign who acquired possession of the land but struggled to achieve sovereignty on Manappuram in the absence of the right to life and death, and right to mobility of subject and object. In contrast, the English were indeed a sovereign power; colonisers with the right to life and death and right to control the mobility of subject and object of the native sovereign without even holding possession of the land. Therefore, here it can be observed that the right to control the mobility of the subject and object seems the decisive element that defines power.

Power, in fact, appears here not like the modern colonial power but rather like the native traditional power. That means power in this context combines with colonial modern authority and native traditional authority and is, therefore, a

“collaborative”⁵⁰⁷ authority. One could argue that the native traditional authority which is a part of native hegemonic structures like caste, gender and religion, is here arrived at as a native traditional power. Hence, here power constitutes itself not only through the politico-juridical-fiscal system but also configures itself through traditional socio-cultural power.

⁵⁰⁷ Ludden 250-278.

Chapter Four

Making of Histories and Territorialities of the Region: Discourse on Disputes and Production of Narratives on Manappuram

Introduction

Claims and contestations are an important element of histories that depict the territorialities of regions, and appear to be a vantage point to embark on such a scholastic enterprise. Therefore, for me, claims and contestations illustrate the very idea of history and territorialisation and its interconnections. It might serve as one of the routes to understand the formation of a region in general, and Manappuram in particular. In the observation of Robert David Sack “...in modern society, many ordinary kinds of places must become territorial to exist as places⁵⁰⁸.” (19) However, if we perceive the process of territorialisation in the historical context of Manappuram we can understand that contrary to his observation, Manappuram seems undocile to the process of territorialisation in modernity. In this chapter, I try to examine how histories and territories are generated through disputes and the production of narratives that influence the formation of the region are formed in general. Besides that, I shall endeavour to illustrate how a discourse of dispute makes the boundary of the region and produces narratives of the region in particular. To unpack the complexities of the contestations and claims, I look at historical accounts from 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, such as the letters written by the natives (the Cochin Raja and the inhabitants of Manappuram), and colonial letters (the Dutch and the English); memorandums (memoirs) of the Dutch; and the treaties, agreements (by the natives and colonisers during the period), and reports of the Joint Commissioners.

⁵⁰⁸ Robert Davis Sack, Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

This chapter aims to uncover historical debates on the claims and contestations on Manappuram, by the Cochin Raja and Samuthiri (who were the native rulers), Pazhenchery Nair, Airoor Raja, and Cranganore Raja (who were all considered petty chiefs at Manappuram), and the colonial powers (such as the Dutch and the English). The chapter has two parts: the first deals with the discourse of dispute and the second part considers the production of narratives by the Dutch memoirs. For our purposes, viz. the uncovering of historical debates and contestations on Manappuram, I examined *The Joint Commissioners Report on Malabar 1792-93*⁵⁰⁹ extensively; *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Relating to British Affairs in Malabar*,⁵¹⁰ and letters⁵¹¹ to uncover the intricacies of the discourse of dispute; and two memoirs of Dutch Commandeurs—Gollennesse in 1743 and Moens in 1784⁵¹²—offered details to aid this exploration of production of narratives in the context of histories and territorialities.

This is the epoch is considered to be decisive in the formation of modern territorialities and the modern histories of those regions which had ensued

⁵⁰⁹ *The Joint Commissioners' Report on Malabar 1792-93* (Kochi: Kerala State Archive, reprint 2010). There is one study which tried to delineate the intersection between colonial report and knowledge by studied *The Joint Commissioners Report*. For details see M.P. Mujeebu Rahman, "the British Reports and Colonial Knowledge: The Joint Commissioners on Malabar", M.P.Mujeebu Rahman and K.S.Madhavan, ed. *Explorations in South Indian History*, (Kottayam: Sahitya Pravarthaka Sahakaram Co-operative Society, 2014).

⁵¹⁰ This collection is "divided into two parts". The first part deals with the time "prior to the treaty of Seringapatam" in 1792 and the second part deals with "the period subsequent to 1792 down to the present day (1879)" in "Extracts from the Preface to the First Edition", *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance relating to British Affairs in Malabar*, ed. W. Logan, (Madras: Government Press, 1951), v.

⁵¹¹ See *Series Files (1684-1869)* from Kerala State Regional Archives—Ernakulam and Saktan Thampuran Selected Administrative Records.

⁵¹² The Dutch Commandeurs had to write memoirs for the "guidance of their successor". There was a total of 14 Dutch Commandeurs at Malabar. Gollennesse was the seventh and Moens was the thirteenth Dutch commandeur. See A. Galletti (trans), "Memorandum on the Administration of the Malabar Coast by Julius Valentijn stein Van Gollennesse (1743) and Memorandum on the Administration of The Coast of Malabar by Adriaan Moens (1781)", in *Dutch Records no. 13: The Dutch in Malabar* (Madras: Government Press, 1911). <<http://www.archive.org/details/cu319224023942828>>. Hereafter I use "memoirs" instead of Memorandum. There is a study on Dutch power by M.O.Koshi, *The Dutch Power in Kerala, 1729-1758* (New Delhi: Mittal Publication, 1989)

mainly after the defeat of Tipu Sultan and the fall of the Malabar⁵¹³ Coast into the hands of the English East India Company in 1792. This period is considered remarkable in the writing of Kerala's history in the case of the native states of Calicut, Cochin and Travancore, especially with regard to the frontiers of the native or princely states which were characterised by fixed boundaries, as opposed to the early boundaries of those states which had fluctuated and varied. Another interesting aspect is that the claim over one region or territory had to be defined through documents instead of war, and "evidence" was required to prove the claim.

Through this enterprise, I will attempt to illustrate how legal, political, economic, historical and geographical discourses produced the histories and territorialisation of the region and vice versa. Such histories and territorialisation led to the formation of regions and their identities in a particular epochal juncture and the social grounds that underpinned it. In order to understand the histories and territorialisation of the region better, I would like to draw attention to the following questions: Why did the contestation and claim on the region emerge? Who were the agents of these claims? How was it mediated? To put differently, the study will aim to address these concerns and I will attempt to examine how the discourse on the disputes and production of narratives arrive at this space and time and

⁵¹³ In fact, there might be three important temporal junctures which played different roles in the construction of the Malabar region and perhaps gave it three different meanings. In the pre-colonial period, the name "Malabar" stood for the whole Malabar Coast, as evinced by the travelogues of Arabs and Europeans. They called it Malibar, Manibar, Melibar, etc. The word "mala" is a Dravidian word which means hill or mountain. And "bar" indicates either "Barr", an Arabic word which means continent or "Bar" a Persian word which means country. Al Baruni (A.D. 970-1039) was the first to give it this name. But Kosmos Indikopleustus, an Egyptian merchant, mentions a port called "Male" long before Al Baruni. "Malabar" indicates the coast from north Mangalore to south Kaulam/ Kumarhi, and some travellers also include the Goan coast. See Logan's *Malabar Manual*, Padmanabha Menon's *Kerala History*, and C. A. Innis's *Malabar Gazetteer*. At the next juncture, Malabar manifests as a colonial administrative category which appeared as the province of Malabar under the Madras Presidency. In the third temporal period, after the formation of linguistic Kerala, Malabar transformed into a cultural space in relation to the identities of Mappilas and Thiyyas, also imagined as the old kingdom of Samuthiri.

what it renders and means in the context of the historical-geo-socio-cultural formation of the region, Manappuram.

I.The Discourse of Dispute: Mapping the Boundary of Manappuram

In this part, I endeavour to deal with how the discourse of dispute and boundary mapping are interrelated with each other in general., Specifically, I attempt to illustrate how evidence enters as a decisive aspect in the milieu of dispute that explores the narratives on the region, and I aspire to depict how the discourse on dispute tries to draw the boundary for the region of Manappuram. Moreover, I try to look at how legality, language and geography create intricacies in the narrative and boundary of the region. To uncover the dispute on Manappuram, I will attempt to unravel key threads: the dispute over places such as Pathinettarayalam, Kara, Edathuruthy, Triprayar, Tiruvanchikulam and Cranganore (Kodungallur); and the dispute specifically over Cranganore. I have used the Joint Commissioners' Report extensively to explore the intricacies of the dispute. It is explained in the introductory page of *The Joint Commissioners' Report on Malabar, 1792-93* that it "is a voluminous document running to 576 pages. After a comprehensive study and analysis of the data, they collected through field study and interview [...] the report reflects the history of Malabar from the days of Cheraman Perumal to the appointment of the Commission on 23rd March 1792."⁵¹⁴

The dispute over the places in "Chetuva⁵¹⁵ Island" is another entry point into the discussion on the claims and contestations. After Malabar was ceded by

⁵¹⁴ See the introduction of the Joint Commissioners' Report 11. It is added in the Director's Note, "The entire texts reproduced here without any change [...] No attempt is made to tamper the grammatical style, correct the factual errors and spelling mistakes of the original text". See the Director's Note, Joint Commissioners' Report 6. I have quoted from the Joint Commissioners' report as such.

⁵¹⁵ Chetuva is also spelt in colonial records as Chetwa, Chetuah, and Chettua. The spelling in the quotations has been maintained as such. Here, I spell it as it is printed in the booklet. Rest of the places I spell 'Chetuva', following the native records and the way old people of

Tipu to the English,⁵¹⁶ claims were raised through disputes. Kingdoms like Samuthiri, Cochin and other petty chiefs raised claims on different places like Kodungallur, Chetuva and so on across the territory under the English East India Company. In fact, Cochin made claims on Pathinettarayalam and Kara, Edathuruthy, Triprayar, Thiruvanjikulam and Cranganore for several years, and they also made a claim on Chetuva-Manappuram even during the Dutch period. The Dutch, the Samuthiri and the English also placed claims on Chetuva like Cochin after the fall of Tipu.

The procedure to settle the disputes was started by the Joint Commissioners, who were appointed “to make necessary arrangements for enforcing British authority” for administration and the settlement of disputes in Malabar.⁵¹⁷ The dispute posed questions like “whether Chetway Island did not include Cranganore, Pattinettarayalam, Tiruvanchekulam, Kara, Triprayar?” or were “all territories included in the Cochin Treaty of 1791?” Moreover, the discussion of the dispute was further complicated as “Cochin contended that they were not included” in it.⁵¹⁸

In the context of the dispute over the ceded counties under the British in Malabar, Cochin Raja argued that “Padinetara Alum” or “Paddarettlum”, “Yedatertee” and “Tirriparatee” “composed what were anciently constituent

Manappuram pronounce it. Chetuva = cheru (mud) + vaya/vay (mouth). The word, vaya was shortened into va after the standardisation of Malayalam.

⁵¹⁶ “By the treaty of Seringapatam, 1792, that ended the Third Anglo-Mysore War, the British got control over Malabar”. Joint Commissioners’ Report 10.

⁵¹⁷ “Charles Boddam and William Gamul Farmer were deputed to Cochin and Palaghat respectively to ascertain the identity of the *taluks* referred to in the Cochin treaty of 1790. They were directed to enquire into the boundary dispute between the Raja of Cochin and the Zamorin and that relating to the three taluks between the former and the Raja of Travancore”. Lord Cornwallis on acquiring Malabar asked the governor of Bombay to make arrangements to enforce British authority there. William Samuel Farmer and Major Alexander Dow were appointed Commissioners of the territory and had to report on the administration of justice, collection of revenues, commercial regulations and military stations. Later, Jonathan Duncan, Mr. Page and Charles Boddam joined the Joint Commission at different times. The Commission had responsibilities that included deliberation, control and superintendence (10, 11). Joint Commissioners’ Report 10-11.

⁵¹⁸ See “C-120,” Reserved Files, (Kerala State Regional Archives, Ernakulum), 4.

parts of his kingdom” though the “places [were] lying within the Island of Chetwa”.⁵¹⁹ In fact, he tried to claim that those places had been part of the Cochin kingdom though they were physically located in “Chetway Island”. Perumpadappu Swaroopam (Raja of Cochin) affirmed that “Kara and Pathinettarayalam have been under the Cochin Raja since a long time and those were not included in Tipu’s revenue. These (Kara and Pathinettarayalam) two including Tiruvanchekulam, are under Kodungalloor Taluk, and Edathuruthy is at Airoor Nad; and Triprayar is at Payencheri Nad.”⁵²⁰ It is important to note that all these places were scattered in different *nadus*⁵²¹. Cochin’s property at Manappuram was not distributed as one physically contiguous singular place.

1. “*Cherical*”,⁵²² the Gateway: The Discourse of Dispute

The Cochin Raja claimed that places like Cranganore, Pathinettarayalam, Tiruvanchikulam, Kara, and Triprayar were his *cherical* lands (traditional property) which had been his since ancient times. The Dewan of Cochin presented his claim in front of the Commissioners, and he remarked that those places were “the immediate *chairkul*⁵²³ or private lands of the Rajah of Cochin.”⁵²⁴ Additionally, the Cochin Raja also argued that in some sense, some of those places were the *cherical* land of Thiruvanchikulam and Triprayar temples. The revenues from these villages were used to run and maintain these temples. He explained that the “district Edathuruthy belongs to the pagoda Tirvewansikolam, and Tirpariaar with the villages.”⁵²⁵ He

⁵¹⁹ Joint Commissioners’ Report 417.

⁵²⁰ “Purport: An old historical account and administration of Kara, Pathinettarayalam, Thiruvanchikulam, Cranganore, Edathiruthy and Triprayar and the revenue therefrom regarding the explanation of an article of the Company’s customs”, “Series 1, No: 352/21, List XLI (7.4.969),” Series Files.

⁵²¹ For example, Kara, Pathinettarayalam, and Tiruvanchikulam were parts of Kodungallur taluk; Edathuruthy belonged to Airoor Nad; and Triprayar was under Payenchery Nad.

⁵²² It is defined as “*Cherical* lands – Lands appropriated for the support of Rajas and temples”. Logan, A Collection viii.

⁵²³ It is the English version of *cherical* (land).

⁵²⁴ Joint Commissioners’ Report 426.

⁵²⁵ “Purport: A letter of the Raja of Cochin written to the Lord Governor of Madras”, “E: 24, No: 42,” Series Files, trans. Gereon C. D.

added, “All appropriated to the support and service of the pagoda of Trivengekalam, situated also within the same island.”⁵²⁶

The word “*cherical*” usually means private land of a king. But contextually, the word *cherical* has a dual meaning. One meaning that can be inferred from the previous paragraph is that it is the property for the personal use of the king (426). Another denotation is that it is the property for the use of temples (417). In other words, *cherical* lands appear to have dual significance– they were simultaneously kept in “support and service of the pagoda” as well as the “private land” of the Cochin Raja in this context. Therefore, he could strategically use its ambiguous meaning as either his personal property or the temples’ property during the dispute. However, the revenue from the *cherical* lands was being collected by the Cochin Raja himself.

Cochin constantly emphasised its claim over these places and fended off any move from the Samuthiri, the English or any other individual. The Samuthiri had, in fact, laid claim over several places including Cranganore, Pathinettarayalam, and Kara. This provoked Cochin to complain against the Samuthiri.⁵²⁷ Similarly, the Cochin Raja raised strong objections against the arrest of some of the *devaswom* (managers) at Triprayar in 1809 by the order of Drummond. The Raja stressed in his letter to Mr Warden, principal collector of Malabar that those temples were “particularly for me only”. He affirmed that he had been administering (*nadthichuvarunnu*) the temple-related rituals for years. He further noted that he had appointed those officials and they had started to collect revenue in order to fund temple ceremonies (*devasamadiyanthrangal*).⁵²⁸ He added that these two temples of

⁵²⁶ Joint Commissioners’ Report 417.

⁵²⁷ “Purport: A letter of the Raja of Cochin written to the Lord Governor of Madras”, E:24, No:42, Series Filestrans. Gereon C.D. The Commissioners observe, “The next pretension set up by the Zamorin was to the territory of Setway Manapoorum and Cranganore (otherwise called the Island of Chetwa) [...] have been conquered from the Samoory by the Dutch about the year 1717, fifty-six years after which it was taken from them in 1776 by Sirdar Khan on the part of Hyder Ali”. Joint Commissioners’ Report 293.

⁵²⁸ “Purport: a) From H.H to Mr Warden Management of the landed property of two *Devaswams*. Tiruvanchikulam and Triprayar and sending Konkani Venkateswaram to answer his liability as H.H’s shop-keeper b) From Col. Warden to H.H accounts of toll-free

“Tiruvanchikkulam and Triprayar and their properties were included in the treaty between us (Cochin) and the Company”.⁵²⁹

It was not possible to raise these claims verbally, in the context of this discourse, unlike in the past. The procedure for raising disputes insisted, not only on nominal evidence to prove ownership of the claimed properties but also sufficient evidence to establish it legally as well. Therefore, dispute arrived here probably under the guise of legality. The next section will discuss the evidence in the context of the dispute and its interconnections.

1.1. Dispute and Evidence

The discourse over boundary disputes makes evidence mandatory to establish claims. At that time, the prerequisite of evidence was new, unfamiliar, and caused confusion among the natives. However, such situations were managed through different strategic arrangements. For that purpose, they produced treaties and other documents. It is evident that the Cochin Raja tried to establish the claim by submitting treaties and agreements to the Joint Commissioners.

Cochin produced the treaty between the Cochin Raja and the English East India Company in 1790, in order to prove its claim over these places. The treaty stated that Cochin “shall throw off alliance to Tippu Sultan and become tributary to [...] company”.⁵³⁰ According to the treaty, the “company’s forces shall assist Rama Warma Raja to recover the possessions wrested from him by Tippu Sultan and shall render him independent of him [...] Rajah shall be put possession of them”.⁵³¹ It was decided that the Raja would pay tribute only for these possessions. The possessions included “Padanittaulum”,

grants to the above-mentioned *devaswam* called for”, “Series 1, No: 81(a), list IV (11-1-984),” Series Files.

⁵²⁹ “Series 1, No: 81(a), list IV (11-1-984),” Series Files.

⁵³⁰ A Collection 91.

⁵³¹ A Collection 91; See also Joint Commissioners’ Report 410.

“Karah”, “Tireparete” “in the district of Chetwai and Manapooram”; “Trevangekadum church”, “Yada-turtie” “in the village of Cranganore” where Cochin Raja “shall exercise complete and uncontrolled authority” on those possessions but it was only “under the acknowledged sovereignty” of the English company.⁵³²

According to the advice of Juan Gerathbun Angelberch, the last Dutch Commandeur, Cochin submitted proofs such as a receipt for tribute paid (receipt of *kappam* to Tipu), treaties and other documents to the Joint Commissioners to support his claim.⁵³³ Cochin consulted Angelberch regarding procedures of dispute over these places as well. Angelberch strengthened the Raja’s confidence with regard to Kodungallur by pointing out that the Raja could produce proof because the receipt of revenue, which was paid by Cochin (for Kodungallur) to Tipu, was already in his possession. He suggested that Cochin could have also produced any records, which were already in their possession, which documented that Pathinettarayalam had been given to Perumpadappu (Cochin Raja) by Nediyririppu (Samuthiri).⁵³⁴ He also reassured the Raja that the treaty clearly stated that Kodungallur was separately leased to Cochin.⁵³⁵

The Commissioners emphasised the need to produce evidence in a very strict manner. They instructed, “Clear up the doubts that arise from even their (disputants’) own narrative, they should bring forward and exhibit not only the treaties (several in number) thus asserted to have been passed, but the full number of receipts from year to year, so as to ascertain beyond dispute their

⁵³² A Collection 92. See also “Treaty with English 1791” (6th January 1791),” Series Files. In the Tamil copy of the same they have written as *sheema* instead of districts, *gramam* instead of village, *kshetram* instead of church, Series Files T.7.

⁵³³ “Purport: Instructs H.H how he should his claim to Cranganore and Pathenettarayalam and that it will not do to set forth the claim to Kavalapara”, “Series 1, No:375/227, List LXII-B, Bundle:30,” Series Files.

⁵³⁴ “Series 1, No:375/227, List LXII-B, Bundle:30,” Series Files.

⁵³⁵ “Purport: Informed Mr. Wretty in detail how Cochin Raja obtained Pathinettarayalam and Cranganore”, “Series 1, No:375/228, List LXII-B, Bundle:30,” Series Files.

payment of the Cranganore revenue.”⁵³⁶ Therefore, Cochin produced some evidence which helped to establish their claim on Cranganore. One such evidence was the ‘original letter’ which was written by Hyder Ali to Cochin Raja on September 1776.⁵³⁷ The same letter revealed that “the late Rajah of Cochin, having in consequence of Sirdar Khan’s attack on the Island of Chetwa in 1775-76, sent his vakeels ...to the aforesaid Nawaub, . . . conclude an agreement to pay in future the annual tribute of 30,000 Ikeree pagodas, inclusive of the district of Cranganore”.⁵³⁸ Cochin also produced “twelve more receipts, dated and granted. . . for the payment of the tribute in all of which Cranganore stands specifically named.”⁵³⁹

It has to be noted that, here, dispute invites written evidence to prove the claim. In fact, they might not have produced the evidence; rather they perhaps (re)produced the documents as evidence for the Joint Commissioners through legal procedures. The treaties and other documents which they submitted were already in existence, but the legal procedure of resolving dispute forced them to submit these. Such process of legality which mandated production of documents might appear as a kind of (re)production of (them as) evidence. The materialisation of the authenticity of evidence which was proposed by the colonial legality was not only limited in its written manifestation but was also in search of its historicity, in this context. Therefore, there appeared another form of evidence, parallel to but at the same time different from treaties and other documents.

⁵³⁶ Joint Commissioners’ Report 449.

⁵³⁷ “Second part – report of Messrs. Duncan and Boddam to the honourable sir John Shore, Bart (Governor-General-in-Council at Fort William),” Joint Commissioners’ Report. It was remarked that this letter “corroborated by official extracts furnished to us (Commissioners) by the Governor of Cochin, from the records of the Dutch Government at that place (translation of which are already before the board)” (479).

⁵³⁸ Joint Commissioners’ Report 479.

⁵³⁹ Joint Commissioners’ Report 451- 452. It is observed that “(several of them-receipt and so on - during Tippoo’s government) as far down as the year 1784”.

Narration as Evidence

The Commissioners also needed historical authenticity to establish the claims apart from treaties and other documents. Therefore, all parties that made claims had to produce details about their possessions in order to substantiate their claims. The Commissioners collected historical information from persons like Angelberch, the last Dutch Commandeur, the Dewan of Cochin, the Cochin Raja and the chiefs of petty principalities like Airoor Raja, etc. It has to be remembered here that the Dutch were also collecting historical information regarding the possession of the region during their period. Moens, the Dutch Commandeur, usually collected information through “old and impartial natives” about possession,⁵⁴⁰ which I will discuss in a later part of this chapter.

Juan Gerathbun Angelberch noted in his transaction with the Commissioners that Pathinettarayalam had been under the rule of Cochin for a long time. Once it was attacked by Samuthiri. But later it was taken from the Samuthiri by the Dutch for a short span and was then given back to the Cochin Raja.⁵⁴¹ The Commissioners also emphasised that as per the Cochin Dewan’s conversation with them, the “districts of Puinetara, Alum and Kaura, which though originally appertaining to the Airoor division of the island”, were not part of Cranganore even though Hyder and Tippu allowed Cochin⁵⁴² to keep these places. The Dewan of Cochin also informed them that they had paid revenue for those places throughout Tipu’s rule.⁵⁴³

The Cochin Raja had emphasised the claim over his own *cherical* land and disqualified Samuthiri’s claim over “Chetuva Manappuram” by writing a

⁵⁴⁰ Moens states that he wanted to know the “old division of land” among natives and those places “most naturally belonged” with whom. Additionally, he states, “on the one hand I understood that not only much composure but even knowledge and experience of the country are required to keep the balance in that place and among the natives”. “Memorandum on the Administration of the Coast of Malabar by Adriaan Moens,” in The Dutch in Malabar (139, 141).

⁵⁴¹ “Series 1, No: 375/227, list LXII-B, Bundle: 30,” Series File.

⁵⁴² It was observed that “whose family had originally acquired them many years ago; through an adoption, from the Airoor Rajah”. Joint Commissioners’ Report 430.

⁵⁴³ Joint Commissioners’ Report 430.

letter to MacLeod, the first Principal Collector of Malabar then, dated 9th *Makaram* 977 (1802). The Cochin Raja stated that “Chetuva Manappuram belongs to Airoor Raja; Payenchery Nad is the part of the same which had been given to Payenchery Nair by one of the Airoor Raja without the consent of others (of Airoor).”⁵⁴⁴ Since the remaining Rajas did not agree that the Payenchery Nairs had unanimous authority over Payenchery Nad, Payenchery Nairs invited Samuthiri to affirm their power at Payenchery Nad and subsequently, Samuthiri exercised his excessive power across the “*rajyam*”.

Consequently, Airoor Raja and Cochin together requested the “*lanthakumpanji*” (Dutch Company) to stop the Samuthiri’s interference and they confiscated Payenchery Nad from the Samuthiri. As a result, it came under the Dutch control. Eventually, it was taken by Hyder and finally, it fell into the hands of the English East India Company. The Cochin Raja argued that otherwise “there is no connection of Manappuram with Zamudiri Rajavu.”⁵⁴⁵ Upon a careful reading, one can observe that some of his *cherical* were situated at Airoor and Payenchery Nad. Further, while stressing on *cherical*, his private properties, he tries to claim Manappuram itself. In other words, *cherical* seems not only the gateway of dispute but also the entry point of the claim on Manappuram.

Information on Kodungallur was also certainly an important point of contention in the dispute. Angelberch said that when Hyder Ali Khan came to Cranganore, a place which was a “small one under Kodungalloor Raja”, it was “separated” and “not attached with Chetuva Dweep, the *rajyam* which was situated north of Puramkottam (outer fort)”. Hyder had given Cranganore on lease to Cochin and Tipu had later extended that lease, but they had given Cranganore separately, as specified in the treaty. He added that the fort

⁵⁴⁴ “C-120,” Reserved Files 6.

⁵⁴⁵ C-120, Reserved Files 6.

situated in Kodungallur had been sold to Trippapil Swaroopam (the Travancore Raja) by the Dutch.⁵⁴⁶

Angelberch also gave a brief historical sketch about Cranganore to the Joint Commissioners in the context of Samuthiri's claim over Cranganore. He elucidated on the issue; "... no doubt he (*Zamudiri*) supports his pretensions upon the history of last century and more particularly upon the treaty of peace with our (the Dutch) company of the 10th September 1691, by which we granted to him, in mere gift, this small country conquered by us from the then Rajah."⁵⁴⁷ However, Samuthiri "terminated" the peace in "the early part of the century" and Cranganore Raja got back the land by the "treaty of January 1710". According to this treaty, the Cranganore Raja had continued his power till Hyder's conquest of Cranganore.⁵⁴⁸

From the above discussion, it is clear that Cranganore became the focal point in the discourse of claim. In the backdrop of this dispute, for Cochin, Cranganore seemed an easier and strategic entry point, geographically and discursively, to make the distinction between its own regions and leased regions. One can explore the implications through a detailed study of the letters. In fact, Cochin was very careful while writing the agreement. The Raja instructed his office-bearers to be careful while describing Manappuram in the agreement of the lease. Its area was marked off thus in the contract: Chetuva Manappuram which was "north to Kothaparamba and south to

⁵⁴⁶ "Purport: Informed Mr. Wretty in detail how Cochin Raja obtained Pathinettarayalam and Cranganore", "Series 1, No: 375/228, list LXII, Bundle: 30," Series Files.

⁵⁴⁷ Joint Commissioners' Report 436.

⁵⁴⁸ See Joint Commissioners' Report 437. It is noted in *The Chetwaye Island* that "Dr. Day observes that 'in the Dutch records for 1743, it is expressly stated: the Cranganur owed obedience to the Dutch company and was not under the Raja of Cochin. That they obtained this territory by a treaty of peace made with the Zamorin, December 17, 1717; but they allowed the line of the Cranganur Rajahs to continue as their vassals'" , C-120, Reserved Files⁵

Chetua estuary” which “excluded” the places “Pathinetarayalam, Kara, two *devaswams* of Triprayar and Tirvanchkulam and *desams* under them”.⁵⁴⁹

Through this remark, it can be understood that Cochin tried to exclude its own *cherical* lands from the agreement of the lease in order to emphasise its ownership over these places. But this remark also draws attention to some spots such as “north to Kothaparamba and south to Chetua estuary” that seem to be an attempt to mark the south point of Manappuram at Kothaparamba where Kodungallor’s north point starts. This throws light onto the precise physical formation of a region. The next section will elaborate more on this thread.

In short, the discourse of the dispute demanded evidence and narration as substantiation. The English demanded that written evidence be produced, backed by the representation (narration) of the people. Therefore, the native Rajas reproduced receipts of revenue, documents of treaties, agreements and deeds. And people themselves were presented in front of the Commissioners and (re)presented the narratives. Here, all the information which the Joint Commissioners collected from different persons can be classified as narratives. Moreover, the information would not merely appear as information; rather it arrived as narration on the region that is perhaps historical.

Hence the collection of narratives, which is historically stimulated, meant that the narratives appear as historical here. The usage of these historical

⁵⁴⁹ They may refer to places under the treaty between Cochin and the English in 1790. “Purport: H.H’s reply Chikkaniyan’s proposal regarding Chetwa lease involving secrete expenditure”, “Series 1, No: 355/3, List XLII, Bundle: 20” (17 *Chingam* 970), Series Files. Also see “English East India Companykku Malayam Pravishya Labichathu Sambanthicha Rekha” (the document which regards on the Malayam province got to English East India Company), Saktan Records, “Series Files 383/1 (19.5.967; 1791),” 26-27. See also, C-120, Reserved Files 8. It is marked, “The lease for 10 years of “the island Chettewah Manappuram,” exclusively of the *cherical* land of Pudewatara, Alume and Kanru, in which that of the Rajah’s temple of Trevangecolum and the pagoda Teriparattu for an annual rental of Rs.30,000 was eventually made”.

narratives as substantial evidence to establish the claims means these narratives sounded as evidence in the legalities of the dispute. Concisely, here, the narrative itself seems to be the evidence in the discourse of dispute. In a sense, the narrative appears not only as historical but also as a legal one. In short, one can observe that the evidence has emerged as both a legal and a historical object in this discourse because the evidence they submitted was in the form of treaties, agreements and so on that could be considered legal.

Furthermore, the people had to be physically present and submit their letter, in front of the Joint Commissioners to provide information, which means that they had to be present in front of the colonial legal structure. Such a presence of the body and the letter indicates their representation itself. To put it differently, in the discourse of the dispute, people seemed to expound the historical narrations by the (re)presentation through their body and letters. One can extend the argument and state that the above process of the narration itself (re)presented in front of the legal apparatus produces the very idea of ‘evidence’ and ‘facticity’. Therefore, these two kinds of evidence—legal and historical—were mutually constituted in the epoch of the 18th century. In short, both the historical and legal not only created the evidential and the factual but might have been co-produced reciprocally. The evidential and factual perhaps produced the history and the legality.

One could probably argue that the (re)production of evidence and (re)presentation of narration arrive at the locus of legalities of dispute in the form of evidential and representational narratives that offer the scope for writing the history of the region. But here, while narrative became evidence, the representational narratives were also certainly limited to the evidential, which perhaps suggest a teleological, scientific, and linear history at least. It might potentially exist and so possibly can appear at any historical moment since the representational narrative has been concealed in the evidential. At

this juncture, one can pose the question: why has there not been any history writing on the region of Manappuram?

One could argue that the (re)presentation of historical narration in the light of legality and its recording reified the boundary of the region. In this context, one can note what Michel De Certeau (1988) in *The Practice of Everyday Life* rightly pointed out with regard to the “[...] dispute concerning debatable boundaries. Their ‘interlocutory judgment’ as it was called, was an ‘operation of marking out boundaries’ [...] writing something flowed into drawings outlining the boundaries [...] these interlocutory judgements were in sum nothing other than meta-stories. They combined together the opposing stories of the parties involved” (122).⁵⁵⁰ Here it can be argued that the reproduction of evidence and representation of narration would not only offer scope for writing the history of the region, rather, it endeavoured to define/redefine the region itself by marking the boundary.

The evidence and narration in the context of the dispute on Cranganore would attempt to draw the distinction between Cranganore and the rest of the places at “Chetuva Island”. How one such attempt was depicted intensively by the dispute is discussed in detail in the next section.

1.2. Dispute and Boundary

There was a specific dispute between the English and Cochin on the question of whether Cranganore was included in the island of Chetuva or not,⁵⁵¹ and this, in fact, became a central discourse which possibly attempted the drawing of the boundary of Manappuram. While the Joint Commissioners heard and settled the dispute regarding the “Island of Chetwa”, which fell into the custody of the English from Tipu, the claim of Cochin on Cranganore also

⁵⁵⁰ Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (London: University of California Press, 1988).

⁵⁵¹ Joint Commissioners’ Report 409.

appeared before them. When we examine the discourse generated by the procedures of dispute, it becomes apparent that the English tried to establish Cranganore as a part of the island of Chetuva. Simultaneously Cochin argued that Cranganore was a separate place which was not included as part of the island of Chetuva. Both parties had similar aims – to possess Cranganore.

The entire discourse with regard to the content emerged and advanced in two directions, the narration of the treaty and the language of the treaty—both related to the question of whether Cranganore was included in Chetuva or not. The former (narration of the treaty) was on the basis of two claims put forth by Cochin through a letter mentioned in the *Joint Commissioners' Report*. First among the claims is that according to the treaty between the Cochin Raja and the Madras government in 1790, Cochin had “rented Chetwa proper from the company under the lease granted by Mr Powney without including Crungiloor”. In the same letter, Cochin brought up a second point, “on the surrender of Chetuva to the company, that place is mentioned without Crungiloor” by Tipu (417).

Furthermore, the Commissioners had to address another question raised by Cochin which was linked to the language of “the original treaty signed by the Madras government”. The treaty was written both “in the English and Malabar Language”. And these two versions were written differently. Based on these differences “does perhaps principally hinge what may be urged on both sides of this question.”⁵⁵² Both parties produced evidence and counter-evidence and arguments and counter-arguments, in order to establish claims of historical possession through various treaties, their contents, and the counterparts of the treaties and so on.

⁵⁵² It is noted that “[...] the original treaty signed by the Madras government in English and Malabar languages, were opposite to what is written in the former village of Cranganore, the *seemy* (i.e.) district or country of Cranganore is in the latter, on which difference does perhaps principally hinge what may be urged on both sides of this question”. *Joint Commissioners' Report* 425.

There was a considerable correspondence between the Commissioners and the Raja of Cochin, the Dewan of Cochin, the Dutch Commandeur, the Raja of Airoor and others regarding the question of whether Cranganore was already included or not as part of the island of Chetuva (427-30). Van Angelberch, the Commissioner, noted that “the political relations among the several petty chiefs of the country of Chetuva Manapoorum, are so numerous and perplexed and have ever been liable to so many changes, that it is almost impossible to give any clear and distinct detail of them” (433). Even though the English tried to get information about these petty chiefs and the relations among them, it was a painstaking process.

Boundary and Narration

In order to counter Cochin’s claim, the Commissioners had collected additional, though brief, details on the histories of Manappuram based on the former’s argument. According to the “Rajah of Ayroor (the middle part of Chetwa)”, the Commissioner recounts, “Setwye Manapooram, does when strictly construed in the full sense of the term, include Cranganore, though in general or common conversation, Setwaye Manapoorum and Cranganore are used to express the territory which geographically constitutes the island of Chetwa; overall which three divisions, the dominion of the Samoory (to whom however this witness is rather favourably inclined) [...] and all the local authorities within the island were subordinate to him till the year 1715” (428).⁵⁵³

The report continued narrating the Airoor Raja’s account and stated that Cochin had captured “Setwye Manpooram” with the help of the Dutch and kept it in possession until the Zamudiri again attacked Cochin in 1753-54 and reduced it to the “two forts of Cochin and Cranganore”. The Samuthiri kept

⁵⁵³ The Commissioners note that Samuthiri had collected “several articles of Trevakarchy (or presents)”, chungadum (or protection money)” and “purishandrum or shares of deceased person’s estates”.

it until 1757-58 and the same year Cochin declared war with the help of the Dutch. The war ended with a peace treaty which permitted the Dutch to hold the whole island of Chetuva until the Samuthiri provided compensation for the war. However, the Samuthiri himself was expelled from his own country by Hyder within eight years in 1765 (428-9).

The report added that according to Airoor Raja, when the Dutch were “either unwilling or unable to protect Cranganore”, its Raja had agreed to “a written engagement” with Nowas Rao, Hyder’s general. The agreement was “to pay a certain sum of money, for which he gave the Carigur of the Cochin Raja as his security, and did accordingly make his payments through the said Carigur for two years or 1775-76”.⁵⁵⁴ In due course, Sirdar Khan (Hyder’s officer) invaded the rest of the island except the Fort of Cranganore.⁵⁵⁵ But the Dutch recaptured Chetuva in 1783. However, Mr Angelberch, the Dutch Commander returned Chetuva to Tipu by the year 1784, as per the order of the Council General of Batavia (432).

The discussion also examined whether Cranganore was under the control of the Dutch or not. Van Angelberch stated through correspondence with Duncan – one of the Commissioners – that “the village of Cranganore [...] appeared [...] always [...] independent of the Dutch”. The Commissioners noted that Angelberch had mentioned: “in his first communication” that “Cranganore has been always distinct from Chetuva proper (the northern part of the island) and depended on itself and on its Chief who governed it” (432-3).

⁵⁵⁴ Joint Commissioners’ Report 429. The Commissioners observed that Cochin Raja had “paid something including also for the country of Cranganore” to Mysore up to 1773-74 when Cranganore assured “in writing” and continued till 1776-77 (425).

⁵⁵⁵ Joint Commissioners’ Report 429. The Fort of Cranganore continued to be under Dutch control until “they sold it to the Rajah of Travancore in 1789”.

In opposition to this information, the Commissioners received counter-information that Cranganore was dependent on the Dutch like “the rest of the island of Chetwa, which included [...] all the territory between the two bars of Cranganore and Chetwa”. To support the above statement, the Commissioners emphasised that Angelberch had “silently passed” information that the Cranganore Raja had “been a vassal of the Dutch company”⁵⁵⁶. They had also observed that “the Rajah of the last-mentioned country (Cranganore) appears to have continued to always be independent” since Angelberch’s letter was received (433).

As per the information provided to the Commissioners by Angelberch, Cochin had not taken into consideration that “Cranganore was included in the lease from Mr Powney”. He explained that “because as this village belonged neither to Paponetty (another term for the middle division of Ayroor) nor to Chetuva, this supposition falls of itself” (433). In fact, he observed that “the Rajah claimed Cranganore, not upon the subsequent lease but up on the previous treaty”. But the Commissioners countered that “on the same subject [...] we might argue, that [...] in lease the island of Chetwa, including as it geographically does, the village and territory of Cranganore, at a rental equal or nearly to the full value of the whole of that island [...] that this district, and not merely the village of Cranganore, had been ceded by Tippu Sultan to the English East India Company [...] since it has (as Mr Van Angelberch himself informed us) been conquered by that prince’s father in 1776, at the same time with the rest of the island, at which period, it does by no means appear that Cranganore appertained to the Cochin Raja” (435).

The second claim of Cochin was that there was no mention of Cranganore (in the records) on the occasion of the surrender of Chetuva to the English East

⁵⁵⁶ Joint Commissioners’ Report 433. The Commissioners also noted that “by the first of which that gentleman (Angelberch) states that the dependence of the Raja of Cranganore on the Dutch company did not finally cease till the month of November in the year 1776, when Hyder Ali Khan took possession of Chetwa and Paponetty and invaded also at the same time the country of the Rajah of Cranganore.” See Joint Commissioners’ Report 448.

India Company by Tipu. The Commissioner addressed that claim by referring to “Tippoo’s schedule in the 78th para”, and found that the argument that Cochin had raised was false. The Commissioners mentioned that in the schedule of Tipu, “Chetwa Island” is referred to as “the two talooks” which included “Satway and Crungiloor or Cranganore”. That means “the whole island of Chetwa, which comprises Setwye or Chetway Manappooram, and Cranganore”.⁵⁵⁷

Looking at the treaties with Tipu and the narration of Angelberch, the Commissioners tried to argue that Cranganore was a part of the “Island of Chetwa”. However, the counterclaim by Cochin on Cranganore delimited such yearning of the English for the region in the realm of dispute. Cochin’s argument was that Cranganore never “belonged....to Chetuva” and its “supposition falls of itself” trying to project Cranganore as a separate region and distancing it as something distinct from “Chetuva”. To put it differently, it probably draws a demarcating line between Cranganore and Manappuram.

Village or “Seemy”: Language and Boundary

The next question the Commissioners had to deal with was regarding the language of the treaty which was written both in the language of “Malabar”⁵⁵⁸ and English. In the English version of the treaty, Cranganore was marked as “the village of Cranganore”, contrary to the Malayalam equivalent, in which it was stated as a “the *seemy* (i.e.) district or country of Cranganore.”⁵⁵⁹ In

⁵⁵⁷ Joint Commissioners’ Report 417-418. The Commissioners note that in the letter which was written by the Raja of Cochin on the issue, the word which (indicating island of Chetuva) was written by the Raja denoted only its “sandy situation” and Crungiloor” (418). That means the Raja of Cochin specified only Manappuram instead of “Setwye or Chetway Manappooram and Cranganore”.

⁵⁵⁸ In the report they mentioned the “Malabar part”, but the original which I was able to find was only in the form of copies in English, Tamil, and Malayalam. The Malabar counterpart of the treaty which they refer to, was actually written in Tamil, which means that Malayalam as a language was not very distinct from Tamil at that time in the consciousness and discourse of the rulers.

⁵⁵⁹ It is noted that “ [...] the original treaty signed by the Madras government in the English and Malabar languages, were opposite to what is written in the former, the village of Cranganore, the *seemy* (i.e.) district or country of Cranganore is in the latter, on which

fact, discrete remarks in the original treaty qualified Cranganore in two distinct ways. The questions that arose due to the language of the treaty also characterised the nature of the place. The argument had arisen on the question of whether Cranganore had been marked as a “village” or “*seemy*–country/district” in the treaty.

The Commissioners pointed out that “in the treaty the words ‘of the village of Cranganore’ are written generally”, even though the Cochin Raja “does still possess two villages in that country” (438). But in the copy of the Raja which was written in the Malabar part, Cranganore was referred to as the “*seemy* (the country) of Cranganore”. The Raja’s claim emphasised the latter remark and hence led to the question (442-3). The Commissioners added that the Cochin Raja and his ministers persisted in asking for “the *seemy*, or country of Crangaloor, to be given up to them” basing their arguments on the grounds “that word (*seemy*) was inserted in the Malabar part of their treaty” (442).

The Commissioners quote Angelberch’s communication with them which disclosed his conversation with the Cochin Raja as well. Angelberch notes that “you (Commissioners)⁵⁶⁰ object that it was not the entire district or country of Cranganore, but only the village of that name which had been granted to him (Cochin Raja) in the engagement, but he replied that he did

difference does perhaps principally hinge what may be urged on both sides of this question”. Joint Commissioners’ Report 425.

⁵⁶⁰ Angelberch clarified two more objections raised by the English regarding his conversation with the Cochin Raja. He passed on the communication to the Commissioners through his correspondence with them. One was with regard to Cochin’s “engagement with Hyder Ali Khan”. In his reply, the Raja agreed that his uncle had engaged in a treaty with Hyder who “had not yet invaded Cranganore, nor even any place to the northward.” Nevertheless, he added that his uncle was conscious that “Hyder intended not only to possess himself of these northern countries, but also of Chetwa, Paponetty (or Airoor) and Cranganore, wherefore it was that he was beforehand in concluding his engagement”. A second clarification was needed on why Cochin did not include the districts of Chetwa and Paponetty in the engagement. Cochin clarified that those places were under Dutch control and added that “such a measure would have been a breach of his treaty of alliance with the Dutch company, to whom these two countries did then belong”, Joint Commissioners’ Report, 443-444.

not know the English language”. The Cochin Raja, in fact, did not involve himself in any vocal engagement. Similarly, the Malabar counterpart of the treaty also had remarked that “the term *sima* or *seemy* [...] means the country of Cranganore”. Therefore, Cochin Raja stood by his remark which was written in “his own language”. Angelberch also specified that it would be “unjust” if the Raja was forced to suffer the “blunder of the English” (443). However, the Commissioners stood their ground on the basis of the following two arguments, firstly “the terms of the lease are expressly for the island of Chetwa”, where “Cranganore stands undoubtedly comprehended”; secondly “Tippoo Sultan hath also included and ceded Cranganore in the rental accompanying the treaty of peace separately from Cochin” (439).

This also reveals how the play on language influenced the characterisation of a place that in turn led to its concreteness. One can understand that Cranganore was characterised as either “village” or “country” through this discourse. In other words, these tropes possibly provide a proper, concrete form or character to a region. What it says is that both language and narration constitute the tropes “village” and “*sima*”. The word “*sima*” or “*seemy*”, in fact, stands for the Tamil word “*seemai*” which denotes “country”. At the same time, there is a word in Malayalam, “*sheema*”⁵⁶¹ which has two meanings: boundary and district; another Malayalam word “*seema*”,⁵⁶² which means boundary.⁵⁶³

It is interesting to juxtapose these two words which offer reciprocal relations between them to suggest that *seema* is a synonym for *sima* (*i*). Similarly, the term boundary is a synonym for country and that allows the reading that the idea of a country might have emerged when the marking of boundaries began

⁵⁶¹ C. Madhavan Pillai, NBS Malayalam English Dictionary (Kottayam: Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd, 1999), 995.

⁵⁶² Pillai 1013.

⁵⁶³ *Seema* is a Sanskrit word. After the Sanskritisation of the old language, Malayalam emerged as a language in its own right, and Kerala started to mark its imagination/identity as a linguistic region.

and vice versa in the linguistic realm. Therefore, the discourse of dispute on Cranganore endeavours to draw the boundary for both Cranganore and Manappuram. Thus, Cranganore probably emerged as a separate, physical region through this discourse and it also attempted to render the physical region of Manappuram. It should be noted here that the language arrived in the discourse is an essential component in the making of the boundary.

Moreover, the trope of “village” which was used by the English has influenced the translation of the native possession “*sima*”, into “*village*”. But the native Raja was not ready to accept such a translation. This sheds light on how certain predicaments of colonial knowledge attempt to translate the life and knowledge of “natives” through their (colonial) epistemological domain and facilitate its inclusion.

“Nulla”: Geographical Marker and Boundary

The discussion on geography also underpinned the discourse on the same. In the *Joint Commissioner’s Report*, they indicated that:

The southern part of the island consisting of Cranganore, was divided from the northern by a *nulla* or watercourse; but as will appear by the inspection [...] the watercourse in question, though meant probably for a boundary to Cranganore, does not extend across the island, but only as far as it meets the two spots of Pudinetara Alum and Kaura, where it stops. So that geographically, Chetuva proper, Airoor and Cranganore, must be apprehended (as is also the general acceptance) and understood as composing one island (431-432).

It is intriguing how the Commissioners brought a *nulla* or watercourse which geographically divided Cranganore and rest of the places in Chetuva Island into the discussion. But they were also somewhat keen on the scientific, accurate physical features of the island which made them worry that the *nulla* “does not extend across the island” which was discovered by means of “inspection”. It pushed them to conclude that because the watercourse did not

appear in its proper form, Cranganore was not a distinct landform. Therefore “Chetuva” was appeared arrived at as an island as well through the above discussion. In fact, its boundaries were blurred.⁵⁶⁴ The debate and contestation over the *nulla* seem to “probably render a boundary to Cranganore”. Similarly, it somehow generated the idea of boundary for Manappuram as well.⁵⁶⁵

The Commissioners finally reached two proposals or options with regard to Cranganore: “Either all the island including Cranganore, or only Cranganore, may remain with him (Cochin Raja) or both shares thereof may devolve to the company” (439). In that context they were allowed to keep one person to look after “the protection of the *ryots*, (Indian cultivators) it shall be again entirely committed to him”. The second proposal was that if the Cochin Raja did not want to acquire the “whole island” he could hold “the single district of Cranganore” as long as he abided by the above condition (439-440).

The discourse of dispute names the region as “Island of Chetwa”. This naming does not indicate a mere name but it defines the region, which means that the region’s name, Chetuva Island, marks its nature and defines it as an island. In addition, the process marks the region as an island which would have appeared as one easy way to tackle the dispute. For that purpose, the English portrayed Chetwa as “the territory between the two bars of Cranganore and Chetwa”, that “geographically constitute(s) the Island of Chetwa”. They emphasised that it’s positioning between “two bars” “geographically constitutes” the island thus physically incorporating the

⁵⁶⁴ The Commissioners also observed that “this island in general had remained in the possession of the Dutch from 1717 to 1776, whereas we have now reason to believe that they were occasionally disturbed, and once at least dispossessed during the said period of their tenure” (this information is from Mr. Powney, who transmitted Mr. Angelberch’s information), Joint Commissioners’ Report 427.

⁵⁶⁵ Sack observes that in the pre-modern period “boundaries were never delimited as accurately as they are now because surveying and mapping techniques were limited and records of land holdings were not kept uniformly and accurately”. Robert Davis Sack, Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History, in Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 19.

region into the idea of an island. There was an attempt to classify Manappuram as an “island” in a scientific manner by bringing in the discussion of *nulla*.

In sum, through the discourse of dispute, the English projected its nature as closed that perhaps set the region as a closure. Both attempts at naming and setting the closure try to define the region—processes that might have facilitated the English to administer the region, and might have offered the idea of an administrative region.

Upon studying the dispute, it is clear that the Commissioners considered in parallel all the claims on Cranganore. The Commissioners also observed that “(as Mr Van Angelberch adds) the pretensions of the Zamorin on the village of Cranganore are exceedingly ill founded” (437). Travancore also made a claim over Cranganore, but Mr Powney observed that it was “unjust and ill founded” after “a strict examination” (443). The Commissioners decided at the end of the dispute that the Cochin Raja will be “allowed to retain the proper district of Cranganore” (445) and “to continue possession of all these places, on the same footing and to the same extent as he formerly enjoyed them”.⁵⁶⁶

Here there is no mention of the petty chiefs or inhabitants. In addition, the discourse probably reduced the number of actors’ and their claim on the region; moreover, it marked the Cochin Raja, Samuthiri and the English as the actors of the claim in the context of the dispute. The normal structures of dispute settlement allowed possession of the land only to the native Raja and the colonisers, and this prevented even petty chiefs from laying claim to the

⁵⁶⁶ Joint Commissioners’ Report 446. The Commissioners’ also noted that “[...] Pudinetara Alum and Kaura (in which last is his temple of Travangicalum) in like manner as he had always held these places in Tippu’s time, together with Yedetertee which we understand to be composed of lands consecrated to the temple in question; and finally Terreperattee, a place in the northern division of the island of Chetwa proper, where his rights are said to extend only to a share in the temple there, and in the lands peculiarly appropriated to its support” (445).

land. Here one could argue that this legal discourse and colonial mediation evicted the agency of inhabitants and petty chiefs and that it lent more power to the native Rajas. Furthermore, these actors seem to be depicted as sovereigns, unlike the petty chiefs. It can be argued that the discourse of dispute tries to establish and maintain the sovereignty triggered by the lease and by doing so, attempts to settle the contestation and the different claims on the region so that a physically homogenous region is offered.

While one looks at the entire discourse of the dispute, it seems that the evidence and narration reveal attempts to draw the boundary of the region, as mentioned earlier. But further analysis reveals that language and geography are also significant in the marking of the boundary. One could argue that the narrative, language, geography and (evidence) legalities played a pivotal role in marking the boundaries of the Manappuram region during this time. Therefore, it is a kind of mapping of the region through the narrative, legality, language and geography—without a map. The ‘evidential’ and ‘factual’ narratives are perhaps a substitute of the map that offers “concrete” and “accurate” boundary for the region.

In the end, Mr Duncan declared Cranganore and all the other disputed areas as belonging to Cochin after a close examination of all the claims.⁵⁶⁷ In other words, Cochin, through sheer persistence, obtained Cranganore, Tiruvanchikulam, Kara, Pathinettarayalam and the Triprayar temple on Chetuva Island.⁵⁶⁸ The Cochin Raja also won the rest of the tract, but merely on lease, since the Commissioners “decided that the tract was British territory”.⁵⁶⁹ It was quite difficult to make an ultimate resolution in relation to the boundary claim in the context of places like Triprayar,

⁵⁶⁷ “Purport: A letter of Raja of Cochin written to the Lord Governor of Madras”, trans. Gereon C.D., “E: 24, 42,” Series Files.

⁵⁶⁸ “C-120,” Reserved Files 9.

⁵⁶⁹ The Chetwaye Island 8. Though Cochin made a “fairly good claim”, the English also tried to annex Cranganore on legal grounds. Seen along those lines, it is no wonder they “rejected” Cochin’s claim over the rest of Chetuva Island.

Pathinettarayalam, Kara, Edathuruthy and Tiruvanchikulam, which were enclosed by leased lands. There was always tension among the English, Cochin and the inhabitants even later on due to the constant threat that the lease could be cancelled. It was an unsettled dispute that persisted for long in the region because it was intractable to settle through legal mediation. After the expiry of the term in eight years, this tract of territory returned to the English.

If we consider some of the connected issues, it is clear that there were a few individual claims over the region of Manappuram apart from the dispute. For instance, Mr Kuthampilly Kelukutty built houses at “Thuruth (holm), on the east side of the east river of Manappuram” and on “land in Kodungalloor”—both of which were places which the Cochin Raja had already laid claim on. The Cochin Raja sent a written objection to Mr Duncan, then Governor of Bombay, and asked him to remove the house and the person occupying the land.⁵⁷⁰

Here, it is evident that the claims exerted by Cochin, Samuthiri and English over these places were mediated through the legal discourse of dispute unlike the earlier practice of encroachment and conquering. However, some personal claims were still made on the land, manifested through encroachment by individuals like Kuthampilly Kelukutty, who was presumably an Ezhava. This individual encroachment suggests a personal claim over the region where petty chiefs would not have dared to encroach, unlike the dispute, where the claim was possibly limited to native Rajas and colonisers. This encroachment, which occurred in more than one place, shows that there was some puzzling but powerful presence of another kind of claim there, which was outside the normative realm of polity in the region.

⁵⁷⁰ “Manappurathu Thuruthummal Kuthampilly Kelukutty Pura Kettiya Vivaram” (Matter regarding Kuthampully Kelukutty building a house at a holm in Manappuram), Sakathan Records, in “Series Files: 95/1, 8.7.976 (1800),” 87. See also “Kodungallooril Purakal Ketty Kavalakkunnathu Sambathichu” (Matter regarding houses built and posting security at Kodungallur), Sakathan Records, in “Series Files: 92/1, 13.4.979(1803),” 111.

II. Scripting the Past: Memoirs and Production of Narratives

The historical narratives collected by the Joint Commissioners (1792-93) discussed in the previous section of this chapter shed light on the region during the Dutch period. The Dutch memoirs extend our knowledge about the region further. In this section, I discuss the Dutch memoirs in detail, especially the memoirs of the two Dutch Commandeurs – Gollennesse (1743) and Moens (1781) –who documented Manappuram in the 18th century. The memoirs delineate the daily life of the natives and the Dutch authorities in the area during the Dutch rule. These well-documented memoirs are an excellent repository of records and historical narratives about the pre-Dutch period of the region as well. This part deals with how the memoirs produce the narratives on Manappuram. Furthermore, I strive to look at how such narratives script the past of the region.

Most of the historical narratives in the Dutch memoirs, *The Dutch in Malabar*, were a reflection of their time, even though many details were collected from original native sources. For instance, Moens wrote that he had “inferred” the details from “old people”, “old records” and “old documents” of “natives”, especially from “old impartial” natives (139). Since there was an absence of “documents and native tradition”, Moens collected information from multiple sources such as the ministers of Cochin Raja, the “old documents of the people of Malabar, and [...] notes and traditions of the families themselves” (127,135). Further, he drew upon the letters of the Dutch officials to portray the earlier Dutch period in his memoir (128).

From the discussions on the discourse of dispute in the previous section, it is apparent that during the English period there was no physically homogenous region called Manappuram. At this point, the following questions emerge: Did Manappuram exist in any other form in the Dutch period? How did power manifest in that period? Did it precede the formation of the region?

1. Swaroopams⁵⁷¹ and Nadu: Petty Principalities in (Pre) Modern Times

According to the Dutch memoirs, there were four petty chiefs in the “region between Chettua and Cranganore”⁵⁷² —Kodungallor, Airoor, Cartamana and Pazhenchery Nair.⁵⁷³ With the exception of Pazhenchery Nair, all the others were considered as royal families. Different stories and claims had been made about these families and their origins.⁵⁷⁴ The Dutch memoirs provide a slightly different picture about the division of “territories” of these principalities from the report of Major Dow, one of the Joint Commissioners.⁵⁷⁵ In Major Dow’s account, the “island of Chetuva” was described as a division of “three unequal principalities”,⁵⁷⁶ which included the “largest consisting of Setwaye proper, occupying the northern portion of this isle,⁵⁷⁷” “in the middle Ayroor,” and lastly the “smallest sub-division of Cranganore”.⁵⁷⁸

1.1. Airoor Swaroopam at Vellangalloor and Three Petty Principalities

⁵⁷¹ Swaroopam means “dynasty; the first king as the representative of the dynasty”, (Pillai 1999: 1023). Logan describes, “Svarupam = one’s own shape, image, idol, dynasty; means decent, family, race, house, answering to Vamsam”, Logan, Malabar II (1989: ccxxxiv). Achyuta Menon described Swaroopam as follows: “The Naduvazhi chiefs [...] belonged to one of three classes, viz., *svarupi*, *prabhu* and *madambi*. All who had the power of life and death were *svarupis*. A *svarupi* might, therefore, be an independent king like that of Cochin or Calicut, or he might be a tributary Raja [...] the only restriction on whose power was that they could not make war or coin without the sanction of their suzerain, or he might be the subordinate chief [...] governing a district under the orders of the king”, in Menon, The Cochin State Manual 63. See also, Menon, Kochirajya Charithram (1966).

⁵⁷² Memoirs of Moens in The Dutch in Malabar (134). It was also marked as the “territory of Chettua” (134) and as the “stretch of land from Chetuva to Cranganore” (135). At the same time, Gollennesse did not mark Manappuram similarly but as “states” and “countries” (62-64).

⁵⁷³ The memoirs mark it as Payenchery while the native letters spell it as Pazhanchery.

⁵⁷⁴ From, The Dutch in Malabar.

⁵⁷⁵ See “Introduction”, Joint Commissioners’ Report 10.

⁵⁷⁶ Principality means “prince domain, territory”. T. Ramalingam Pillai, English English Malayalam Dictionary (Kottayam: D.C Books, 1986).

⁵⁷⁷ It is defined as “a small island sometimes being termed an isle, very small an islet”, Audrey N. Clark, The Penguin Dictionary of Geography (New York: Penguin Books, 2003) 214.

⁵⁷⁸ Major Dow’s account was cited on the division of the region in the Joint Commissioners’ Report 295.

The Dutch memoirs explain that the three petty principalities in the region—Cranganore, Airoor and Cartamana, were all off-shoots of the same royal family—the Airoor Kovilakam at Belangaor Vellangalloor (spelt as Vellangallor or Vellangalur in records). Vellangalloor is a place located on the opposite side of a river. While Pappinivattom (spelt as Paponetty in records spelt) was part of Manappuram, Vellangalloor was not. In other words, Vellangalloor, the place from where these royal families originated, was located outside Manappuram. Moens describes the family of the Airoor king as “first and most distinguished of Malabaris”. Eventually, the family split up, and many branches of the Kovilakam moved away and settled in different parts of Manappuram. “Airur is the most ancient, followed by Cranganore and then the principality of Cartamana or more correctly these springs from the old kingdom of Airur. This old kingdom was first divided between two brothers and afterwards the part of the elder was again divided into two” (137).

Cranganore: Moens observed that the Cranganore branch was the “most prominent” among these royal families (140). He portrayed the chief of Cranganore, the younger brother of the Airoor chief as being of “high lineage”. The younger brother of Airoor had gone and “settled down” in his share of the property at Cranganore, after a split in the Airoor family; at the property that formerly belonged to Airoor (137). In the early 18th century (1743), Gollennesse, the Dutch Commandeur portrayed Cranganore thus: “Cranganore or Paddijattu Sarovan: It is a little kingdom five miles (20 English miles) to the north of the town of Cochin. By the treaty of peace made with Zamudiri on 17th December 1717, it was placed under the hon’ble company” (62).⁵⁷⁹ But, Moens had a different account. According to him, the “deceased chief” acquired the “title of king” along with the “right of life and

⁵⁷⁹ But in the early 20th century (1911) we see that Galletti refers to Achyuta Menon, who notes, “Cranganore: Kodungallur or Padinjatted at Swarupam is now a tiny principality and has an area of 19 square miles. It is under Cochin and pays a tribute of Rs. 6,876. It is financially autonomous, but in all other respects it is administered as one of the taluks of the Cochin state”. Galletti 62 (in footnote).

death” and “free access to the princess of Zamorin” (137). The Cranganore Raja was seen as “defenceless” and did not even have the “means to provide for his own protection”. This “little kingdom” had been conquered by different native Rajas until Moens’ period. Cranganore was taken under the protection of Samuthiri first and then under the Dutch (140).

Cartamana: After some time, the Airoor family at Vellangalloor was again split among two brothers—one held the palace and the “dignity” of the king while the other, the younger brother, namely prince Cartamana, went to the other side of the river, and remained there as an “ordinary proprietor of the estates which were his share, situated in the province of Paponetty” (138). Moens depicted the Cartamana chief as a “restless prince”. In light of earlier records, he explained that “Cartamana was always very arrogant and usually engaged in foolery and pranks” (141). He added that Cartamana was the “smallest landholder” who was the “bitterest and most obstinate in his resistance” (139).

Airoor: At a later point, when the Airoor family was reduced to three persons—two brothers and one sister, they again divided their estates for unknown reasons. The eldest brother took the old palace at Belanga (Vellangalloor), and the younger brother and sister “left and settled” at “the side of the river in the province of Paponetty”. The younger brother “looked after his estates as a common landowner whilst the eldest brother retained the principality and the other prerogative as king” (137). The offshoot of Vellangalloor (Airoor) that moved to Paponetty was also known as Airoor. There is also a claim that “Airur or Vellangallur Swarupam was a collateral branch of the Cranganore family and its territory lay to the north of Cranganore”.⁵⁸⁰ In 1743, Gollennesse described Airoor of Belanga as Cranganore Raja’s cousin and neighbour who were depicted as “poor princes without power” (63). That the younger brother remained as an ‘ordinary

⁵⁸⁰ Galletti quoting Achyuta Menon in a footnote (63).

proprietor of the estates” which he got in Paponetty and “looked after his estates as a common landowner” (137) is noticeable in this context.

Moens continued, “Therefore, according to Malabar genealogical reckoning, [...] the present king of Airur, so to speak, is in possession of one-fourth, prince Cartamana of one-fourth and the king of Cranganore of half of the former estates of Airur, besides those he inherited” (138) (which seems to be one-fourth of the possession at Manappuram). The rest of the one-fourth was under the Pazhenchery Nairs.

1.2. Pazhenchery Nairs

Gollennesse and Moens provided detailed accounts of the Pazhenchery Nairs, who were one of the “important proprietors” and “was formerly under the Zamorin”. In addition, they stated that “his lands lie to the north of the kingdom of Cochin” (64). Moens describes the region thus, “The district of Payenchery forms a part, the northern part of the territory that lies between the forts of Cranganore and Chettua” (134). The Dutch held their “important fortress of Chettua” which was situated “in this country” (64). They marked the boundaries between two “forts” rather than between two “estuaries” which had been the natural marker for a boundary in general.

The Pazhenchery Nairs were divided into three major families such as Mannatha Parambatha, Ullat and Panangad which were again subdivided into many branches. However, all of them were usually addressed collectively as the Pazhenchery Nairs (135).⁵⁸¹ According to Achyutha Menon, the family of Pazhenchery Nairs “now consists of several branches, only one or two of which are in easy circumstances”.⁵⁸² These families had been governing this

⁵⁸¹ Gollennesse wrote, “The family of the Payenchey Nairs consists of four houses, which are again sub-divided into many branches” (64). Galletti further mentions, “The Payenchery family has now 12 branches of which four are Mannattamparambat, five Panangad, one Ullat and two Manapilavil”, (135 in footnote).

⁵⁸² Galletti quoting Achyuta Menon in a footnote (64).

territory for several years. The eldest of the main family governed his family but the eldest among the three families governed the “country” “as he pleases and exercises the right of life and death” (135). These lands were under the Cochin Raja “in the oldest time” (133) and were “almost entirely tributary” to Samuthiri, and in 1717 came under the protection of the Dutch (136).

The petty chiefs such as Cranganore, Cartamana and Airoor were directly or indirectly related to the Samuthiri.⁵⁸³ According to the treaties of 1710 and 1717 between the Dutch and the Samuthiri, the three principalities of Airoor, Cranganore and Cartamana were marked under the Dutch control (138) along with Payenchery (62), even though Airoor and Cranganore “exercised the right of life and death over their subjects” (138). But after the Samuthiri ceded Paponetty to the Dutch as per the treaties of 1710 and 1717, these two families no longer had the same rights “over those subjects who were living on the estates in our (Dutch) territory” (138). Since Cartamana had “no land outside the conquered territory” of the Dutch, it was stated that he had “no right at all of life and death” (138). This meant that if he were to deliver a death sentence or any other kind of severe punishment, the Dutch Company would have to sanction it (138).

Later when “Nabob” Hyder Ali Khan conquered the “whole region from Chettua to Kodungallor” (136) in 1766, these three principalities and the Pazhenchery Nairs “expelled by the Nabob from their territories” wandered and stayed in the same neighbourhood near their estates “in the hope that times may change for the better” (136, 142). In 1781, Moens reported, “at present he (Airur) is still residing at what was always the place of residence, viz., in his palace on the other side of the river (backwater)”.⁵⁸⁴ Even so,

⁵⁸³ Moens notes, “The region between Chettua and Cranganore, of which whole region he (Zamudiri) was formerly master” (134). Moens also notes that the petty chiefs’ “[...] closest relations were also formerly with the Zamorin” (137).

⁵⁸⁴ The Dutch in Malabar 141. Galletti quoting Achyuta Menon says that Airoor (in 1911) “family lost its territory in the time of Tipu and is now living in mainland in the village of

Airoor was in a better position when compared to the other principalities which were dependent on the meagre allowance that was provided by the Dutch for their sustenance (142). Moens notes, “As he (Airur) still has land there which yield sufficient for his support, he does not receive any assistance from the company” (141). In contrast, “According to a resolution of the 8th September 1777 Cartamana receives, until further order, a monthly allowance of Rs.40 for his support” (142). Similarly, Payenchery was receiving a monthly allowance of Rs.30 from the Dutch company. The memoirs also reveal that Cranganore was receiving Rs.50 for maintenance in 1781 (136-140).

From the above discussion, one can infer that even in the Dutch period, Manappuram did not manifest as a single region, neither in terms of politics nor geography, but that it was spread across several *swaroopams*, petty principalities and *nadus*. Here, it may be of interest to note the concept of ‘segmentary states’ that Burton Stein (1977) proposes in the context of his work on the medieval Chola Empire. He argues, “In a segmentary state there may be numerous ‘centres’ of which one has primacy as a source of ritual sovereignty, but all exercise actual political control over a part, or segment of the political system encompassed by the state” (10)⁵⁸⁵. But contrary to the segmentary state, there is no single sovereign for all of these petty principalities. These memoirs do not provide the history of a single sovereign in the region; rather, it is a narrative of the histories of the region which constitute the geographies of the region.

2. Origin, Etymology and Affairs of Petty Chiefs: Myth, Lived Expression of the Name, Measuring, and Oracle

Vellangallur four miles to the north east of Cranganore. The major portion of territory now forms part of British Malabar” (63 in footnote).

⁵⁸⁵ See Burton Stein, “The Segmentary State in South Indian History,” Realm and Region, ed. Richard Fox (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1977).

Apart from the accounts of the *swaroopams* and *nadus*, the Dutch memoirs also chronicle the origin, etymology and affairs of petty chiefs in Manappuram in the 18th century. The details are spread throughout the account and a thorough examination of the text is illuminating.

2.1. Origin of the petty chiefs: Myth of the Legendary Cheraman Perumal⁵⁸⁶ and the myth of the “old petty kingdom”—Charcarre Swaroopam

Gollenesse notes that the Airoor Raja had been bestowed with the kingdom⁵⁸⁷ by Cheraman Perumal “who gave him the title of king and authority to exercise the right of life and death [...] but under the suzerainty of the Zamorin”. Moens, in his account, added that “he received some territory not compact but divided up into parcels, most of them between the Cranganore and Chettua districts in the province of Paponetty, the other son the other side of the river opposite Paponetty in the most northern part of the kingdom of Cochin” (137). Similarly, Moens recounts how Payenchery Nair obtained the land. One member of the Payenchery Nair family was the bodyguard of Cheraman Perumal. When Perumal divided his territory, he left parts of his estate to “kings of less importance”, and Pazhenchery Nair, his bodyguard, also inherited some land from Cheraman Perumal (135). He explained that Cheraman Perumal also left some estates “to the oldest of the Payencheries, who was at that time a certain Manattamparambatto and a lifeguard of the Emperor, some lands in the district of the Zamorin, and at the same time put

⁵⁸⁶ Cheraman Perumal is considered as the last consolidated king of Kerala (Malabar). He had disappeared suddenly from the pagoda of Thiruvanchikkulam near his palace. There are two versions with regard to his vanishing. One is that he converted to Islam and sailed to Mecca, while another claims that he converted to Buddhism and practised Buddhist worship in his pagoda taking a strict stand against Brahminism. It was believed that it was this enmity with the Brahmins that led to his assassination by the latter. Before he left the country for whatever reason, he divided his kingdom mainly among the Samuthiri, the Cochin Raja, and the Thiruvithamcore Raja; and also, among small principalities. See Logan, *Malabar*, vol.1; Menon, *History of Kerala*; Bhaskaranunni, *Pathonpatham Noottandile Keralam (Keralam in 19th Century)*; Menon, *Aithiyamala (Chain of Fables)*.

⁵⁸⁷ Padmanabha Menon has cited Fra Batolomeo who described the kings “among whom Perumal divided his empire”. He listed the “second rank kings” among them as the “kings of Tanur, Kodungalloor, Purpurangari, Airur, Cannanur, Edapilli or Papolin, Cayemcollam, Temali, Parur”. Menon, *Kerala History* 416.

under him 500 Nairs from that same district of Chettua, but also of the above-named estates in the Zamorin's kingdom and was at the same time lord of 3,000 Nairs" (135).

There is also another story that Pazhenchery Nair got his property from Charcarre Swaroopam, "the old petty kingdom" who ruled the whole region from Chetuva to Cranganore. The chief of Characarre Swaroopam, embroiled in a dispute with his nephew, his direct heir, had apparently given away his property to his Nair son, Payenchery Nair (135).⁵⁸⁸ Charcarre Swaroopam or Sarkara Swaroopan "was another branch of the Cranganore family and ruled over the northern portion of the island".⁵⁸⁹ Gollennesse noted that they "now live there as private individuals and in very poor circumstances" (64).⁵⁹⁰

The aforementioned stories reveal that the Cheraman Perumal conferred the "title of the king" and "authority to exercise the right of life and death" to Airoor and had similarly given "some land" to his "bodyguard", Pazhenchery Nair. Such narratives of myths and legends registered in the Dutch memoirs link the origins of the petty chiefs such as Payenchery and Airoor with Cheraman Perumal, the legendary king of Kerala. This mythical linking between the Airoor Swaroopam and the king of Kerala extended to Cranganore and Cartamana as well, as they were believed to have originated from the old kingdom of Airoor.

In addition, this narrative also uncovers the intricacies of an "old petty kingdom"— Charcarre Swaroopam or Sharkara Swaroopam. Gollennesse observes that in his time, the princes of Charcarre Swaroopam lived "as private individuals" who lived "in very poor circumstances". However,

⁵⁸⁸ Gollennesse also wrote, "The last owner made a voluntary gift of it to the Payenchery Nair's, illegitimate sons, out of dislike of his nearest of kin" (64).

⁵⁸⁹ Galletti quoting Achyuta Menon (64 in footnote).

⁵⁹⁰ But in 1911, it was remarked that "Charcarre or Sharkara Swaroopam is now extinct". Galletti quoting Achyuta Menon (57 in footnote).

Moens' account does not give any indication of such squalor, although he does make a passing reference to Charcarre Swaroopam as that "old petty kingdom". Either way, the family seemed to have moved into "extinction" by the early twentieth century as pointed out by Galletti. It was commonly believed by the natives that Charcarre Swaroopam once ruled places stretching from Chetuva to Cranganore. However according to Achyutha Menon, they only "ruled over the northern portion of the island". In this account, the connection of Pazhenchery Nair with Charcaree Swaroopam apparently seems like a mythical narration.

The stories regarding the origin of Airoor and Pazhenchery arriving here as historical narrative might have helped to associate the entire region of Manappuram with Cheraman Perumal, the legendary king of Kerala. The origin stories of these petty chiefs do not align with the myth of Parasuraman, another legendary figure who is prominently illustrated in the history of Kerala along with Cheraman Perumal.

One could argue that the myths of Cheraman Perumal and Charcarre Swaroopam linked with Manappuram seem like a denial of the pervasive Parasuraman myth. This denial of the Parasuraman myth by the people of the region positions them "one step outside" the Brahminic mythical narration. At the same time, the narratives incorporate the other popular myth—that of Cheraman Perumal, which is a generally accepted myth in the context of the formation of Kerala. It is through this myth that the region has been imagined as a part of early Kerala, and this might be an attempt towards a universal imagination of Kerala. The myth of Sharkkara Swaroopam, in contrast, confers distinction on the region and particularises its position in the larger imagination of Kerala. Mythical narratives are central to the origin of early kingdoms. Therefore, myth is not only a making of the origin, but it also signifies the plot of history-making.

2.2. The “Sandy Land”: Etymology and Lived Expression of the Name

Moens, while he discusses Pazhenchery Nadu,⁵⁹¹ notes that “The Payenchery district is usually called “Mana-ppuram” or “sandy-land” by the natives. Even in the company records, (it is marked as) ‘the sandy land of Chetuva’, which includes the whole stretch of land from Chetuva to Cranganore, is also sometimes called by the natives as ‘the sandy land’ without addition” (135). Hence, Pazhenchery Nadu was called “Manappuram” by the natives in general. At the same time, the whole stretch from Chetuva to Kodungallur was also known as Manappuram among the natives without the word ‘Chetuva’ added to it. This addition was usually seen in the company records.

The prefix ‘manal’ in Mana-ppuram denotes sand while the suffix ‘puram’ signifies land, hence Manal-puram (*manal* – sand, *puram*–land), further shortened to Manappuram, loosely translates as ‘sandy land’. Furthermore, the description “sandy land without addition” suggests that there is no qualifier for sandy-land; or rather sandy-land is not seen as a qualifier of Chetuva. Therefore, for the natives it was not “Chetuva Manappuram”, rather, it was simply “Manappuram”. The configuration of the name Manappuram will be discussed in another chapter.

From the discussion, it is evident that the “land from Chetuva to Cranganore” was sometimes called “sandy land” by the natives. This is different from the Dutch company’s nomenclature, which referred to the land as the “sandy land of Chetuva”. In addition, the memoirs also reveal that Payenchery Nadu was administratively marked as the “sandy land of Chetuva” in Company records when other places were called as Cranganore, Airoor, Paponetty and so on. In short, the region had neither been administratively marked as “Manappuram” nor unified as a single region during the Dutch period. That means this expression of the name Manappuram existed in practice and not

⁵⁹¹ Pazhenchery Nadu, the “district” was known as “Payencheri Nad till 50 years ago”, this information was given by Achyuta Menon to Galletti (Galletti footnote 135).

in administration and records. Therefore, it is perhaps a lived region in history.

Close analysis of the usage of “the sandy land of Chetuva” shows that it was an attempt by the Dutch to contextualise the place Chetuva as the region where the company’s “important fortress of Chettua” was historically located. Further, the argument could be extended to say that this contextualisation was an endeavour by the Dutch to lay claims on the “territory that lies between the forts of Cranganore and Chettua”. Here, for the Dutch, Manappuram appeared to be a spatial terrain which situated and contextualised Chetuva historically.

2.3. “Affairs” of Petty Chiefs: Measuring and Oracle

The Dutch memoirs also speak of the “affairs” of the petty chiefs—their relations with the native Rajas and the native Rajas’ role with respect to their affairs. They also discuss how the Dutch tried to deal with such affairs. Moens states that he rarely interfered with Payenchery’s administration and allowed them to settle their affairs on their own. According to him, he intervened “only when they began to go too far, and I took direct cognisance of the matter and acted according to justice” (137).

These petty chiefs had a strong relationship with the Samuthiri and they sought his presence to settle their affairs time and again. The families of the Payenchery Nairs were also regularly “involved in quarrels and disputes” with each other. Gollennesse was concerned that when the Dutch tried to intervene or settle the disputes, the losing party in that dispute “does not think of submitting to the decision, but runs off to the Zamorin” (64). Moens also elucidates how the Cranganore Raja caused “trouble” for the Dutch due to his relationship with the Samuthiri. He describes “this kinglet” (Cranganore) had taken Samuthiri’s ‘back up’ secretly “whenever he (Cranganore) was discontented or whenever he thought that he had been wronged” (141). It reveals that these petty chiefs had a good relationship with the Samuthiri and

that the Dutch were discontent with that relationship among them. In contrast, the Dutch memoirs maintain silence about the Cochin Raja's influence on them. The main reason for the silence might be the good relationship between the Dutch and the Cochin Raja.

The Dutch remained cautious about keeping these petty chiefs under them. Moens explicates how they tried to maintain their suzerainty over the petty chiefs. He elaborates, "It is in itself a somewhat curious procedure to restrict the right of a ruler to punish his subjects, but the practice is already of long-standing and so if only to maintain our suzerainty, we cannot let it slip away, as they would never give the go-by to an opportunity of insensibly establishing a superior position and independence" (138). At times, the Dutch Company had resorted to force to control these petty chiefs. During such times, the chiefs secretly urged the native kings, usually the Samuthiri, to help them out. According to Moens, "more than once they have shown their teeth and through their Nairs given trouble in this territory to our subjects, so that it has been necessary occasionally to send some soldiers into the country, to keep them (petty chiefs) quiet. At times, they have even gone so far as to seek help and protection secretly from the native kings against the company" (138).

The Dutch memoirs also elucidated some of the disputes between these petty chiefs and the role of the Dutch in such matters. According to Moens, they quarrelled among themselves for the possession of places that fell within the company's territory. On such occasions, they usually left the decision to the company. Moens observed that these cases were extremely "difficult to decide" because neither party could produce any "real proof of ownership" (138). When the estates were divided among the brothers, it did not seem to be "regularly divided" (138). When such disputes arose, the Dutch usually collected information through "old and impartial natives", as mentioned earlier, to know more about whom the land belonged to (139). Moens states

that this made it easy for him to judge who and how the disputed property “most naturally belonged to” using “the old division of the lands”. It is important to note that Moens’ ‘difficulty to decide’ on these issues was due to the absence of ‘real proof of ownership’ which is apparently connected to the absence of ‘regularly divided’ estates.

He complained that disputes about property were ‘difficult to decide’ due to the absence of “a proper map of the lands” under the control of the Dutch company, which he considered as “a capital defect”. He observed that “there exists, no doubt, a map, but it indicates only the courses of rivers and the boundaries of the estates but the real internal situation cannot be ascertained from it” (139). He grumbles that the natives were “disrespectful” and “suspicious” about “measuring”. To be clear, he notes, “it is said that the lands here cannot be really properly surveyed and mapped, because the native rulers, being too distrustful, would be suspicious about the measuring” (139).

Surveys and maps were probably attempted to concretise and render a geographically calculative region but more importantly, it was an attempt to produce a politically homogenous region under the Dutch. Surveying and mapping do not merely make regions accurate, measurable, finite and absolute, but they also constitute a method to coalesce objective, numeric, mathematical, and scientific knowledge about a region. Therefore, measuring could be seen not only as an attempt to draw the boundary of the region and to sketch existing knowledge about it in detail but also as an exercise that might create the premise for the notion of a modern region. Even though Moens observed, “There exists, no doubt, a map”, which shows “only the courses of rivers and the boundaries of the estates”, and he lamented that there were no existing maps which revealed “the real internal situation”. Even if they could measure the exteriors of the region – the tangential knowledge on the region—they could not touch the interiors of the region and gain in-depth knowledge.

Moens observed some incongruity in the way Cranganore dealt with its affairs. He described, “The affairs of the kingdom” (of Cranganore) were looked after by two ministers instead of the Raja. Whenever a prominent “affair” arose, instead of taking into account public good, “and when they could not agree they would have recourse to their idol in the big pagoda, whose decision was sought by a process of hazard secretly by one of the most prominent and cunning priests of the pagoda” (140). Therefore “the decision was then looked upon as an oracle like the oracles of the ancients” (140). This shows the importance of “pagoda” and “oracles” wielded over “decisions” pertaining on the affairs of the kingdom.

From the above discussions, it is clear that petty chiefs sought secret backup from the Samuthiri to settle their affairs, while the Dutch used military force for the same. We also learn that the Dutch had tried to propose “measuring” to settle disputes while the petty chiefs depended on the “oracle”. Here “measuring” and “oracle” seem to be the two apparatus that determine the affairs of the region, propelled by different trajectories—oriental and occidental. These are the apparatus that tries to draw the boundary of the region and sketch its knowledge. One could possibly argue that both “measuring” and “oracle” equally influence the formation of the region.

Moens observed that it might not be relevant to record details about these petty chiefs since “Cranganore, Airur, Cartamana and the Payencherys are of very little use nowadays”. Even though they hoped that the situation may change and they could gain “possession of the lost territory”, and that it may then be relevant for further “use to the then head of the administration”. He emphasised that “without them you cannot deal with affairs satisfactorily nor feel easy in your mind or satisfied that you have acted according to conscience and duty” (142).

Nevertheless, he had another reason for documenting these remarks; “knowledge and experience of the country” were requisite to maintaining power. He added, “on the one hand I understood that not only much composure but even knowledge and experience of the country are required to keep the balance in that place and among the natives” (142). In other words, “the possession of lost territory” as Foucault said, is the logic of “medieval sovereignty”.⁵⁹² Similarly, the Dutch were also influenced by modern enlightenment⁵⁹³. Therefore, territory (which was produced in modernity) and (produced) knowledge were used to reify the idea of the region in this context. Instead of the narratives of the petty chiefs, it would interweave some additional narratives to endorse the “knowledge and experience” of Manappuram.

3. Places of Non-principalities: Geographies of Region

Apart from the petty chiefs who called themselves *Nadu* and *Swaroopam*, there were other kinds of places which held different power relations in Manappuram during the Dutch period. In the Dutch memoirs, these places were the “eighteen half-village” or the Pathinettarayalam, Cochin Raja’s “plot of territory”, Paponetty, the “Dutch Province”, Samuthiri’s “fields and gardens”, and Dharmot Panikar’s “landed property”.

⁵⁹² Foucault in his lectures on security, territory and population, observes that Machiavelli’s problem was fundamentally a sovereign problem. Foucault, in addition, notes that the sovereign problem was “either conquering new territories or holding onto conquered territory” during the medieval period, cited in Stuart Elden “How Should We Do the History of Territory”, in *Territory, Politics, Governance* (7). But Elden argues that territory emerged along with population during the modern period when “Foucault thinks it disappears” (12).

⁵⁹³ Foucault observes that the art of government, which appeared at the end of the sixteenth century, “increased in scope in the seventeenth century” and seemed connected with “a set of analysis and forms of knowledge indeed named as ‘statistics—meaning science of the state’”. See Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-78*, ed. Michel Senellart, English series ed. Arnold I Davison, trans. Graham Burchell (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 138. In contrast, the Dutch memoirs featured descriptions of information rather than accurate “statistics”.

3.1. Eighteen half-villages (Pathinettarayalam): Moens provides a detailed description of the “eighteen half-villages (Pathinettarayalam)”. According to Moens:

By the eighteen half-villages, it is understood as a plot of territory stretching from the sea to the river (backwaters), between the northern limit of the kingdom of Cranganore and the southern limit of province Paponetty. They belonged formerly to the kingdom of the Zamudiri, but in the course of time, they came into the possession of the King of Cochin; but now and under what conditions there are no documents or native traditions to show (127).

According to the information which Moens received from the king’s minister, these lands were obtained by the Cochin Raja as his share after the war with Samuthiri. It remained in his hands up to 1719. At that time, there emerged a dispute between the Cochin Raja and the Raja of Cranganore about a piece of land in this Pathinettarayalam. The Dutch Commandeur Hertenberg was the middle man in this dispute. The Cochin Raja wrote a letter to the Dutch Commandeur informing him that he had obtained this land in due course of war, and now he “would give them up” and renounce the rights to the Dutch, and the Dutch company “might then give the villages to the king of Cranganore” (127). Moens goes on to say that though “the *Commandeur* took his highness (Cochin Raja) at his word and assured him that he could not decline such a generous gift so that these eighteen half-villages came into the possession of the company and remained so till the year 1740 when they were returned (Pathinettarayalam) to the King of Cochin under a formal deed of cession” (128).⁵⁹⁴ From a secret letter Gollennesse received from the Governor-General Adriaan Valkenier, Moens affirmed that eighteen half-villages were returned to Cochin. Gollennesse himself notes, “By a secret dispatch of 4th July 1740, their right worshipful have returned to the King of

⁵⁹⁴ It happened in 1740 by which time Adriaan Valkenier had returned.

Cochin the so-called eighteen half-villages which are situated in it (Paponetty), because his claim to the same was judged to be good” (63).

So, these places were governed by the Cochin Raja till 1757, when the Samuthiri “invaded the territory of Cochin” and took possession of the eighteen half-villages. And so, it passed into the hands of the Samuthiri. But the Samuthiri made a peace treaty in 1758 with the company, and consequently, these eighteen half-villages were “restored” to the Company. The Dutch continued to hold the eighteen half-villages up to 1769 when it handed the lands over to Cochin, which had regained possession of its northern district and had started to make claims on Pathinettarayalam and pressurised the Company to give it up (Moens 128).

However, during Moens’ time, “the whole territory from Chettua till Cranganore”, was under the Nabob Hyder Ali Khan, “Yet these villages are left alone and therefore the revenues thereof are enjoyed by the King of Cochin without interference on condition that this prince pays the tribute imposed on him to the Nabob at the proper time” (129) Thus, we may infer that Pathinettarayalam was a kind of land which had no *Rajas*, but had been under the possession of Cochin, Samuthiri, the Dutch and Cranganore at different times, and it does not seem to have been under the ownership of any temple at any point of time. Finally, Cochin possessed it by paying tribute to Hyder Ali Khan after Hyder possessed Pathinettarayalam and others in 1776. Pathinettarayalam appears throughout these memoirs as an aggregate of different places, separate from others, with no single sovereign, owner or a proprietor at any time. It was not a *swaroopam*, petty principality or a *nadu*, and hence was quite distinct from Airoor, Cartaman, Payenchery and Cranganore. One could say that it does not even appear as the “*cherical land*” of Cochin Raja discussed in the context of the dispute.

Moens noted that the complex name was rather confusing. “The piece of ground in question is diversely referred to in the company’s paper either as the eighteen half-villages or the 18½ villages, the first expression would imply that there are nine complete villages, and second eighteen complete villages and a half, but the right name is eighteen half-villages because the territory consists of eighteen pieces of ground each of which constitutes a kind of village and so each piece is called a half-village instead of a village” (129). However, Galletti corrects Moens’ understanding about the name, “Mr. Moens is probably mistaken. To add on a half to a figure is, I am informed by Mr. Achyutha Menon, a favourite method of computation in Malabar. So, for instance, a temple may be managed by 18½ families or votes” (129).

Apart from Pathinettarayalam there was one province called Paponetty or Pappinivattam at Manappuram under Dutch ownership. “Province Paponetty” was won by the Dutch from the Samuthiri in the war, and according to the treaty of peace in 1717, it had gone back to the Dutch company (63). Gollenesse claimed that “this province has been much improved since our occupation by the discovery of many misappropriated lands, gardens and rights [...] these revenues have since been increased” (63). But the eighteen half-villages, Pathinettarayalam, which included Paponetty, had been given to Cochin in 1740 (63).

3.2. “Fields and Gardens”: There were some “fields and gardens” owned by the Samuthiri at Payenchery Nadu during the same period (133). Even though those fields and gardens were outside his kingdom, he did not give up his claim over the region between Chetuva and Cranganore where he was once “formerly master” (134). But in 1717, because of his treaty with the Dutch, he lost his prominence over the whole region. Samuthiri, however, reserved the ownership of this particular land and ruled till 1763, “When he still owed the company 12,000 rupees and odd on account of the last war expenses, and

the company kept these lands as a guarantee for that money” (134).⁵⁹⁵ Later, Samuthiri “claimed these lands back”, but the Dutch demanded an “immediate settlement of the debt”, and they took an assurance from him that unless he paid them back they “should keep these lands [...] under the company” even though “the revenues thereof would be credited to him against the debt”. Samuthiri promised to pay back but he could not. Therefore, the Dutch kept this conquered land as their property (134).

3.3 “Landed Property”: Dharmot Panikar, one of the “principal Rajadores (minister) and vassals of Zamudiri” was said to hold “landed property” in “the territory of Chettua”. The above-mentioned landed property was “situated at the northern limits of the province of Paponetty” (Pappinivattam) near the Triporatty temple (Triprayar temple, Chavakkad taluk of Malabar). It came under Dutch control by the treaty of 1717 with the Samuthiri. Since “the sandy land” had been occupied by Hyder Ali Khan, this particular place was also added to his lands (Moens 134).

In this narrative of the Dutch, “region” is always contested. For instance, in the Dutch period, Manappuram was fragmented into *swaroopams* and *nadus* of local chiefs such as Airoor, Cartamana, Cranganore and Payenchery; the province of Paponetty was under the Dutch; the “landed property” of Dharmothu Panikkar; the “fields and garden” of Samuthiri; and the “plot of territory” (Pathinettarayalam) was not under anyone. Thus, the entire region was scattered simultaneously into various categories such as *swaroopam*, *nadu*, land,⁵⁹⁶ territory,⁵⁹⁷ province,⁵⁹⁸ “landed property”, and “fields and

⁵⁹⁵ Moens indicates that the Samuthiri had not paid the amount even at the time of writing the memoir.

⁵⁹⁶ Elden notes, “Land is relation of a property, a finite resource [...] as politico economic question.” See Elden, “Land, Terrain, Territory”, *Progress in Human Geography* (2010), 804. From <<http://phg.sagepub.com/content/34/6/799>> accessed on 16 July 2013.

⁵⁹⁷ Foucault remarks that territory is “[...] no doubt a geographical notion, but it is, first of all, a juridico-political one: the area controlled by a certain kind of power”. See interview of Foucault by Journal Herodote, “Question on Geography”, *Power/Knowledge* 68.

⁵⁹⁸ Editors of Journal Herodote note, “A province is a conquered territory (for geographers)”, in the interview with Foucault (*Power/Knowledge* 69).

garden” etc., owned by different parties. Here, it is quite important to revisit the discussion on the focus of power and its categories, especially in the context of the 18th century.

Foucault makes a remarkable observation in his lectures on “Security, Territory and Population”. He observes that the form of power had transformed from “sovereignty” during the middle ages to “government” during the eighteenth century, when, “the object or target of power” also shifted from “territory” to “things” (population). In government, govern means to “govern the things” (people are considered as things) (135). In other words, the 18th century saw a shift where power “arranges the things”⁵⁹⁹ and puts “things in order” (135, 136). Here Foucault makes a shift in his spatial metaphor, from “territory”, which played an important role in the power of the sovereign (“state of justice”) and the administrative state (“society of regulations and disciplines”) to “space” along with “things”. For Foucault, except in the case of heterotopias, space was something which ordered things; something which was always connected to power. Therefore, space appeared in the eighteenth century as a form of “order” according to Foucault’s work.

While looking at the genealogy of territory, Stuart Elden extensively engages with Foucault, and argues that there was indeed a shift from “land” to “territory”, but it emerged later than the period in which “Foucault thinks it (territory) disappears”. He argues that “territory” itself can be seen as a “modern” category along with “population”, and it is not a medieval category (12).⁶⁰⁰ He substantiates his argument by saying that the “politics of

⁵⁹⁹ Foucault uses Guillaume de la Perriere’s *Miroir Politique* (1555) to point out that “government is the right disposition of things arranged” (134).

⁶⁰⁰ Stuart Elden, “How Should We do History of Territory”, *Territory, Politics, Governance* (Vol:1, No:1), 5-20, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2012.733317>>. Elden explains how territory and population are interconnected. He notes that “populations are defined, in part, by their location, and territories, in part, by their inhabitants. Territory and population emerge at a similar historical moment as a new way of rendering, understanding and governing the people and land [...] to control territory requires the subjugation of the people; to govern the population requires command on the land” (17).

calculation” is a relevant mechanism not only in the case of government but also in the case of territory. He notes, “The strategies applied to territory—in terms of its mapping, ordering, measuring, and demarcation, and the way it is normalised, circulation allowed, and internally regulated—are calculative.”⁶⁰¹ By extending Foucault’s historical approach, Elden suggests that territory, as a “political technology [...] comprises techniques for measuring land and techniques for controlling terrain” (2010: 811). Elden contends in another context that territory is widely read as either land or terrain—land as a political-economic question, and terrain as a political-strategic question. He argues that territory is both—land and terrain—but still “insufficient”, therefore he adds “space” to territory (811). In the context of Manappuram, the region referred to in the Dutch memoirs is manifested in multitudes of land, terrain, territory, space, and province. Beyond these categories, it was also simultaneously *nadus* and *swaroopam* at one historical juncture and this complicates the argument offered by Foucault and Elden.

The memoirs also explain that even before the Dutch period, when Manappuram had been under the Cochin Raja, the Samuthiri still owned some places in the region and vice versa. It is remarkable that Manappuram did not appear as a single administrative category under a single sovereign or a king and its nature or characteristic was also not homogenous during the Dutch period. In contrast to all these different forms of concrete manifestation, interestingly, there was “usually” a region “called” Manappuram or “the sandy land” by the natives. It offers complex readings of the category “region” which might constitute some or all of these categories – territory, land, terrain (colonial); *nadu*, *swaroopam* and *cherical* (native); “the sandy land”, Manappuram (popular)—which were arrived at simultaneously during the Dutch period. Therefore, the categories of popular, native and colonial perhaps equally influenced the formation of the region.

⁶⁰¹ Elden, “How Should We Do History of Territory?” 14.

Additionally while we examine the Dutch memoirs, it becomes clear that they marked Manappuram as a “region”, “territory”, “tract” or “stretch of land” between Chetuva and Cranganore estuaries interchangeably, but had not yet named, or probably found it difficult to name, in contrast to the naming of “Chetuva Island” by the English. Furthermore, Manappuram was also depicted as a “property of lease” (British, Hyder and Tipu) and as a “property of guarantee” (Dutch) (seemingly objects) in contrast to the natives who saw it as a “*nadu*” or a “*swaroopam*” (which does not correspond to country).

Apart from the details of the possession of the region, the Dutch memoirs also provide a detailed account of kings including their origin, religion, caste, succession, victories and failures in wars, style of rule, judgment in dispute, their relation with the legendary king, Cheraman Perumal, their affairs with neighbouring kings and vassals, etc. The memoirs also provide knowledge about the origins of the petty chiefs, the genealogy of the king, land relations, power relations, law and custom, etc.

Indeed, we can argue that these memoirs—which appear to be a narrative on myth, lived expression of the name, measuring and oracle, and geographies—portray the region in the 18th century. It perhaps suggests the script for the past of the region. In a sense, it is almost a pre-sketch of the historical information which would play an important role in the discourse of dispute. These narratives in the Dutch memoirs might be a possible referential source for the “history” of the region, albeit a normative, teleological one. In addition, the categories of popular, native and colonial juxtaposed to each other provide an idea of the region in the eighteenth century. However, this gives rise to other questions: Why is there no written “history” on Manappuram? Why did the Joint Commissioners not revisit these memoirs?

Conclusion

Manappuram, as a place had no “real proof of ownership”, was “not regularly divided”, and could not “be properly surveyed and mapped” (Moens 138, 139). It had no “proper map” because the natives were distrustful and suspicious about colonial land measurements in the Dutch period (139). It is into this locus that the dispute and the historical narratives enter into the region’s historicity that provides the normative idea of the region. The normativity attached to the European understanding of the region has also influenced Manappuram. The entire project of claim and contestation could not arrive at strict boundaries, homogenous region, or a singular sovereign for Manappuram. The Joint Commissioners faced a dilemma as they had to produce a legal region in order to create a single narration of political power and linear past. They attempted to create such a mono-historical origin by coalescing historical (perhaps even historical-mythical) narratives from different persons and produced them as evidence.

The very idea of language, reproduction of evidence, geographical markers and representation of narration would suggest the boundary that facilitated the creation of a concrete, physical administrative region called Manappuram in the context of the dispute. The process of marking the boundary, characterising the physical nature and setting the closure endeavours to bind the region—it is like mapping the region—without a map. This was not merely an enterprise to define the region, but also to territorialise it. Furthermore, the narratives on principalities and non-principalities, myth, lived expression of name, measuring and oracle unpacked by the Dutch memoirs would suggest the script of the past for the region. This discourse, especially the discourse of dispute tried to concretise and territorialise Manappuram but different claims and contestations ended up rupturing the notion.

It would be opportune at this point to look at Robert Davis Sack, who discussed human territoriality as the “basis of power” and not “as part of

instinct”. He defined territoriality as “the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence or control people, phenomena and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area. This area will be called the territory”. He added that “unlike many ordinary places, territories require constant effort to establish and maintain” (19).⁶⁰² However, Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden critically engage with Sack’s idea and noted that such positions of “territoriality [...] understood to entail some form of spatial enclosure” (355).⁶⁰³

Here, the idea of territorialisation that transpired through the attempts of the British to reify the region by settling different contestations and claims was unsettled by the heterogeneous, multiple, discontinued and conflicted nature of contestation and claims. Therefore, it is these multitudes of claims and contestations that render Manappuram immune to the process of territorialisation, unlike “many ordinary kinds of places” that “become territorial to exist as places” in modernity (Sack 19).⁶⁰⁴

Furthermore, this discourse also pushes for the documentation of the history of the region. However, unlike other places, this did not result in formal or organised history writing on Manappuram. The discourse of dispute and the Dutch memoirs try to constitute a linear past and a homogenous region. This can be seen as an attempt towards territorialisation and production of modern history, which forms backdrop of the formation of the modern region as well. In short, therefore, one can argue that the mapping of the boundary and scripting of the past not only seem as mere backdrops of the modern region—rather they appear as the very roots of consciousness which might be one of the basic tenets in the formation of the region.

⁶⁰² Robert Davis Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁶⁰³ Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden, “Henri Lefebvre on State, Place, Territory,” *International Political Sociology*, (2009), (Vol: 3, Issue 4), 355-377, <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-5687.2009.00081.x>>.

⁶⁰⁴ Even though Brenner and Elden observed that in Sack “the term is very difficult to dissociate from place” (355).

The Dutch accounts could have potentially revealed a homogenous script of the region's past. However, even these accounts reveal multiple claims. Claims and contestations, instead of solidifying mono-history writing on the region, uncover several possible histories. Though it was neither a concrete region nor a territory, and though it did not have a 'history', it nonetheless raises a few important questions: What are the reciprocal relations between history and territory? Does normative history need territory; and does territory produce normative history alone?

While we navigate the particular registers of the 18th century, how Manappuram, the region, was arrived at even before the said century is something worth thinking about. It has to be noted that the 18th century was the period that saw the emergence of the idea of Kerala as a linguistic region. Therefore, one can perhaps pose the question of whether Manappuram appeared as a pre-linguistic region. Possibly, this idea can even be extended to suggest that it lived as a linguistic expression. Rich Freeman argues that the fabrication of regional consciousness as a linguistic identity of Kerala on the one hand and the formation of the Malayalam language itself on the other emerged through literary production during the medieval period.

He further extended the argument to state how such production was shaped through the intense labour of the Nair community, the Shudra caste.⁶⁰⁵ Here the linguistic region becomes a Shudra problem, even though there were other kinds of regions that existed based on the factors beyond language.⁶⁰⁶ At this point, it is clear that the consciousness of Manappuram seems to have begun before the emergence of Kerala/Malayalam linguistic region where, in fact,

⁶⁰⁵ Rich Freeman, "Regional Consciousness in Medieval Kerala," Region, Culture and Politics in India, eds. Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhaus (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 2006).

⁶⁰⁶ S.V. Srinivas argues that the concept of region emerges out of cultural production and consumption, where both territory and imagination matter, especially in the context of Telangana and the North-East. A paper presentation on "Region and Markets", organised by the Centre for Regional Studies on 29 October 2014. He also argued that culture encompasses language itself (during a personal discussion with him on the same date).

the existence of multiple languages⁶⁰⁷ like Malayalam, Tamil and Sanskrit, etc. was possible.

⁶⁰⁷ Even in the 18th century, many of these letters were written in Tamil, English, Dutch, Portuguese, and Urdu.

Chapter Five

Mobile Geographies⁶⁰⁸ in between the Catastrophic and the Productive: Re-making of the Region Manappuram

In this chapter, I delineate the making of the region Manappuram through symbiotic relations between the transformation of natural landscape of Manappuram, the manmade material construction⁶⁰⁹ of Manappuram and ideations about Manappuram by texts. For operationalising this relational construction of Manappuram, I unravel the interconnection between disaster (such as storm, famine, flood and cholera faced by people), development (such as transformation of a landscape, built-environment and migration, mobility) and textual discourse (of newspapers and other print materials).

Through this, I explicate the interrelation of four areas. Firstly, linkages between construction of built-environment (such as roads, drinking water systems, hospitals, bridges, educational institutions, agrarian constructions and industries) and relief activities (for alleviating famine, cholera, flood and storm) in Manappuram. Secondly, the funding of migrants from Manappuram (who work and do business in Ceylon and in the Gulf⁶¹⁰) along with other residents of the same region for relief and development. Thirdly, influence of Sree Narayana Guru's⁶¹¹ anti-caste theology on relief, development and textual discourses. Fourthly, construction of Manappuram as a region by the textualisation of material construction, development and relief activates by

⁶⁰⁸ Mobile geography means formation of geography through different trans-territorial flow of people, money, goods, and spatial networking between places.

⁶⁰⁹ In the case of forces of nature (like flood, famine, etc.), place making is not only constructive but also destructive. This will be taken up in detail in the rest of the chapter.

⁶¹⁰ Colloquially, 'Arab states of the Persian Gulf' are known as the Gulf or the Gulf countries. It includes Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

⁶¹¹ Sree Narayana Guru was a legendary anti-caste philosopher and a social reformer from Kerala.

Manappuram Times, *Ende Jeevithakadha* (Story of my Life),⁶¹² *Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* (Memoir of Malayalis in Ceylon),⁶¹³ *Brahmasri Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar*,⁶¹⁴ *Innale* (Yesterday),⁶¹⁵ *Manalmozhi* (Sand-speech)⁶¹⁶ and other oral narratives.

By doing this, I delineate the movement of people, money, knowledge, newspaper, commodity and labour within Manappuram through the circuit of roads, schools, industries, electrical system and water supply system that are mainly realised by the external linkages of people and flow of money, knowledge, newspaper, commodity, and labour between Manappuram, Ceylon, Gulf countries, Mumbai and Kozhikode through the migrants from Manappuram. Then I argue that the main constituent of the making of the region Manappuram built-environment and textual discourse produced through this trans-territorial flow of people, goods and ideas, and networking of Manappuram with many places. Therefore, the making of the region Manappuram not only happens locally in Manappuram but also is produced globally from/in different parts of the world. This (mental and material) mobile geography of Manappuram is supplemented with its own catastrophic and productive geographies that exists in the interrelation between disaster and development of Manappuram. Before turning to the process of the remaking of the region of Manappuram, the context, contents and concerns of the above texts need to be discussed.

1. Context, Content and Concern of Texts

Manappuram Times was a bi-monthly newspaper that aimed to bring about progress in Manappuram. It started printing on 15 August 1949 and stopped

⁶¹² V.K. Kumaran, *Ende Jeevitha Kadha* (Thrissur: Map Printers, 1989).

⁶¹³ M. R. Krishnan, M. V. Abdulla Moulavi, A. K. Nair, V. Vasu, S.P. Kadavil and P.R. Dharmabandu, (eds). *Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* (Memoir of Malayalis in Ceylon), (Nadavarambu: Ceylon Malayali Smaranika Prakasana Committee, 1986).

⁶¹⁴ Sudhakaran Cholayil, *Brahmasri Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar* (Thrissur: Cholayil Kunhimamy Smaraka Prasadheekarana Nilatam, 1981).

⁶¹⁵ E.V.G., *Innale* (Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhath Book House, 1985).

⁶¹⁶ Sreelatha, *Manalmozhi* (Thrissur: Current Books, 2019).

around the year 1974.⁶¹⁷ In its 25 years of being in print, production was stopped a couple of times and was then restarted. The editor, propagator and proprietor of this newspaper was V.S. Keraleeyan.⁶¹⁸ This newspaper did not have a direct affiliation with any political ideology. However, the paper stood for the progress of rural places and communities in general, and the empowerment of the people of Manappuram in particular. The problem of the caste system, social and economic underdevelopment of rural areas, infrastructural advancement of rural places, disaster relief of peripheral regions, enquiry into the history of Manappuram, and cultivation of progressive literary consciousness were the main areas of concern. Therefore, along with day-to-day news about festivals, celebrations, death and problems of the people of Manappuram, it published articles related to the educational, infrastructural, agricultural and industrial development of Manappuram. On the Republic Day celebration, the newspaper published an editorial in April-May 1970, “What is the use of democracy without social and economic freedom of the common people?” The editorial clearly signifies the standpoint of the newspaper (6). The aim of *Manappuram Times* is evident in the poetic blurb of an article titled, “A Master Plan for Manappuram” published in October 1969:

The life-goal of *Times* is not only to replicate the love of the interior-land (Manappuram) but also the sorrow inherent in its surroundings. Bridges, factories, small-scale industries, fishing harbour, tourist centres and even an airstrip is being visualised in its future. The masterful writer of this subject

⁶¹⁷ There is no information available about its last issue. The last issue has been tentatively established as October 1974 based on available issues. Circulation figure of the Manappuram Time is not available in any of the available sources.

⁶¹⁸ In the initial stage, *Manappuram Times* was published from Thrissur, at Vijaymani printing press, with the help of Ramu Karyat and Shobana Parameswaran Nair. Then its production was shifted to Kozhikode. At that time, Keraleeyan worked in Kozhikode. Then, it was moved back to Thrissur and printed from Fr. Vadakkan’s press. In 1973, Keraleeyan’s friends arranged for a printing press in Engandiyoor in the current building of *Manappuram Times*. After printing a few issues from this press, the newspaper stopped production forever. Velayudhan Panikkassery, V.S. Keraleeyan: Manappurathinte Vikasanashilpi (V.S. Keraleeyan: the developmental architect of Manappuram), (Thrissur: Green Books, 2005), 19.

(who is the dearest son of Manappuram) is weaving human effort into the web of nature to allow our cherished ideas to bloom (3).

The November 1969 editorial of *Manappuram Times* proclaimed:

The aim of the *Times* is the development of the village. Natives, activists and government employees have participated in these reformation programmes. We acknowledge them without hesitation (6).

The piece written by P.C. Varghese in November 1973 in the *Manappuram Times*, for increasing the circulation of the paper is an exemplary note on the ideational and physical contribution of the newspaper to the progress of Manappuram. He narrates problems that were specific to this region 25 years ago, such as lack of transportation facilities, educational institutions, healthcare institutions, and negligence of government towards this rural area, where people frequently had to face natural calamities and outbreak of epidemics. He affirms the contribution of *Manappuram Times* in conveying the pathetic situation to the government and the selfless efforts of V.V. Keraleeyan to help the people recover from such situations. P.C. Varghese requested the people to increase the circulation of *Manappuram Times* for achieving further developmental targets for Manappuram such as the Chetuva-Kottappuram Bridge and the coastal highway (6). Furthermore, to address the issues faced by Chetuva-Manappuram, in the August 1970 issue, the *Times* suggested that the government form a taluk by clubbing the 10 panchayats situated between Chetuva and Aala (11).

Another important textual source that sheds light on the formation of the region is *Ende Jeevithakadha* (1989) an autobiography written by K.V. Kumaran. He passed away before completing his autobiography and afterwards his wife and son finished his project. In Kerala, he was a known public figure, politician and a popular teacher. As a person who was born and brought up in Manappuram and as a man who was proud to be a native of

Manappuram, he gave himself to the educational, infrastructural and cultural empowerment of Manappuram. Therefore, this autobiography on his lived-experience and social-memory of Manappuram is an excellent record of the transformation of Manappuram.

Ceylon Malayali Smaranika is a memoir about the life of Keralites in Sri Lanka. It was published by the Sri Lanka Malayali Welfare Association in 1986. The idea for this book was formulated in a meeting of Ceylon Malayalis that was held at Thrissur on 24 March 1984. In the introduction of this memoir, the editor Dharmabandu (a native of Manappuram) wrote:

Whenever Keralites have gone to Ceylon to search for jobs, they have contributed to the general wellbeing of the country. Similarly, Ceylon Malayalis have always helped with the initiatives for the social, economic and cultural development of Kerala. This memoir was prepared by collecting information and pictures (about Malayali life in Ceylon). Even though Ceylon Malayalis faced many difficulties and grievances in their life, looking back we see how life in Ceylon helped many of them achieve social and economic development (3).

A majority of the Malayali population in Ceylon was from Thrissur, especially from Manappuram. Therefore, in the literal sense, this book was also a register of Manappuram in Ceylon and Ceylon in Manappuram.

As the title signifies, *Brahmasri Chodayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar* (1981) is the biography of Chodayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar. He was a legendary Ayurvedic physician and writer, born and brought up in Manappuram.⁶¹⁹ He was born to the renowned physician, Chodayil Raman Vaidhyar in 1865. Therefore, this biography is a rich record of the social life of Manappuram from an earlier time.

⁶¹⁹ He was an eminent physician and cured many people of difficult diseases. He was the chief physician of Sree Narayana Guru.

Innale (1985) was written by E.V.G., the famous literary figure who wrote dramas, stories and novels in Malayalam. The assassination of Sardar Gopalakrishnan, considered as the first lockup murder in the Republic of India, and the class struggles led by him in Manappuram form the plot of the novel. Through this novel, the author narrativised the cultural geography and social history of Manappuram.

Manalmozhi (2019) is a novel by Sreelatha written in the context of the social history of Manappuram. The life of the main protagonist of this novel not only moves through the landscape of Manappuram and the cinematic world of Ramu Karyat but also narrates the personal and mythical past of this region in a fictional language. The following sections analyse the concept of disaster, built environment, migration and mobility in detail to elucidate the process of remaking of Manappuram.

2. The Catastrophic Geography of Manappuram: Flood, Storm and Famine

2.1. A Water-borne Catastrophe: The Flood

The words of Varghese Mechery, one of the writers from Manappuram, capture the life of/at Manappuram. He recollected:

Manappuram has developed in many ways. However, earlier, this place faced poverty, famine and unemployment. In the 80s, when I was the editor of *Thozhilali* (a newspaper), I wrote an editorial regarding this. It was titled, “Nattika is the Rayalaseema of Malabar”.⁶²⁰ To overcome this situation, people from here had gone looking for jobs in Malaya, Burma and Singapore. After that, people started to go to Ceylon. Then people turned to the Gulf countries in the 50s and the 60s. In the Gulf countries, because of lack of education, most of the youngsters who had gone from here could only get unskilled jobs. Meanwhile, during the Second World

⁶²⁰ In those days, poverty was high in Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh.

War, people of Manappuram were recruited for road construction and other manual jobs in Assam.⁶²¹

The difficult life of the people of Manappuram was registered and rearticulated in newspapers, biographies, novels and short stories. The biography of Chodayil Kunhimam Vaidhyar (1981) mentions the tidal wave that covered Manappuram in 1870. The sea encroached inland to a distance of 4 *nazhika* (6.436 kilometres). Many families lost thousands of hectares of farmland. In the biography, this incident is mentioned as an irrecoverable catastrophe. It marks this disaster as earth-shattering and indescribable. This unexpected blow destroyed the livelihood of many families. The Chodayil family lost thousands of hectares of coconut groves and paddy fields. A large part of their landed assets was wiped out by this deluge (37). Then, a few years later, in 1897, Manappuram witnessed an extensive outbreak of cholera (*Vishuchika* disease). A few family members of Kunhimam were also infected by this illness (273).

Then in 1924, Manappuram faced a big flood. The people faced serious difficulties at that time. In the autobiography of V.K. Kumaran (1989), he recollects the effects of the flood. The ground floor of his two-storeyed house was submerged completely in water. His family shifted with their cattle to a nearby hill after building a temporary shed on it. It was a huge struggle for survival (21). The novel, *Innale* by E.V.G. also narrates the ruin of human dwelling, flora, and fauna by the flood while capturing the emotional toll it took on the people – the destruction of many family houses, loss of assets in the overflow of water, people taking refuge in the big house owned by a local elite family, and mutual aid and selfless help offered by people in those days. All these depictions in the novel signify the kindness of the people of Manappuram during a catastrophic event (277-303).

⁶²¹ Varghese Mechery, personal interview, 04.05.2012.

Though extensive destruction of agricultural land and ruining of houses were the end results of both these natural calamities (tidal wave of 1870 and flood of 1924), the mutual help provided by the people to overcome the situation produced a feeling of togetherness among them. This feeling grew into many other levels in subsequent calamities. Moreover, narratives of these incidents in the above biography, autobiography and novel as calamities of Manappuram imagined Manappuram as a region.

2.2. A Fatal Touch of Wind: The Storm

Like the flood, the storm in 1941 was also a frightening memory for Kumaran.⁶²² Many houses were destroyed by the harsh storm. Countless trees, especially coconut and mango trees, had fallen down. The livelihood of the people of Manappuram was seriously ruined. The storm caused many people in Manappuram to fall prey to permanent famine conditions. In many parts of this region, the Congress Party opened relief centres to help the needy. Under the leadership of V.K. Kumaran, a relief centre was started in his household. In Nattika Firka (Manappuram), Shankara Narayana Menon was the in-charge of the relief committee. The relief committee selected 40 storm-affected families, who were engaged in coir making, and purchased their coir by paying an additional price for the commodity. This offered a sustainable income to these families and increased domestic production. Moreover, the committee distributed clothes to the poor that they had received from Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Kolkata. This relief centre functioned for around six months. On the day immediately after the storm, a merchandise boat was looted by a set of people from Manappuram. They took all the goods on the boat such as crystal sugar, sugar, pulses, coriander and rice (97-103). Allegedly, the Communist Party was behind this looting. It was an attempt to overcome the famine and redistribute the goods that were being sold at a

⁶²² In the novel of Rahman Vadanapally also, the storm and its aftermath are depicted with remarkable clarity. He narrates of a Nair, Syrian Christian, Ezhava and Kannaka taking refuge in a mosque at the time of the storm. See, Rahman Vadanapally, Kalathinte Karayilninnu (From the Shore of Time), (Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1993) 26-27.

higher price in the black market to the poor.⁶²³ The novel, *Innale* narrates the existence of the black market that denied access to rice and other essentials to the poor because of smuggling via sea to Travancore, Tamilnadu and Ceylon, and the ensuing resistance of the Communist through the capture of those goods (323-329).

In the 1940s, the president (C.K. Kunjiraman) and secretary (P.V. Velaay) of Ceylon Malayali Mahajanasaba were natives of Manappuram. After the 1941 storm, the Mahajanasaba formed a relief committee in Ceylon to help people deal with the serious calamities caused by the storm. A large amount of money that was collected by this committee for the cause was sent to the bank account of the relief committee in Kerala (E.V.G. 39).

The mutual aid given by people to each other at the time of the flood (1941) was more effective than during the storm. The relief activities funded by the Congress Party under the leadership of Kumaran and the diasporic aid provided by the Ceylon Malayalis headed by the people of Manappuram show the far-reaching effect of the regional consciousness of the people. Additionally, the relief activity of Kumaran for the people of Manappuram was constructive because it offered them a relatively sustainable income. Moreover, the rebellious act of looting and redistribution of rice and essentials by the Communists not only harmed the exploitative mercantile economy that had grown into a black-market trade but also envisaged an egalitarian society for Manappuram. Along with these, the textual presence of these calamities and the social actions of the Manappuram collectives in the autobiography, memoir, novel and the short story not only produced an imagination about Manappuram but also reproduced the regional consciousness.

⁶²³ See the description of the black market in Vadanapally (81-82) and also in D.M. Pottekkat, D. M. Pottekkatinte Kathakal (Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi, 1997) 13-20.

2.3. An Epochal Food problem: The Famine

A special supplement of *Manappuram Times* (hereafter *Times*) on the famine and food shortage in Manappuram published on 25 August 1950 is also a proof of the distressing life of the people in Manappuram. This supplement described the devastating food shortage and the relief attempts by the people to overcome this. The supplement reports the submission of a memorandum to the Collector of Malabar district by the 'Manappuram Memorandum Collective' to allocate food via the public distribution system as an urgent remedial measure to prevent the danger of starvation faced by 1,50,000 people in Manappuram. In response to this representation, the then Malabar Collector (R. Prasad IAS) gave permission for a lorry carrying ration to pass through the Manappuram road. He directed the supply officer of the southern Kerala Union to give permits to bring banana and tapioca. The first-hand report by V.S. Keraleeyan, editor of the Manappuram newspaper, and one of the leading figures in the relief committee shows the intensity of this problem and efforts by people to overcome the hunger situation. This report maps the long wait of the people in front of ration shops for staple food grains (like rice, wheat and sugar) and other essentials (like kerosene). The report published on 25 August 1950 in the *Times* is a running commentary by Keraleeyan from a loaded lorry that was carrying 60 sacks of food grains (such as paddy, wheat and millet) to Manappuram. He reports:

Large groups of people gathered in front of the ration shops which were numbered 489, 491, 492 and 493. On hearing the sound of the lorry, people began to relax. Nevertheless, the load allocated to them was being brought by another lorry which was coming behind. This information was announced loudly to the public and the manager of the ration shop by Karunan, who was travelling in that lorry. The lorry moved forward to give ration supplies to the ration shops assigned to it. Meanwhile, I saw women and children rushing to the ration shop with their baskets. When we reached in front of the ration shop that was located near the entrance of the mosque in Kippamangalam, the manager of the shop and people in the locality gestured to stop the lorry. They shouted that they

were waiting since morning. Because he was anxious, the manager had come up to the road to stop the lorry. It was sad seeing him and the others who were standing in queue for the ration.

The lorry unloaded a few goods at the Perinjanam ration shop near the post office and then moved to the Mathilakam market. A large group of people were waiting there from the morning onwards. An old man asked me, 'Hello son, will I get the ration tomorrow?' What could I answer? I tried to calm him down by referring to the attempt to bring ration to his place. When the lorry reached Sreenarayanapuram, around 500 people were there. The representatives of western Vembaloor were in despair because, even if they did get the ration goods, they needed to carry those as headload. Moreover, it was sunset by then and the porters would have had to carry the goods crossing waist-deep water, even though they were ready to carry those to their location.

Then we returned to the place from where we had started our journey. On the way, the view of ration sacks being unloaded by trolley-pullers in different places was a relief to me. The food supplies had not yet reached Veluthakadav, Panagad and Kothaparamb. In those places, many people had gathered in front of ration shops. After 9 o'clock, the night lorry would go to these places. It was necessary to send goods to Thalikulam, Vadanapally and Engandiyoor. Only one lorry was in service. However, the demand for goods was high in many places. Therefore, we were waiting for that lorry to distribute the supplies.

Meanwhile, the Thalikulam ration shop sent a letter through a man to the supply office to ask for more supplies to be sent immediately because the supplied goods were not enough to be distributed to all the members of that particular ration shop. The driver of the lorry, C.K. Raman, was driving it at the maximum permitted speed. While the lorry was passing

through the road, people were calling it the food-giver (*annadhadhav*). I came to know about the food stock shortage at the warehouse. It would cause a supply deficit in all the ration shops in Nattika Firka. Therefore, we sent a telegram to the supply office mentioning the seriousness of the problem (1).

Further, this report narrates the difficulties in the distribution of food grains and other essentials due to the scarcity of ration supplies. He recounts the failed attempt by Balakrishnan Nair and Kadhar Kutty to bring ration supplies from Ambalapara, Venganacherry and Ponnani. Similarly, the efforts by the leaders of the relief committee to get supplies from the Indian military ship that reached Kochi carrying food grains (to meet the needs of the people of Kerala) also came to nil. However, because of the constant attempts of the 'Manappuram Memorandum Collective' and the 'People's Cooperative Committee' (PCC, which ran many of the ration shops in the region), they started to get ration supplies. On 15 August 1950, the PCC of Nattika received a telegram mentioning an allotment of 272 sacks of rice. Concurrently, 1110 sacks of wheat were also allotted to Nattika Firka and a major chunk of it was transported to Manappuram. On 16 August 1950, because of the memorandum by the Manappuram Memorandum Collective, 100 tons of rice were allotted to Nattika Firka from the Kozhikode district supply office. Of this, 50 tons were from the Shoranur warehouse and 50 tons from the Tirur warehouse. The 100 tons would have been around 1350 sacks. This allotment was enough for just three days. He explains in the same article:

In a week, for 6 ounces of rice per family, 2057 sacks and 114 *nazhi* (300 millilitres) of rice is needed for adequate supply in Manappuram. Around 10,000 ration cards are in use in Manappuram. The total numbers of ration shops are 88, among them, 73 are under PCC societies and 15 of them are under independent societies (2).

In another article, the newspaper reports the attempts made by the ‘Manappuram Memorandum Collective’ to solve the food shortage in Manappuram. The meeting of this delegation with the Malabar Collector on 12 August 1950 and the matter that they discussed with the collector were the main contents of the report. Along with that, the report describes many consultations, which the delegation made to resolve the food problem of Manappuram. When under the leadership of Dr V.K. Raman, the delegation met the Malabar Collector at 11 am, he asked them, “Is there any difference in the food shortage at Manappuram compared to other areas of Malabar?” Then the delegates convinced him of the depth of the famine in Manappuram in comparison with other areas with evidence. When the delegates mentioned the arrival of a ship in Kochi with rice, the collector agreed to allocate a share of it to Nattika Firka. Then he not only offered to give sugar and tapioca through the ration shops but also allowed PCC to drive one more lorry through the Chetuva-Aala road for the supply of ration goods. He also agreed with the suggestion of the Memorandum Collective to lend paddy to solve the deficiency of food grain supply in Manappuram (2). To actualise the allocation of tapioca, the *Times* held a campaign across Manappuram and collected 10,000 signatures for a memorandum to be submitted to the Southern Kerala Union government to provide 176 *kandy* (44.196 kg) tapioca (2). Then they submitted a request to the Malabar Collector again, pointing out the difficulty in transporting ration supplies due to the scarcity of petrol, and they demanded essentials such as banana, sugar and tapioca (2).

In 1953, Manappuram faced another famine. It was the greatest famine in the history of the region. The famine relief committee’s notice⁶²⁴ narrates the famine-related deaths of 2 children of Ayyappan from Nattika. The cry of hungry children could be heard everywhere in Manappuram. In Peringanam, a mother sold out a section of her house to buy food for her ravenous children; in Valappad, a boy on his way to his uncle’s house after three days of

⁶²⁴ Published on 22 August 1933 from Kalalayam Press, Valappad.

starvation lost his life in the river; and in Kippamangalam, 100 children and women become thin and skeletal after they lost their health. Common people sold all their belongings including small brass vessels to end their family's hunger. Moreover, epidemics started to spread in this region. So, the people of Manappuram opened gruel-supply centres in certain parts of the region.

C.K.G. Vaidhyar, one of the leading public figures from this region, also remembered this famine. A famine relief committee was formed for the Manappuram region⁶²⁵. It was organised by V.S. Keraleeyan. At that time, he was a journalist and social activist based in Kozhikode. In 1953, while the famine was spreading in Manappuram, C.K.G. Vaidhyar gave a statement in a newspaper for governmental declaration of Manappuram as a famine-hit area. K.B. Menon, who was the MLA of the Madras legislative council, picked up this news and brought in an ordinance in the legislative council for the declaration of Manappuram as a famine-hit area.⁶²⁶ Moreover, the president of the relief committee, V.K. Kumaran also met Rajagopalachari, Chief Minister of Madras presidency, and submitted a memorandum for governmental help (Kumaran 152). Based on this and other delegations, the Madras government assigned the Malabar collector, R. Prakash to inquire about the famine. He visited all famine-affected areas in Manappuram. Consequently, the government started gruel-supply centres in Nattika, Vadanapally, Valappad, Kazhimbram and Kulimuttam, and these gruel distribution centres existed for two months. One of the gruel-supply centres that functioned at Nattika, Sree Narayana Guru Mandiram, was offering rice gruel to around 5000 people. In other places, big playgrounds were transformed into gruel-supply centres and people flocked to the centres to ease their hunger. The relief committee also distributed clothes, which they received from different places to the people of Manappuram. After hearing

⁶²⁵ V.K. Kumaran was the president of that committee. V.V Raman and E.M. Shankaran were the vice presidents, P.C. Ramakrishnan was the general secretary, C.K.G. Vaidhyar and P.K. Abdul Majeed were the joint secretaries, and C.S. Abdu was the treasurer. This committee had a central committee.

⁶²⁶ C.K.G. Vaidhyar, personal interview, 06.05.2012.

the news about the famine, V.S. Keraleeyan came to the region and conscientised people by visiting every place. Collecting small financial and labour contributions from the public, he took the initiative of starting bigger relief and developmental activities. The functioning of the gruel-supply centres and the construction of roads were made possible by these mobilisations.⁶²⁷

In 1950, the famine relief committee proposed to the public who were the beneficiary of these gruel-supply centres to get involved in welfare activities for the region and especially for the construction of the road. In response to this, several people got involved in road construction in different parts of Manappuram. In this manner, many roads were constructed by the collective effort of the public. To connect places between the coast and the backwater, from Sreenarayanapuram to Vadanapally, more than 25 roads were built in this way (Kumaran 153). These roads that were situated in the 14 villages of Nattika Firka (153) cross the Tipu Sultan Road that goes from Aala to Chetuva, the main road of Manappuram built in 1939.⁶²⁸ These roads have been renovated through the 'Rural Manpower Scheme' and 'Food for Work Scheme' that was implemented with the participation and contribution of the people by the government via the Block office. After a few years, laterite and tar were laid on these roads. Thus, a detailed network of roads appeared in Manappuram.⁶²⁹ After 1950, building roads with public collaboration was very common in Manappuram. Construction of public roads from Chetuva Mosque to Pulikkakadav was such a venture. This project was completely funded by the people who lived around the place. The land to construct the road, money for the materials and labour for its construction were the contribution of different people.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁷ C.K.G. Vaidhyar.

⁶²⁸ C.K.G. Vaidhyar.

⁶²⁹ C.K.G. Vaidhyar.

⁶³⁰ Manappuram Times, 15 May 1965: 5.

After the famine, in 1953, Manappuram fell into the grip of a dysentery outbreak. Many people were seriously affected by this disease. At that time, only a few hospitals existed in Manappuram. The existing ones had a shortage of doctors and treatment facilities like beds and medicines. People panicked. On hearing about the spread of dysentery, V.S. Keraleeyan rushed to Manappuram from Kozhikode. After travelling to all the areas affected by the epidemic, he went back to Kozhikode. He visited the then collector and heads of the Health Department to inform them of the urgent need for medicinal assistance to prevent death. Then he gave this news to all the dailies. Many papers wrote editorials on the epidemic. This was widely circulated. Under the leadership of Dr Muhamed Yusuf, the government sent a mobile medical unit to Manappuram. V.S. Keraleeyan also accompanied them. Higher officials of the government, including the director of the health department, camped at the region. The timely intervention of Keraleeyan and the presence of doctors along with the many relief volunteers stopped the death toll from rising (Panikkassery 13-14).

The famine was not a single incident that appeared all of a sudden in Manappuram, but there were clear indications that it was about to happen. One of the early issues of the *Times* had foreseen the possibility of a famine. On 20 October 1949, there was a write-up:

Due to the food shortage, the living expenses of the common people have gone up now. Each and every second, the poor are moving from half starvation to full starvation. There are many households that do not have money to buy ration. It is not visible because those who have money are buying ration supplies utilising the ration cards of the poor. Because of the unemployment in this region and the stoppage of money from Ceylon, our region has been engulfed in disaster (8).

After the special issue on famine, the *Times* started reporting the problem of food shortage very seriously. On 23 October 1950, it wrote about how ration

supplies could be provided only for 4-5 days in a week and the difficulties in procuring and distributing sugar. Moreover, the paper remarked on the bad condition of the rice that was being supplied as ration and the difficulty in preparing it because it was being distributed at night. However, on a positive note, the *Times* mentions the transportation of sacks of rice allotted to Nattika Firka from the supply offices at Alathoor, Kuzalmandam and Vadakancherry (1).

News reports about the meeting of an organisation called Gurujana Samajam also show the measures people took to reduce the effect of famine. Since there was a food scarcity, they suggested that pupils should not do physical exercises at schools. Another news reported a lack of attendance in schools because of the food shortage. Hunger led to many students being absent from classes and tired students used to return home without completing their classes. The news reports requested people to supply ration to the interiors of Manappuram such as Vembaloor. Moreover, the Panagad panchayat committee of the Congress Party requested the governmental authorities to take measures to remove the obstacles in bringing tapioca and other food items to Nattika Firka. In the programmes that were conducted on the birthday of Sree Narayana Guru, the problem of food scarcity and relief strategies were discussed in detail. Additionally, people and the political parties distributed food to help the famine-affected families. For instance, V.G. Manoharan gave free ration for a day to all the cardholders from his ration shop no. 499 on the death anniversary of his father.⁶³¹

Due to the activities of the relief committee, famine in Manappuram, especially the hunger deaths and dysentery, were reported at St. George Fort, Red Fort, headquarters of the United Nations and other international platforms. It opened the eyes of governmental authorities. Moreover, the activities of the famine relief committee of Manappuram put in motion the

⁶³¹Manappuram Times, 23 Oct. 1950: 2.

formation of relief committees for Manappuram in places such as Mumbai, the Gulf countries, Ceylon and in Kozhikode. Posters appeared in Mumbai asking people to help Manappuram recover from hunger. Moreover, many gruel distribution centres were opened for thousands of starving people, and a mobile dispensary started functioning in the region. *Chandrika*, the newspaper of the Indian Union Muslim League also provided a helping hand.⁶³² Thus in 1953, natives of the region who lived in different parts of the world and other generous people actively funded relief efforts to alleviate famine death in Manappuram.

The famine relief activities were coordinated and done on a larger scale than in the times of the flood and the storm. The Famine relief committee of Manappuram, the PCC and the *Times* worked extensively to organise relief aid by coordinating and sending many delegates to the government and public. The involvement of national and international collectives from Ceylon, the Gulf countries, Mumbai and Kozhikode for famine relief activity through monetary and other support shows the far-reaching effect of the networking of people from Manappuram. This network not only shows the trans-territorial identification of people with this region but also signifies the effects of regional consciousness of Manappuram beyond the locatedness of people within the terrain.

At the same time, by participating in famine relief activities, people of Manappuram enunciated and demonstrated their regional consciousness in a profound manner. This participation of natives not only exposes the interrelation between individual and communitarian efforts in the survival of an interior land but also indicates how collective survival itself produces a regional identification among inhabitants of a place. Correspondingly, through the textual representations of this famine, the *Times* and other print discourse produced the idea of Manappuram, other than the lived realities.

⁶³²Manappuram Times, April-May 1970: 2.

In this textual production, narrativisation of famine and famine relief activities by the *Times* demands much attention. This is because narrativisation of *Times* is an indistinguishable part of the actual relief practices rather than mere documentation of the famine that was done many years later as we see in the autobiography of Kumaran and other texts. In other words, bodily labour of the people for famine relief and ideations for relief in the *Times* mutually constitute regional consciousness of Manappuram rather than one's precedence over the other. This problem can be clearly read in the running commentary by V.S. Keraleeyan published in the *Times*. In the commentary, one sees the mapping of the region Manappuram by narratively connecting different places such as Kippamangalam, Perinjanam, Mathilakam, Vembaloor, Veluthakadav, Panagad, Kothaparamb, Thalikulam, Vadanapally and Engandiyoor, and the parallel involvement of V.S. Keraleeyan and others in relief activities through the distribution of ration supplies. This mapping and activities at the time produce a symbolic territorial shape of the region in the minds of the readers and invite the readers to involve themselves in the relief activities that constructed the region materially. Moreover, the families that received ration supply from the ration shops⁶³³ shared the regional geography of Manappuram by being members of the public distribution network of Nattika Firka.

Furthermore, the name of the delegate committee (that negotiated with governmental authorities) 'Manappuram Memorandum Collective' is in itself an example of how the spatial idea of Manappuram was reproduced in public discourse. This is because there was no administrative spatial unit as such in the name of Manappuram for negotiating with the government. The administrative name of the area that included places of Manappuram was Nattika Firka, not Manappuram. Therefore, the demand in the name of

⁶³³ This connects with the presence of a network of distribution system from the supply office to ration shops as seen in the commentary of V.S. Keraleeyan.

⁶³⁴ Varghese Mechery.

Manappuram for governmental aid was denied by the authorities. But by engendering an effective print discourse the *Times* not only reified that spatial idea in front of the non-Manappuram public but also convinced the governmental authorities of its existence. In the following section, how people negotiated with the state for the development of Manappuram and actualised it even when it was not an administrative spatial unit under the state is discussed.

3. The Productive Geography of Manappuram: Road, Bridge, Bus, Industry, Agriculture and School

3.1. Mobility through Land: The Bridge and the Bus

In 1965, the first bridge of Manappuram was constructed at Triprayar. Then bridges came up in Kandashankadav, in Kattoor, in Kakathurithi and Mathilakam. It was after the arrival of these bridges that Manappuram could be connected to other places via land (Sreelatha 28, 43, 100-101, 118-119). These bridges helped students to go to colleges in Thrissur and Irinjalakuda for higher education. At that time, there were no colleges in Manappuram.⁶³⁴

The people's request for a bridge over the Chetuva River to connect Manappuram overland with the northern part of Kerala was one of the main demands taken up by the *Times*. The Madras government undertook a preliminary survey at Chetuva in response to the people's demands. A team constituted by the Madras government for the investigation of highways and roads came to Chetuva to examine the depth and width of the river and other ecological considerations for the construction of the bridge.⁶³⁵ In the same period, the government was also approached for a permit for bus service through Manappuram, from Chetuva to Aala. The PCC society of Nattika also applied for a permit. However, the government rejected the application of the

⁶³⁴ Varghese Mechery.

⁶³⁵ Manappuram Times, 23 Sept. 1950: 1.

PCC society from the list of applications.⁶³⁶ In response to this, a shareholder of a co-operative society in Manappuram reminded the government that 75 percent of the expense for the construction of the road from Chetuva to Aala was the contribution of the people of Manappuram. Additionally, they were also willing to contribute money for the construction of the bridge. Therefore, the government should consider giving the permit to PCC for starting the bus service.⁶³⁷ The bus service started in Manappuram after two years, in 1952. At first, only one bus was in service. People travelled up to Chetuva estuary on that bus. Then crossing the river by ferry, they would board another bus to go to Chavakkad and Guruvayur.⁶³⁸

Nothing materialised on the bridge construction front even many years after the survey. In response to this situation, on 15 May 1965, the *Times* wrote an editorial to bring the attention of the Kerala Governor to the necessity of constructing the Chetuva Bridge to accelerate infrastructural development of the region (2). Furthermore, this issue of the *Times* discussed the urgent need for the construction of the Chetuva and Kottapuram bridges. It elucidated how the absence of bridges on the northern and southern sides to connect it to Chavakkad and Kodungallur was causing serious territorial disconnect and underdevelopment. It reminded the government about the financial aid offered by the PCC society for the construction of the bridges and demanded the actualisation of the unrealised promise of the government (in 1953) to construct Chetuva Bridge and the laying of metal on the Manappuram roads. This write-up also asserted the importance of bridges in national, international, economic, social and cultural discourses (2).

Moreover, to expedite the development of the Chetuva estuary, delegates of Manappuram planned to visit Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala, and submit a memorandum to the government. The November 1969 issue of the

⁶³⁶ *Manappuram Times*, 23 Sept. 1950: 1.

⁶³⁷ *Manappuram Times*, 23 Sept. 1950: 3.

⁶³⁸ C.K.G. Vaidhyar.

Times saw this move as a reclamation of the legacy of Chetuva estuary. In the past, many foreign ships used to moor in the Chetuva estuary for trade and military purposes. Additionally, this article argued that the development of the Chetuva estuary would result in the economic development of the entire Manappuram region (1).

This developmental quest of the people is evident in the budget of the Thalikulam panchayat in the year 1965. The panchayat had allotted ₹3,500 for road maintenance and ₹9,250 for bridge construction.⁶³⁹ During that period, many small bridges were constructed by the panchayats, and Pulikkakadav bridge was one among them.⁶⁴⁰ People also demanded bus services through their areas to connect to the city, the hospitals and educational institutions. For instance, an open letter by V.K. Madhanan was published in the *Times* on August 1970 which requested the government to extend bus services to Nattika Beach for improving transportation facilities in the area, especially for the educational needs of the children (11). A memorandum submitted by the representatives of the *Times* to the transport authority and the Ernakulam district collector to start a Fast passenger bus service between Ernakulam and Chetuva via Irinjalakuda and Edamuttam⁶⁴¹ is also an example of the people's desire for social and economic mobility.

For the materialisation of the Chetuva and Kottapuram Bridge projects, people of Manappuram submitted a memorandum to the railway minister of the Indian Union, Panampalli Govinda Menon. In response to that memorandum, the minister promised the public that the construction of Chetuva and Kottapuram Bridge would be executed soon.⁶⁴² Moreover, Paul Patamadan wrote a public letter to Panampalli Govinda Menon to affirm how

⁶³⁹ Manappuram Times, 15 May 1965: 11.

⁶⁴⁰ See news about the bridge construction in Pulikkakadav in Manappuram Times, April-May 1970: 11.

⁶⁴¹ Manappuram Times, Oct. 1970: 8.

⁶⁴² Manappuram Times, Jan. 1970: 1.

the building of the Chetuva Bridge, the Kottapuram Bridge and the seashore train services would be essential in addressing the underdevelopment of Manappuram. He opined that the seashore train services would connect Aluva, Kochi and Alappuzha to the north and expedite the transportation of raw materials and products between Manappuram and outside markets at lesser expenditure.⁶⁴³

In April-May 1970, the *Times* called for a public campaign to implement the long-standing demand for the construction of the Chetuva Bridge, Kottapuram Bridge and the coastal road to connect to Ernakulam, Varapuzha, Paravur, Kottapuram, Chetuva, Chamravattam and Farook. In the campaign note, the editor discussed how this infrastructural development would bring about not only the progress of Manappuram but also the growth of entire Kerala.⁶⁴⁴ Similarly, for the industrial and occupational development of Manappuram, the Nattika Block Youth Congress committee also decided to appeal to the governmental agencies to speed up the enactment of the construction of Chetuva and Kottapuram bridges (6).

In 1973, the government approved the project for the Ernakulam-Farook coastal highway. The *Times* write-up in November 1973 on this approval not only envisaged economic growth of Manappuram but also visualised the development of entire Kerala using this transportation system (5). From the central ministry, the Chetuva-Kottapuram Bridge Action Council also received a letter about the governmental sanction for the Ernakulam-Farook coastal highway.⁶⁴⁵ Subsequently, the *Times* reported about the laying of the foundational stone of the Kottapuram Bridge by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on December 1974. This bridge was the biggest among all the bridges on National Highway-17. It was 510 meters in length. After 8 years, on 16 July 1982, the foundation stone of the Chetuva Bridge was laid by the Deputy

⁶⁴³ *Manappuram Times*, Jan. 1970: 5.

⁶⁴⁴ *Manappuram Times*, April-May 1970: 1.

⁶⁴⁵ *Manappuram Times*, May-June 1974: 1.

Chief Minister C.H. Muhamad Koya.⁶⁴⁶ Envisaging the progress of Manappuram in the same period, the *Times* called for another campaign for extending the Kuttippuram-Guruvayur railway line to Chavakkad and Kodungallur.⁶⁴⁷ As N.M. Saith Muhammad stated in October 1969, “Many crossroads that connect Kottapuram-Chetuva Road to seashore and Conolly Canal, and bridges have changed the face of Manappuram.” Then, as he desired, the materialisation of the Chetuva and Kottapuram bridges drastically changed the landscape of Manappuram (3).

The Chetuva estuary was also a focal point of regional development like the Chetuva Bridge. Public demand for dredging and deepening the sea mouth to prevent natural calamities in the context of a boat accident in Chetuva estuary (on 28 February 1969) when a boat was hit by a disastrous wave, signifies this interest.⁶⁴⁸ On November 1973, in the context of another mishap, the *Times* again asserted the urgency for the development of the Chetuva estuary to save the lives of and empower the people of Manappuram. This particular article argued that immediate dredging of the river mouth was necessary for the prevention of further boat accidents and death of the angler due to the boat hitting a sand deposit in the estuary. The newspaper also recommended that the government prepare a comprehensive project for the development of this historically important estuary as the main fishing centre of the region (4).

A.P. Raman and A.C. Sankaranarayanan were the two figures who worked tirelessly for the infrastructural and educational development of Manappuram like V.S. Keraleeyan and V.K. Kumaran. For acknowledging the contribution of A.P. Raman, the people of Manappuram living in Ceylon conducted a felicitation program for him in Colombo when he visited Ceylon in 1928

⁶⁴⁶ One of the articles published at the time of the bridge construction discussed a post-bridge developmental plan for the further development of Chetuva. See, Madhavan Chetuva, “Chetuva: After Bridge Construction,” Chetuva Chandhanakudam Nercha Souvenir (Chetuva: Rafeek Enterprises, 1983) 11-12.

⁶⁴⁷ Manappuram Times, Oct. 1974: 1.

⁶⁴⁸ Manappuram Times, Jan. 1970: 1.

(Kumaran 32). On 2 November 1973, a children's ward was built in the government hospital of Valappad and dedicated to the memory of A.P. Raman and A.C. Sankaranarayanan, the two forces behind the development of Manappuram, by the then Kerala Governor N.N. Vanchu.⁶⁴⁹ This is a case in point of how the memorial of development of Manappuram in itself became a materialisation and development of a new institution.

The construction of bridges such as Triprayar (in 1965), Kandashankadav, Kattoor, Kakathurithi, Mathilakam, Kottapuram (in 1974) and Chetuva (in 1982) and linkages of those bridges with the network of roads and bus services (from 1952 onwards) connected Manappuram with many places situated on its eastern, southern and northern sides. This new network of roads, bridges and motor vehicles not only accelerated the movement of people, things and commodities through the land but also manifested a renewed region that had land-based links with many other places outside Manappuram. This trans-regional network provided mobility to the people in the fields of health, education and commerce by bridging this region with other cities and towns that offered advanced services in health, education and commerce. Henry Lefebvre's idea of the production of social space provides much insight in this context. As mentioned earlier, Lefebvre theorised that social space is produced through complex interrelations between natural objects, manmade objects, networks, pathways, knowledge and social labour.⁶⁵⁰

Moreover, the three-decades-long campaign for Chetuva Bridge by the *Times* through many memorandums and advocacies with the government continuously injected the idea of Manappuram in the minds of the people and build a mental image about the region Manappuram with material soil. One of the effects of this campaign was the creation of a bridge between the

⁶⁴⁹ *Manappuram Times*, Special Supplement, Nov. 1973: 3.

⁶⁵⁰ Henry Lefebvre, *Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 77.

mentality about and materiality of Manappuram more than the actual construction of the Chetuva Bridge.

The manifestation of Manappuram region through the new ‘network of roads, bridges and motor vehicles’ is different from the earlier appearance of the region through the ‘network of footpaths, rivers and ferries.’ This is so because, unlike mobility through roads that is possible with motor vehicles, the movement of people through footpaths depended on their footwork. However, that movement of people was restricted by the caste system. On rivers and ferries, different from road and bridges, one could travel in different directions by small boats wherever there was enough water for the movement of the boats. Along with rice and groceries, even the basic materials for house construction such as laterite and rubble were also transported from other places to Manappuram by boats. This mobility through waterbodies was also restricted by the caste system, as mentioned in the case of the Triprayar ferry. Therefore, the main distinction between the ‘networks of footpaths, rivers and ferries’ on the one hand and of roads, bridges and motor vehicles’ on the other remains in the case of speed. Compared to the former, the latter accelerated the movement of people, goods and things. Moreover, after the construction of the ‘network of roads, bridges and motor vehicles’ restriction on the movement of the body by the caste system was ‘transformed’.

3.2. Question of Employment and Industrialisation

Like roads and bridges, the people of Manappuram worked towards the industrial development of the area. The article written by V.K. Kumaran in the first issue of the *Times*, on 15 August 1949, is one of the primary registers of these processes. He wrote:

Manappuram is a half-island situated in the southern edge of Malabar. Its population is around one and a half lakh. This place is a total of 14

amsham (an administrative unit of place) in Nattika Firka located in Ponnani Taluk (11).

He further elucidates:

Many people in this region have primary education. A considerable portion of the population of Manappuram lives in Ceylon. They are at least around 20,000 in number. These people are struggling due to the financial regulations placed by the Ceylon government (The regulation which prohibited people from sending sufficient money to their families in India). Many families in Manappuram depend purely on the money from Ceylon that is sent by people who work there. The exclusion of Indians from the citizenship of Ceylon is primarily going to affect Malayalis. In this situation, they have no other option than to return from Ceylon. Return of Ceylon Malayalis, who had been sending large amounts of money to Manappuram, would create a very difficult situation. Moreover, the money earned by a section of the people from this region by working in the labour unit of the military has been spent completely. All these factors clubbed with the already existing unemployed youth will double the situation of unemployment in this region (11-12).

To recover from this situation of unemployment, he requested the government and public organisations to improve investment and production of coir, screw-pine mat and fishing industries in the region. Especially, he proposed that the government modernise the coir and screw-pine mat production by giving modern training and minimal wages to coir⁶⁵¹ and screw-pine mat workers in the region. He emphasised that this modern training would help the workers to produce and export their products like the coir industries in Travancore, who were producing and exporting mats and other products to

⁶⁵¹ In this period Nattika, Thalikulam, Vadanapally and Engandiyoore that were situated in the northern part of the region were production centres of coir.

foreign countries. He also requested the government to take the initiative to start industries for the production of these products either in the co-operative sector or in the government sector (11-12).

As an indirect result of this demand, preliminary industrial development of this region was started in the following years. It is very evident in an article titled “From Disaster-prone Place to Prosperous Place” that appeared in the *Times* on 15 September 1961. The governmental programme that is described in this article for the empowerment of cottage industries of Manappuram unambiguously signifies the orientation towards the material transition of the region. The article examines the developmental activities of the government that were implemented through the Block Extension Office (BEO) for the advancement of cottage industries. In the opinion of the *Times*, establishing cottage industries using the available natural resources of the region would have been the ideal way to recover from the disastrous and wage-less life at Manappuram (3).

For the setting up of various cottage industries such as fishing-net making industry, carpentry workshop, metal industry, screw-pine mat unit, coconut palm sugar (*chakkara*) unit, starch making unit, concrete-pipe making industry, metal vessel making industry, crushing industries and two shops in Manappuram, the BEO and KKVIB (Kerala Khadi and Village Industrial Board) had invested considerable capital. These industries and shops worked under diverse cooperative societies from fields such as the Carpenter’s Industrial Co-operative Society, Metal Worker’s Industrial Co-operative Society, Women’s Handicraft Co-operative Society and Village Industries Co-operative Society. More than Rs.75,010 was funded by these government agencies for starting these cottage industries in different areas of

Manappuram such as Pallipuram, Triprayar, Thalikulam, Edathuruthy, Angadiyoor, Vadanapally and Nattika.⁶⁵²

Furthermore, the 15 September 1961 issue of *Times* demanded that the government empower traditional coir industries that were working in Engandiyoor, Vadanapally, Thalikulam and Valappad under co-operatives. Additionally, it proposed that the government invest to stabilise the sand-brick industry, the glass industry for making glass from sand, the cashew-nut factory, the food processing unit for making jam from cashew, the leather industry, the beedi industry and the spinning mill for resolving the problem of unemployment (3).

N. M. Saith Muhamad's article in October 1969 offered a master plan for the development of Manappuram. It said that the people of Manappuram were indebted to the politicians of the region for all these developments because they had kept their politics aside to address public problems (3). He further elaborated on his master plan for the development of the cottage industry in the next issue. He delineated possibilities for cottage industrial production utilising locally available raw materials for making sand bricks, screw-pine mat, vetiver production, tamanu oil production, and cashew nut factory.⁶⁵³ After this proposal, the *Times* attempted for the industrial growth

⁶⁵² The allotment of fund by BEO for starting various industries was as follows: 1, ₹12,450 for starting the manufacture of fishing-nets in Pallipuram for the villages of Edathurithi, Pallipuram and Nattika, 2, ₹26,000 for establishing a carpentry workshop under the Carpenter's Industrial Co-operative Society in Triprayar; 3, ₹31,740 for founding a metal industry at Thalikulam under the Metal Worker's Industrial Co-operative Society, (This industry was started to manufacture agricultural gadgets and other tools of labourers); 4, ₹4,820 for founding the screw-pine mat unit at Edathurithi under the Women's Handicraft Co-Operative Society. Also, with the help of the BEO in Angadiyoor and in Pallipuram, a coconut palm sugar (Chakkara) unit was operating under the co-operative society. With the help of the industrial department of the government, in Thalikulam, a Starch-Making Unit was running. A concrete-pipe making industry was working in Edathurithy with the help of the BEO. An industry for making aluminium, copper and brass vessels was started at Edathurithy. With funding from the KKVIB and the help of the BEO, two co-operative shops were started in Vadanapally and in Nattika to sell Khadi products. An Oil Crushing and Village Industries Co-operative society was operating in Thalikulam with financial help from the KKVIB. See *Manappuram Times*, 15 Sept. 1961: 3.

⁶⁵³ *Manappuram Times*, Nov 1969: 3.

of the region. It requested the government and the public to revive the dying coir industry to prevent starvation of workers⁶⁵⁴ and proposed that the government expand the 'Thrissur Spinning and Cotton Mill' to a textile mill that is located at Nattika for increasing job opportunities for the people of Manappuram.⁶⁵⁵

This industrialisation of Manappuram through the coir industry, fishing-net making industry, carpentry workshop, metal industry, screw-pine mat unit, coconut palm sugar (*chakkara*) unit, starch-making unit, concrete-pipe making industry, metal vessel making industry, crushing industries, beedi industry and spinning mill offered considerable employment opportunities for the people of Manappuram. This inaugurated a new movement of labourers, raw materials, commodities, electricity and water through different areas of Manappuram such as Pallipuram, Triprayar, Thalikulam, Edathuruthy, Angadiyoor, Vadanapally and Nattika, and formed a network of commodity production. From each production centre of Manappuram, these commodities were transported to market centres of towns and cities such as Thrissur and Ernakulum. This expansion of the network while constructing many linkages within and outside Manappuram simultaneously reproduced a spatial idea about the region Manappuram among the people through the network. The *Times*' reports and articles about industrialisation reproduced the spatial idea about Manappuram, and further encouraged industrialisation of Manappuram through the available natural resources of the region.

3.3. Agricultural Growth and Sustainable Life

There was a serious attempt among the people of Manappuram to bring about improvement in the agricultural sector in the region. The first issue of the *Times* from 15 August 1945 suggested that they increase coconut production for economic betterment (13). Distribution of fertilisers by Nattika Firka PCC

⁶⁵⁴ *Manappuram Times*, Jan. 1970: 7.

⁶⁵⁵ *Manappuram Times*, April-May 1970: 6.

Society for better cultivation of paddy, vegetables, coconut and tapioca was one of the main activities done towards the improvement of agriculture.⁶⁵⁶

The campaign for the irrigation project of Chetuva-Kakkathurithi proposed by the government of Kerala is another example of this. The January 1970 issue of the *Times* foresaw this project as a green revolution scheme for Manappuram and hoped that it would increase the production of paddy and other grains help to improve the drinking water supply in the region and offer a safeguard to the wetlands of Thrissur district (1). The demand for dredging the Chetuva estuary to control flood in the Karuvannur river in Unnikrishnan's article (in the same issue) and his caution about the movement of the estuary into the terrains of Manappuram (southern side) every season through the overflow of the river also indicates the agrarian concerns of the people (9).

The setting up of an agricultural seed centre in Vadanapally through the donation of a 5-cent land by the Vadanapally Service Co-operative Society signifies the far-sightedness of the people.⁶⁵⁷ The letter from the ministry of food and agriculture of India to the editor acknowledging the contribution of the *Times* towards agricultural development of the region and the invitation to Keraleeyan to attend a conference for the agricultural empowerment of India mentioned in the October 1969 issue is proof of the selfless work of *Manappuram Times* for the agricultural empowerment of the region (17).

An article written by Sudhakaran in November 1973 about the Chetuva-Vallivattam water regulation project described the agricultural progress that it offered to the farmers of Manappuram. In his opinion, this project not only made possible the development of places between the Arabian Sea and Conolly Canal but was also beneficial to the paddy fields and coconut groves

⁶⁵⁶ *Manappuram Times*, 23 Sept. 1950: 1.

⁶⁵⁷ *Manappuram Times*, 15 May 1965: 6.

that faced drought and flood. This was because, during both the harvesting seasons in Nattika-Manappuram, loss of production would happen either by drought or by flood (6). In the October 1974 issue, the *Times* requested the government to actualise the Chetuva-Vallivattam water irrigation project that would change the agrarian misfortune caused by the onslaught of drought and flood (3). For the people of Manappuram, livestock economy was equally important when speaking about the development of their region. The May-June 1974 editorial of *Times* called for immediate infrastructural development of the veterinary hospital in Engandiyoor that included electrification, fridge for storing medicines and steriliser (8). As in the case of industrialisation, the efforts to modernise agricultural production in Manappuram by the cultivation of new crops, fertilisation, and irrigation including water regulation projects not only materially mapped the region but also imagined Manappuram by narrativising it.

3.4. Sree Narayana Guru, Missionaries and Educational Institutions

In many ways, the account of educational development of Manappuram is challenging and remarkable. George Durbar Memorial (GDM) School was the first school in Manappuram. The school was started around 110 years ago by A.P. Raman of Adiparambil family at his house. At that time, 10-12 students were studying in the GDM School. Then it was shifted to an independent building. Later the name was changed to Gurudheva Memorial School. Around 90 years ago, a Christian missionary founded a school at Valappad under the administration of St. Sebastian's Church.⁶⁵⁸ It was named St. Sebastian's Board School. Later it came under the government and was named the Malabar District Board School (MDBS). P.T. Baskara Panikkar was the first president of the Malabar District Board (MDB). He was not a native of Manappuram.⁶⁵⁹ However, he was an enthusiastic man seriously concerned about the progress of the region. A.P. Raman and he worked hard

⁶⁵⁸ Varghese Mechery.

⁶⁵⁹ Valsan Pokkanchery, personal interview, 15.01.2012.

to bring this school under the MDB because MDB was not willing to take the responsibility of this economically unviable school. By the efforts of Raman, a Mappila (Muslim) school was also started in Manappuram (Praveen 47).

C.K.G. Vaidhyar narrated:

In my school days, the Valappad School (MDBS) was the only school in Valappad. The children from Engandiyoor to Mathilakam studied in this school. Those who lived in the northern part of Manappuram sent their children to school at Kandashankadav located outside Manappuram. At that time, the maximum that people studied was up to the 10th standard. Most of the children studied only up to the upper primary (7th standard). In my memory, the first person who passed the Bachelor's Degree (BA) was C. Kelu. He was a member of the richest family, Cherathodath, in Nattika. He studied his BA in Madras. Then A.C. Govindhan of Aala passed BA. He studied in Mangalapuram (Mangaluru). There were no colleges in Manappuram. Victoria College at Palakkad was the only college. This situation changed only after the establishment of the Sree Narayana (SN) College at Nattika. Thereafter, now it is very rare to find a house without a graduate. In earlier days, students used to walk 4-5 *nazika*⁶⁶⁰ without slippers and wristwatches for earning an education. Now schools, colleges and technical institutes are near their doorsteps.

This drastic change in educational opportunities happened after the arrival of Sree Narayana Guru.⁶⁶¹ He visited Manappuram in 1920 and 1923.⁶⁶² He stayed in houses such as that of Adiparambil Raman, and C.K.G. Vaidhyar as well as in the Pokkanchery house. Following Sree Narayana Guru's doctrine, 'enlighten by education,' organisations in his name started many lower primary (LP) schools. Well-off families of Thiyya community were the active

⁶⁶⁰ One *nazika* is equal to 1.6093 kilometre.

⁶⁶¹ Majeed, personal interview, 11.01.2016.

⁶⁶² C.K.G. Vaidhyar.

force behind these ventures.⁶⁶³ The Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) started schools in every village in Manappuram such as Engandiyoor, Vadanapally and Thalikulam. The SNVUP school of Thalikulam is also a part of this mission.⁶⁶⁴ A few decades before the emergence of these schools, there was an English medium school in Thalikulam. It was started by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in the year 1905 (Cholayil 263). Many students studied here staying in the accompanying boarding house (Kumaran 6-7).

In 1957, when the first ministry of Kerala State came into existence, people of Manappuram were given permission to start a school at Thalikulam because of the efforts of T.K. Raman. V.K. Kumaran was the president of the committee for the construction of the school. Land for the school was donated by Karuvath Velappan. Later this school was handed over to the government (Kumaran 157, 177). Christian managements also started schools in Engandiyoor, Thrithaloor, Nattika and Thalikulam. In earlier times, most of the schools were lower primary schools and upper primary schools. Then in the 1950s, high schools were started in Engandiyoor, Thrithaloor, Nattika, Thalikulam, Chentrappinni, Kaipamangalam and Mathilakam. In those days, a student who passed the seventh standard could study for teacher's training. This situation not only created many teachers in Manappuram but also helped to setting up many new schools under different managements.⁶⁶⁵ Attention to education and schooling was reflected even in the budget of the panchayats. In the year 1965, from its annual budget, Thalikulam panchayat allocated ₹600 for educational activities.⁶⁶⁶

People mobilised a large amount of money to establish the first college in Manappuram at Nattika under the Sree Narayana Trust. Like V.K. Kumaran, many of the public figures of the region worked day and night to build this

⁶⁶³ C.K.G. Vaidhyar.

⁶⁶⁴ C.K.G. Vaidhyar.

⁶⁶⁵ Varghese Mechery.

⁶⁶⁶ Manappuram Times, 15 May 1965: 11.

college. For them, addressing the educational backwardness of the region was a necessity. Chembilparabil Ramankutty donated land for the college (Kumaran 157, 225). K. Ayyappan (Sahodharan)⁶⁶⁷ officially inaugurated the Sree Narayana College of Nattika on 30 June 1967. In January 1970, the *Times* mentioned the contribution of Nattika Sree Narayana College towards the improvement of the educational status of Manappuram by giving admission to 844 students for the pre-degree course. *Times* also said about its possible growth to a degree college (2). In 1970, the college was upgraded to a degree college by the University of Calicut.⁶⁶⁸ There was substantial collective effort put in for founding the Sree Rama Polytechnic in Nattikain 1958. This was the first technical educational institute in Manappuram. Initially, it was in the private sector. Later, on 1 July 1972, the institute was taken over by the government of Kerala and then renamed as Sree Rama Government Polytechnic. This institute has a leading role in the technical education of the people of Manappuram.

An article published in the *Times* on 15 September 1961 can be cited as the perfect case for the development of schools in that period in Manappuram. Under the title “Educational Institutes in Manappuram,” it delineates the educational development achieved by Panagad High School. This school was established on 2 July 1951 with 5 classes and 150 students. In 1961, within ten years, the school achieved tremendous growth. The strength of the students increased to 1300, and the number of classes and teachers increased to 33 and 50 respectively. Correspondingly, many new buildings were constructed to contain a large number of students. Every year, the school published a magazine, *Tilaka*. The art association of this school had an orchestra trained in a number of musical instruments. These advancements and assets made the school a model institute for acquiring knowledge and art. All the 10 high schools in Manappuram have similar stories to tell to tell (4).

⁶⁶⁷ He is one of the anti-caste thinkers and social reformer from Kerala.

⁶⁶⁸ Manappuram Times, April-May 1970: 7.

The piece written by Vaidhyar R.K Karattu on 15 May 1965 in *Times* about the educational empowerment of the poor also showcases the public initiatives taken up for the educational development of Manappuram. He writes:

Due to (bad) situations, many brilliant children in our region had languished (from cultivating a better future). We reached in time to address this issue... We want to form a public trust to search for and bring up children that are interested in education and do not have the means to do that. *Times* should generate public opinion on this (8).

He further proposed that if this trust could own an estate that was worth ₹10 lakhs, by utilising the income from that estate, every year the trust could teach 100 children like Chanthraboos, who had joined medical college to become an allopathic doctor with the financial support of M.R. Vishwanadhan (8). Wide publicity given in 1965 about the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) selection of Banujan from Manappuram and extensive felicitation for this achievement is an example of how people encouraged and celebrated educational development (6).

Establishment of educational institutions in Manappuram from 1905 onwards by Thiyya community under the direction of Sree Narayana Guru and the initiatives of the Christian Missionaries not only actualised educational empowerment of Manappuram but also brought together many organised efforts by the people. These combined actions helped build many structures (like bench, desk and blackboard), initiated pedagogic practices, facilitated up and down travel to schools, and promoted the exchange of knowledge. The web of educational institutions in Manappuram connected Valappad, Triprayar, Engandiyoor, Thrithaloor, Nattika, Thalikulam, Chandhrapin, Kaipamangalam and Mathilakam which existed through the built-environments, pathways and pedagogic exercise that drew a picture of Manappuram in the minds of the students and cultivated it as a consciousness

through friendships and social learning. Moreover, as we have seen in the other cases, the narrativisation of educational institutions of Manappuram by the *Times* and other print media converted the experience of education to a regional consciousness.

4. Migration of of Manappuram: Ceylon and the Gulf Countries

The history of job migration from Manappuram is entangled with poverty and the development of the region. At different times, many people of Manappuram migrated to Malaysia, Burma, Ceylon, the Gulf countries and urban cities of India such as Mumbai, Kolkata and Kozhikode seeking jobs.

4.1. Manappuram in Ceylon

In the opinion of C.K.G. Vaidhyar, people of Manappuram went to other countries after completing their education in search of jobs. Earlier, around 60 percent of the men from the middle class/caste, who got primary education and had studied till the sixth and eighth classes, migrated to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) for their livelihood. Then, one family could survive by the ₹5 money order sent from Ceylon. They gave a small percentage to the postman as a commission. However, after the Second World War, job vacancies in Ceylon came down. Then, those who were educated migrated to Mumbai and Kolkata. Thus, there emerged a group of families who depended on money orders for their living expenses. Later, another group of people joined the military.⁶⁶⁹ Vaidhyar further added:

In 1943 and 1944, a large group of people were recruited to work in plantations in Assam. They were paid ₹15 as monthly salary. One of those men still lives in Nattika. His name is Nambatti Kadan. Now he is 90-years-old. A big family survived with the money he used to send.⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁹ C.K.G. Vaidhyar.

⁶⁷⁰ C.K.G. Vaidhyar.

Peethambaran, one of the leaders of the Communist Party, supported Vaidhyar's view. He narrated:

The migratory lives of the people of Manappuram need to be narrated from Singapore, Malaysia, and Ceylon to the Gulf countries. In the beginning, they had gone to Singapore and Malaysia. At that time, the rate of migration was not very high. Then people went to Ceylon. Later, in the special circumstance of the Second World War, people were recruited to do military-related service in Assam. Their work was road construction and other manual jobs. They were not involved in any military action. They were not skilled to do such work. They were involved only in manual work. Our region was developed by the economy of Ceylon. In my house, my father and his brothers, a total of four, were in Ceylon. Our present landholdings are assets which they had purchased at that time. One of my grandfather's sons did not come back. He died at Ceylon. He was a Hindi teacher. Even though he was not married, he had house and other assets in Ceylon. I have a memoir written on life in Ceylon, named *Ceylon Smaranika*. The person to whom I had lent it has not returned it. There are many narratives about our older generation in it.⁶⁷¹

On reading *Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* (Memoir of the Malayalis in Sri Lanka), there is plenty of evidence about the migratory life of the people of Manappuram in Ceylon and their contribution to the remaking of Manappuram.⁶⁷² As mentioned before, in 1949, the population of people from Manappuram in Ceylon was around 20,000. It was a major percentage of the total number of Malayalis in Ceylon.⁶⁷³ A majority of the Manappuram people in Ceylon belonged to the Thiyya community. As Communist leader A.K. Gopalan wrote, a large part of the Malayalis in Ceylon was the working class.

⁶⁷¹ K. V. Peethambaran, personal interview, 15.01.2016.

⁶⁷² M.R. Krishnan et al.

⁶⁷³ The majority of Malayali population who lived in Ceylon were the natives of Thrissur district. *Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* 270.

Most importantly, a majority of them were from Nattika, and then from Ponnani in Malabar (*Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* 64). Nattika Firka was another name for Manappuram at that time. Therefore, it is clear that the people of Manappuram were numerically, culturally and politically very decisive in the social life of Ceylon.

Migrants from Manappuram generally lived in boarding houses nearest to their workplace. In each boarding house, 50-60 of them lived collectively without any caste or religion-based demarcation. In those houses, they ran night schools and organised collectives in the name of the different areas of Manappuram from where they came (17). Moreover, the Malabar Muslim association and the Malabar Catholic association were also active among them. Above all, for the welfare of all Malayalis, they established a general organisation named Ceylon Malayali Mahajanasaba. In the 1940s, this organisation had 6,000 members, 49 branches and ₹4,000 as capital. Sree Narayana Guru's visit to Ceylon in 1918 is marked as the moment that turned the lives of Malayalis in Ceylon. After that, Malayalis started night schools, libraries, speech training classes and different associations for the educational uplift of the migrants in the name of their hometowns. It was the realisation of Guru's advice to them, to 'be enlightened by education' (22).

The Manappuram Malayalis migrated to Ceylon to overcome the problems of unemployment and the difficult life that they had in Manappuram. In Ceylon, they had a better life and they could improve the living conditions of their families. Most of them reached Ceylon through kinship relations and regional networks such as blood relations, marital relations, business links and friendship circles. The story of K.V. Kumaran's migration to Ceylon shows the context and situation of migrant life in detail.

Kumaran passed SSLC (10th standard) in 1927 with the qualifications to join college. However, he did not have any possibility of landing a job at his place.

Therefore, he decided to migrate to Ceylon. But his father would not allow him to migrate. So, he fled to Ceylon without informing his family or other people in his place. He utilised the southern route. Along with his fellow travellers, he reached Kollam via boat from Alappuzha. Then they reached Thattapara via train. From Thattapara, they travelled to Colombo by ship. There were a couple of other ways to reach Ceylon. Palakkad-Madura-Rameswaram-Colombo and Palakkad-Thoothukudy-Colombo were the two railroad-cum-sea routes to reach Ceylon.

All the people in his group had relatives or friends to stay with at Colombo. His fellow traveller Kittapazi stayed with his brother-in-law, who had a toddy business in Colombo. Kumaran also stayed with his relatives. His uncle was running a shop in Colombo; Kumaran stayed in his uncle's house. Then he got a job in a European Company called Wallkaat. The company was involved in coconut, coir and rubber business. He worked as a manual labourer in the initial days. Then he was promoted to the post of a delivery clerk. About 95 percent of the workers in the company were Malayalis. He became part of the community of Malayalis in general and of Manappuram in particular. After 4 years, in the 1930s, he returned to Manappuram (Kumaran 22-34).

V.S. Keraleeyan also had a life of transitions. Even though he was born in Engandiyoor on 11 February 1911, a place located in Manappuram, he grew up in Ceylon. His parents died in his childhood. Then he and his elder brother were raised by his uncle and aunt. At the age of 7, he and his brother were taken to Ceylon by his uncle, who was working there at that time. Keraleeyan became proficient in English, Tamil, Sanskrit, Sinhala and Malayalam during his life in Ceylon.⁶⁷⁴ He became a social and political-oriented writer and journalist in that diasporic climate. His uncle's encouragement and his

⁶⁷⁴ George A. Allapad, "Yashashareeranaya V.S. Keraleeyan" (Late V.S. Keraleeyan), *Thaliyola: V.S. Keraleeyan Smaranika* (V.S. Keraleeyan Memoir), ed. Velayudhan Panikkassery (Thrissur: September, 1991).

engagement with the political sphere of Ceylon played a decisive role in his life. In Ceylon, in 1935, he and his friends started a Malayalam magazine *Veerakeralan* for the propagation of socialist ideology, and he worked as an editor for the magazine. Similarly, many people of Manappuram had settled in Ceylon for the long haul rather than for a temporary stay.

From the 14th century onwards, Ceylon and Kerala have had an intimate connection (*Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* 14). For war, trade and craft, people moved between these places and settled there. The starting of coffee, tea and rubber plantations at the end of the 18th century precipitated the volume of migration of people onto another level. People of Manappuram used to work with the Ceylon police,⁶⁷⁵ Ceylon railways,⁶⁷⁶ Ceylon port and in the house of Ceylonese as servants. A few people of Manappuram also worked as doctors, teachers and advocates. People of Manappuram were also involved in different kinds of business such as toddy making and sale,

⁶⁷⁵ Job opportunities in the Ceylon police force were also an attractive factor for migration. The Ceylon police department used to recruit Malayalis directly from Kerala. *Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* 16. K. Achyuthan Nayar went from Engandiyoor to Colombo and joined the Ceylon police in 1926 (216).

⁶⁷⁶ Many people from Manappuram were also employed with the Ceylon Railways. K.K. Kuttan from Nattika and V.V. Velayudhan from Engandiyoor, worked as clerks in the railways, and K.A. Raman from Thalikulam worked in the railway workshop. Those who retired from the railways got pension from the different banks and treasuries of Kerala. People from Nattika received pension from Nedumgady Bank. *Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* 179-180.

hotel business,⁶⁷⁷ beedi making,⁶⁷⁸ traditional medicine, tailoring shop⁶⁷⁹ and cycle shop. They became rich by making soap,⁶⁸⁰ through watchmaking and repair,⁶⁸¹ and many other businesses⁶⁸² in Ceylon.

Added to all these dynamic enterprises of the people of Manappuram in Ceylon is their flourishing in Lankan toddy business as mentioned above. The Thiyya community played a significant role in it. They also donated large amount of money to educational institutions and for other welfare initiatives⁶⁸³ at Manappuram. N.V. Govindan⁶⁸⁴ from Thrithaloor, P.V. Manikam from Edamuttam, K.K. Gopalakrishnan from Triprayar, K.K.

⁶⁷⁷ V.K. Kumaran and K.V. Damodharan from Edamuttam, and V.S. Prapakaran and V.S. Velayudhan from Kipamangalam earned wealth in Ceylon doing hotel business. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 259-260, 269.

⁶⁷⁸ In the initial period, the majority of beedi-makers were Muslims. The Malayali investment in the beedi industry was considerable. Raja beedi was the first Malayali venture in Ceylon. The proprietor of this company was A. Abdul Kadhar. He started this company by buying up all the production equipment from Maharaja Beedi Company that was selling all its equipment. A few years later, P.A. Abdul Kadhar, who was the native of Kippamangalam, started Kaja Beedi at Colombo. Then after a period of time, in 1956, the owner of Raja Beedi bought Kaja Beedi Company. Another beedi company named Aana was also owned by a Malayali. P.B. Muhamad, a public figure in Thalikulam was an agent of the Raja Beedi Company. Abdulla Kutty, who was a native of Vadanapally, was also an agent of the beedi company. Most of the agents of Raja Company were Malayalis from central Kerala. The first company that started production of tobacco with government support was the Raja Company. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 122-124.

⁶⁷⁹ Sewing and tailoring were industries in Ceylon, where people from Thalikulam were involved in substantial numbers. The shop of T.K. Madhavan Pilla who was a native of Thalikulam was doing well. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 154.

⁶⁸⁰ In 1945, Balanchandran from Mathilakam and Kumaran Perinjanam were running a soap-making business in Ceylon. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 268. Natives of Kothaparamb such as P.V. Prakashan, K.N. Gopu and Natheshan were also successful in the soap-making business in Ceylon. However, after the ethnic violence that took place against the non-Ceylon population in June 1983, their families shifted to Kothaparamb (269).

⁶⁸¹ The owner of Popular Watch Works was also a native of Orumayanoor. He later started Badhusha Watch Company in Madras. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 264-265.

⁶⁸² Kattashan Veetil Krishnankutty ran many businesses in Ceylon. He was a native of Nattika. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 270.

⁶⁸³ T.R. Ragavan from Perikottukara was in the toddy business in Sri Lanka. He developed a business group with others named Elite. Then he took the initiative to start the Nattika S. N. College. He was president of the college trust for many years. Two of the main toddy contractors, P.E. Appu and P.E. Raman had contributed substantial amounts of money to Pullut Kujikuttan Thampuran College. Appu also contributed to build a ward in the Kodungallur Government Hospital. K.K. Madhavan was in the toddy and hotel business in Ceylon. He donated a large amount of money to start the Nattika S. N. College. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 241-242, 235, 226, 253.

⁶⁸⁴ His son, Vidhanadan was the president of the Vadanapally panchayat. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 228)

Kunjandi from Edamuttam and Madhavan from Valappad also were toddy contractors in Ceylon (*Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* 217-243).

As owners and physicians, people of Manappuram had a great role in the establishment of traditional Ayurvedic hospitals in Ceylon. Establishing clinics in different parts of Ceylon, the traditional physicians started medicinal practices like *dhara*, *pizichil* and *navarakizi*. After founding an Ayurveda college these medicinal practices gained much popularity.⁶⁸⁵ The founder of the Kerala Vaidhyashala in Colombo, Eranzhath Sankaran Vaidhyar was a Sanskrit degree holder from Pattambi Sanskrit College and a student of the famous Vazhoor Chathunni Vaidhyar and Mavilaay Chirukandan Vaidhyar in Kannur. He was a social activist and a member of the Thalikulam Sreenarayana Samajam. He reached Ceylon to work for the Thalikulam Bank Limited, but he eventually started a clinic. When he went back to Manappuram after some time, the shop changed hands twice.⁶⁸⁶

E.S. Dharmapalan Vaidhyar, Ayanikkatu Parambil Padmanabhan Vaidhyar⁶⁸⁷ and K.K. Thamikutty Vaidhyar Kalapurakal who started many medical shops in Thalikulam and K.N. Vasudhevan Vaidhyar who started ‘Sudha Product’ in Peringanam also were physicians who had studied or

⁶⁸⁵ An article by Dr E.R. Balakrishnan Thalikulam in the *Memoir of Malayalis in Sri Lanka* is a brief history of the Malayali connection of Ayurveda in Ceylon. Ayanikkattu Parambil Mama Vaidhyar who was popularly known as ‘Kochi Mama Vedhamahathya’ among the Sinhala community was the pioneer among them. Moreover, the first principal of this college was Dr Captain A.N.N. Panikkar. He was a Malayali. He had deep knowledge of Indian medicinal practices and Allopathy. After attaining a Bachelor’s degree in Ayurveda, following the advice of Narayana Guru he went to England to study Allopathy. Many Malayalis studied at this college. Dr M.K. Narayanapilla, who was the son of the famous Ayyankitta Vaidhyar was one among them. In Ceylon, K.C.R. Vaidhyar did social activism along with his medical practice. *Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* 144-146.

⁶⁸⁶ T.V. Janardhanan Vaidhyar, the disciple-student of Sankaran Vaidhyar who ran the clinic after Sankaran’s period, handed it over to K.K. Vasu (He received the Justice of Peace award from the Ceylon government) when he returned to Manappuram, and he started Bharath Pharmacy in Thalikulam. Another student of Sankaran Vaidhyar, A.K. Velayudhan Vaidhyar, who had owned a clinic in Ceylon, also started a clinic, Sreenarayana Pharmacy in Sreenarayanapuram. *Ceylon Malayali Smaranika* 146.

⁶⁸⁷ He started the Vishwabharathy Pharmacy in Thalikulam.

practised in Ceylon.⁶⁸⁸ V.V.R. Das Vaidhyar from Valappad and P.T. Pushkaran Vaidhyar from Engandiyoor had also worked in Ceylon as Ayurveda doctors (151-153). Moreover, those who returned from Ceylon started many businesses in Manappuram such as jewellery shops, petrol pumps,⁶⁸⁹ watch repair, hotels,⁶⁹⁰ textiles,⁶⁹¹ oil mills⁶⁹² and hardware shops. One migrant family member from Manappuram not only expanded the diasporic life and business to other countries but also became the ambassador of Sri Lanka.⁶⁹³

In Ceylon, people of Manappuram were members of most of the Malayali associations. They were part of the Muslim association, the Kerala Ceylon Catholic Association, the Sree Vijnanodhaya Yogam, Anandha Samajam, Kerala Samajam, Kerala Vanitha Samajam, Malayali Yuvajana Sahithya Samajam, Kerala Samskarika Samajam, Sree Narayana Guru Smaraka Sangam and Vidvan T. Sankaran Smaraka Sangam.⁶⁹⁴ A few collectives among Malayalis such as Nattika-Tripriyay Sahodhara Paripaalana Yogam,

⁶⁸⁸ The children of Pokkanchery Ramakrishnan Vaidhyar, who was an Ayurveda doctor in Ceylon, named Vikramsing, Premlal and Jayathilakan worked as doctors in Kerala government service. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 146-148.

⁶⁸⁹ M.M. Abdul Majeed who owns a petrol pump and a jewellery shop in Vadanapally was also a Ceylon-returned businessperson. The children of M.A. Govindan, who was in Lanka, were the owners of Dhanya Fabrics and Dhanya Tourist Home. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 270.

⁶⁹⁰ Baskaran, the owner of Hotel Dream Land in Tripriyay and owner of Susheel Hardware in Tripriyay was in Ceylon. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 270-271.

⁶⁹¹ Owner of Valsa Jewellery and Valsa Textile in Perinjanam, A.C. Govindhan and Chittechath Oil Mill owner, C.K. Madhavan were also in Ceylon. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 271.

⁶⁹² Owner of Vadanapally Popular Watch Works and Thrithaloor Raja Oil N.V. Mill, Muhamad was in Ceylon. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 270.

⁶⁹³ "There is a man called Vethotil Kumaran. His house was in Edamuttam. Perhaps, he went to Sri Lanka in the 1940s. He had six sons. Among them, three are doctors and one is an engineer in America. They are established industrialists in Sri Lanka. They are influential people in the Sri Lankan government. One of his sons has worked in India and Abu Dhabi as a High Commissioner of Sri Lanka. He was an adviser of the party of Ranil Wickremesinghe. This family has huge investments in the liquor and bar business in Sri Lanka. They have hospital business in Hong Kong and Singapore." From Majeed, personal interview.

⁶⁹⁴ Engandiyoor Thirumangalath Shankaran was a Sanskrit scholar, a traditional physician and teacher. He was also a leader of the Perumanan community. In the 1940s, his fans started a collective called Vidvan T. Sankaran Smaraka Sangam. They organised cultural programs and speech practices. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 136.

Engandiyoor Yuvajana Samajam, Vadanapally Sree Vidyaposhini Sangam and Perumpadap-Edathurithi Sreenarayanaguru Smaraka Samajam, were exclusively constituted by the people of Manappuram, especially in the name of the hometowns of the people of Manappuram. They contributed in a significant way to the development of areas such as Nattika, Triprayar, Engandiyoor, Vadanapally, Perumpadap, Edathuruthy and Thalikulam.⁶⁹⁵

Nattika-Triprayar Sahodhara Paripalana Yogam is one of the people's collectives formed by the natives of Nattika-Triprayar in Ceylon.⁶⁹⁶ Sree Narayana Guru's Ceylon visit was the trigger for the formation of this collective in 1920. In certain ways, most of the early Ceylon Malayalis were closely connected to this collective. This was a collective beyond caste and religion. Christians and Muslims were also members of this platform. This collective had a leading role in the social reform movements and other agitations in their native place. They got involved in the agitations for temple entry, for freedom to walk on public roads and the right to use ponds and lakes. In the centre of Nattika, on the roadside of Moonupedika, they bought a 96-cent land and constructed a building using the collective fund (129).

Engandiyoor Yuvajana Samajam was founded in 1924 by V.K. Shankunni, who was a native of Engandiyoor and a public figure, along with other natives of Engandiyoor.⁶⁹⁷ This collective was founded to build the Engandiyoor Yuvajana Hall and National High School in Engandiyoor. Bratha V.K. Velukutty Master, one of the campaigners for the development of

⁶⁹⁵ Kadvallur Nair Samajam was the only Malayali organisation that the people of Manappuram did not have any connection with.

⁶⁹⁶ Eranayath Karuppan, Mandapully Raman, Alakkal Kunjaman, P.V. Velay, V.K. Kumaran, T.V.K. Kuttan, E.V. Gopinath and T.K. Velappan were the active members of this platform.

⁶⁹⁷ K.C.R. Vaidhyar, C.V. Krishnan (Chanaserry Kuttappan), P.R. Baskaran, Pallithazath Sankaranathan, K.S. Krishnan (Kaanath), Kareepadath Maman (Kochukuttan), Panikkassery Velayudhan, K.S. Paran, Kari Paadath Ayyappan, Pazacheri Sankunni Nair, Eyanithara Raman, Vadakumcheri Ettaman and Kuttikattu Ayyappan were the active members of this collective.

Manappuram came to Ceylon to collect funds for these constructions.⁶⁹⁸ They contributed generously to the development of their native place (130). Natives of the place formed the Vadanapally Sree Vidyaposhini Sangam for the educational development of Vadanapally⁶⁹⁹ and the collective provided notable aid for the educational empowerment of Vadanapally (130).

Prior to the 1930s, the people who lived in Hulshof Street of Colombo started the Sree Narayana fund under the leadership of Thozuthum Parambil Raman Kutty. Concurrently, Thalikulam Yuvajana Samajam was also formed by certain people. The natives of Thalikulam were the majority members in both these collectives. The members of Sree Narayana Fund decided to construct a building in Thalikulam for public use. They bought a 56-cent land in Thalikulam centre and constructed a building. In 1938, both of these collectives joined to form the Sreenarayana Samajam (132).

The people of Manappuram were part of the night school (*Nishapadshala*) called 'S.N.G. Free Night School', in the building of Laurence College in the 1918-19 period in Ceylon.⁷⁰⁰ This was established by the Malayalis in Ceylon for their self-empowerment in response to the unhappiness expressed by Narayana Guru about the educational backwardness of Ceylon Malayalis. Those who learned at this institution became employees, public figures, businessmen, and also got jobs in other foreign countries. K.K. Kumaran from Thalikulam/Valappad earned a job in Kolkata port by studying in the Malayali night school and completing an engineering course in Ceylon (258). The library and the platform for speech training, along with this school,

⁶⁹⁸ He visited in 1925 and again another year.

⁶⁹⁹ P.R. Velandy, P.S. Gopalan, P.R. Kumaran, P.S. Raman Kutty, C.A. Kuttan, M.V. Mama and C.V. Raman were the main members of this collective.

⁷⁰⁰ When the night school was started, K.K. Kumaran, N.G. Ragavan and Nadarajan (native of Tamilnadu) were the teachers. For this venture V.B. Imbich Haji, Malepura Raman and K.C.R. Vaidhyar donated generously. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 137-140.

had a decisive role in the knowledge development of the Malayalis.⁷⁰¹In Ceylon, these people were not only members of libraries⁷⁰² but also the customers of half a dozen bookstalls run by Malayalis. The library that was established in 1937 called Sree Narayana Guru Smaraka Vayanashala was a contribution of the Manappuram collective in Ceylon called the Perumpadap-Edathuruthy Sreenarayana Guru Smaraka Samajam.⁷⁰³

The formation of Manappuram as a region is made possible by its contribution to the prospering of other regions with which it interacted at the level of knowledge production. For example, the Malayali print culture in Ceylon is much indebted to people of Manappuram because both M.A. Velu and K.C.R. Vaidhyar, who were the owners and publishers of the first and second Malayalam printing press of Ceylon were natives of Manappuram. Moreover, the primary editor of *Ceylon Malayali* was a famous writer, V.C. Unniparan from Nattika.⁷⁰⁴The people behind the *Samathwavadhi* newspaper were also from Manappuram. P.V. Valai, one of the editors of this newspaper, after coming back from Ceylon, had contested as a Congress candidate for the Nattika district board election.⁷⁰⁵V.S. Keraleeyan and E.V. Gopinathan were the early editors of another Malayalam weekly called *Veerakeralan* started in 1935 for propagating socialist ideology. The commitment of these print media

⁷⁰¹ In the period between the 1925s and the 1930s, every house with Malayali workers became libraries. The dwellers of each house purchased magazines and newspapers and circulated these. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 141.

⁷⁰² The most famous libraries were Bashaposhini Vayana Shala, T.K. Madhavan Smaraka Vayanashala and Muhamad Abdurahman Memorial library. Those were located in Marudhana, Kumbinitheruv, Grand Pass, Kolanav and Dali Road. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 141.

⁷⁰³ When libraries were being closed down in Ceylon, 2-3 libraries in Nattika Firka requested them to send over their books. K.S. Achuthan's request was taken up and they handed over the books to him. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 142.

⁷⁰⁴ The first newspaper 'Malayali' was started in 1926 by M.A. Velu and the second newspaper 'Ceylon Malayali' was started in 1927. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 163-165.

⁷⁰⁵ *Samathwavadhi* newspaper was started in the year of 1931. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 167-168.

to the reconstruction of Manappuram is undeniable. They were also involved with the disaster relief activities in Nattika.⁷⁰⁶

The people of Manappuram were involved in the religious discussions and belief systems of Ceylon, such as Buddhism, yogic tradition and Pentecost Christianity. These spiritual aspects of Ceylon entered the public sphere of Manappuram differently. Monk Dharma Skandha from Ceylon, who was involved in the revival of Buddhism in Kerala, was a native of Engandiyoor. Under his leadership, branches of Buddha Mission functioned in places such as Kothaparamb and Engandiyoor. Many welfare activities were undertaken by them including the running of an orphanage.⁷⁰⁷ Saint Vazakulathu Kunju Poojari who lived near Sivanadipadam, one of the famous temples of Ceylon, was a native of Nattika.⁷⁰⁸ The founder of the Ceylon Pentecost mission, Pastor P. Paul was a native of Engandiyoor. This sect had many followers in Ceylon. When he came to India for his evangelical mission, he delivered a talk in Engandiyoor market.⁷⁰⁹ People of Manappuram were the leaders of the Hindi Prachara Saba in Ceylon. This institution worked for the propagation of Hindi language. Blangat Raman from Thalikulam, M.P. Narayanan from

⁷⁰⁶ This newspaper was involved in the activities towards the eradication of cholera in Malabar. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 170-171.

⁷⁰⁷ Monk Dharma Skandha gave leadership to the revival of Buddhism in Kerala from 1930 to 1950. He was a scholar in Pali and Sanskrit. After learning Sanskrit and acquiring considerable knowledge, he joined K.C.R. Vaidhyar's Vaidhyashala in Colombo. After practising medicine along with K.C.R. Vaidhyar for a few years, he became a follower of Buddhism. Then he became a monk, and up to the end of his life, he used to prescribe Ayurvedic treatments to patients. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 211-213.

⁷⁰⁸ Sivanadipaadam was the one of the famous temples in Ceylon. Every year, a large number of devotees used to visit this temple. The temple was situated on the top of a hill. There was a foot located midway to the hill. This was on 4-5 acres of flat land. A saint, popularly known as Vazakulathu Kunju Poojari, had a hermitage there. He was a native of Nattika. Near to his hermitage, he had built two shacks with thatched roof for the devotees to take rest. He earned a good income through this. In the period 1945-50, he had two wives even when he was considered as a Swami. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 160-161.

⁷⁰⁹ He was the son of Velandi. His earlier name was Ramankutty (Kuttan). At the age of 15, he went to Ceylon. He worked as a servant in a European's house. That man had a wife and a daughter. The European passed away at a young age. The man's wife was kind to Kuttan. Her daughter had tuition at home. Using that opportunity, Kuttan would also attend the tuition classes. He learned through this. Then he converted to Christianity. Later through his own initiative, he started the Ceylon Pentecost mission. When he died at Ceylon, he was buried with respect. His close relatives from Engandiyoor participated in the funeral. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 172.

Engandiyoor, A. Vasudevan from Edamuttam and A.S. Sankaranarayanan Alakkal from Nattika were the leading proponents of this Saba in Ceylon.⁷¹⁰

Here we can easily understand how the diasporic life of the natives of Manappuram had materially and mentally produced the region Manappuram. In the early twentieth century, many families of Manappuram were completely dependent on money orders from people who worked and lived in Ceylon and Assam. As mentioned earlier, during that period more than 20,000 people of Manappuram were employed or doing business in Ceylon. They worked in plantations, toddy fields, the Ceylon police department, the Ceylon railway department, the Ceylon port, houses of Ceylonese, schools, hospitals and courts; and did business in the fields of toddy sale, hotels, beedi, traditional medicine, tailoring, cycle shops, soap companies, watch-work and petty shops. These formed the basis for the money order economy in Manappuram. The various collectives formed in Ceylon in the name of their hometowns (Nattika-Tripriyay, Engandiyoor, Vadanapally and Thalikulam) not only funded relief activities during flood, famine and cholera but also invested in the construction of roads, schools, colleges, libraries, shopping complexes, hospitals and many businesses. Ceylon migrants even influenced the spirituality of Manappuram; they brought back Buddhism to the region. Moreover, a large section of migrants bought land and built new houses in Manappuram with their income. The landscape of Manappuram was drastically transformed by these public and private built-environments. In 1920, the Manappuram diaspora of Ceylon was very active in the social reform movements in Manappuram. They led agitations for temple entry, freedom to walk on public roads, and right to use ponds and lakes as discussed in a previous section. What these activities lead to was the transformation of

⁷¹⁰ Blangat Raman, a native of Thalikulam, and M.P. Narayanan from Engandiyoor were also part of the venture in 1935. However, the formal foundation of this institution as a franchisee of the Madras Hindi Prachara Saba happened in the year of 1939-40. A. Vasudevan from Edamuttam was the first secretary of the institution. When he returned to Kerala, A.S. Sankaranarayanan Alakkal from Nattika took up that post. The people who studied at this institution become teachers outside Kerala. Ceylon Malayali Smaranika 173-175.

the dominant and exploitative land and property relations and revolutionisation of the social fabric. In short, the diaspora of Manappuram reimagined and reconstructed Manappuram fundamentally on spatial, economic, political, cultural and social terms.

To reiterate, Alappuzha-Kollam-Thattapara-Colombo, Palakkad-Madura-Rameswaram-Colombo and Palakkad-Thoothukudy-Colombo were the main road-railroad-cum-sea-routes that people of Manappuram used to reach Ceylon. Regional networks such as blood relation, business links, friendship circle and marital relations were the main linking factors of this migration. In Ceylon, the migrants lived together in boarding houses or independent houses (rented or self-owned). Through this shared inhabitation and their involvement with different welfare and recreational collectives in the name of their hometowns and engagement with night schools, speech classes, libraries, bookstalls and inter-dining groups, they created another Manappuram in Ceylon. They even constructed permanent buildings in Colombo and other places for collective activities and dwelling. In Ceylon, they lived as in Manappuram. Therefore, this diasporic life not only reimagined and reconstructed the region of Manappuram but also physically and emotionally created a Manappuram in Ceylon.

4.2. Manappuram in the Gulf Countries

In the words of C.K.G. Vaidhyar:

Drastic changes happened here after the Gulf migration. All the current developments at this place were the effect of this migration. After this migration, every administrative centre of panchayats and other small towns like Vadanapally, Thalikulam, Triprayar and Valappad have become centres of trade.

Similarly, V.A.H. Valappad voiced:

In my childhood, life in our place was so difficult. It was the period known as the epoch after the storm. It was a time when employment was

difficult to find. Today we do not have that level of unemployment. One way to address the unemployment issue was to take up job opportunities offered by Ceylon. Then we started getting offers from the Gulf. After the Gulf migration, our place has changed drastically.⁷¹¹

In the opinion of Majeed, one of the main reasons behind the development of Manappuram is the migration of people by dhow (*Laangi*) to the Gulf countries via Chetuva estuary in the 60s, as one can see in the movie *Pathemary*.⁷¹² He asserted:

This is also a major reason for the social changes in our place. One can see a revolutionary change in the last 40-50 years of history. They had big dreams for life. They realised that one cannot gain mental satisfaction without developing the material world. Therefore, they migrated to other countries. They lost out on their romantic life to build the material world. They lost their lives with their family, their love, the growing years of their children and all such treasures. The dream was to live the middle-class life; build a good house with all the new facilities. While some of them could attain this by working in the Gulf, a few could not achieve this standard. This migration brought in huge progress in education and other sectors. Progress in trade and commerce happened along with this.⁷¹³

Though migration to the Gulf was a deciding factor in the development of Manappuram, migration for jobs had started much earlier with Colombo (Ceylon). The founders of the Elite Group, Komathakkal Gopalan and Kollara Chathunny were Colombo-based individuals. Chathunny was one of the well-known liquor merchants in India. Owner of the Elite International Group, Kozhiparambil Kujasdi was their relative. From Edamuttam, they were a family of industrialists who lived royal lives in Manappuram. Like Ceylon,

⁷¹¹ V.A.H. Valappad, personal interview, 01.02.2013.

⁷¹² *Pathemary* (2015), the movie, discussed the life of migrants from Manappuram who had illegally migrated to Dubai in dhows in the 1950s.

⁷¹³ Majeed.

the Gulf countries also helped the people of Manappuram to become entrepreneurs. Owners of the Gulf-based Flora Fauna Group and Seashore Group are natives of Mathilakam in Manappuram. Billionaire M. A. Yusuff Ali who migrated from Nattika to the Gulf is a well-known figure. Similarly, business magnate Gulfar Mohamed Ali is from Thalikulam. The owner of Medimix Soap, Dr Sidhan is from Edamuttam. He is the grandchild of Cholleyil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar.

In the words of Peethambaran:

Now we have all imaginable luxury. This has been brought about by the Gulf. The developments are a result of the Gulf migration. If the Gulf had not offered job opportunities, our poverty would have continued unalleviated. It brought about a revolution in our culture. With aid from the Gulf countries, people could improve their living circumstances and educate their children.

Engandiyoor Chandrasekaran opined:

More than any other place, the influence of the Gulf culture is much more evident in our region. Our people used the money from the Gulf in the right manner, rather than from the other sources. Earlier, thousands of people reached the Gulf countries by adventurously voyaging on the dhows (*Laanchi*) of Laanchi Velayudhan. Several people became rich by going to the Gulf this way. P.T. Kujimuhamad wrote his film script based on this. His mother's house is in Chetuva. He could not make it into a film. But *Pathemary* has been produced based on this subject.⁷¹⁴

Ramadas explicated:

Gulf was the new area of influence on the people of Manappuram. In the past, Laanchi Velayudhan had transported many people to the Gulf. In 1978, I reached the Gulf. At that time, people narrated many stories about earlier migrants. Children who were studying in the 9th and 10th classes had gone there in Velayudhan's dhow without informing their families.

⁷¹⁴ Engandiyoor Chandrashekar, personal interview, 12.01.2016.

The parents were searching for the children here and there, and people would tell them that they had seen them in Velayudhan' dhow, going to Persia. Many of these people managed to better their lives. The majority of the migrants were from Chetuva. My brother had gone to the Gulf by dhow in 1972. The dhow took 8-10 days to reach the Gulf. While migrating by dhow many of them had died. When travelling by dhow, people would vomit due to the smell of the sea. By the time they reached near the shore, they would be completely weak because the food and water would be over. Because of the difficulty to disembark very close to the shore, they were forced to swim to reach the shore. Those that were weak and those who did not know how to swim would get lost at sea. Some of them would reach ashore. All these I heard from people who had migrated by dhow. I travelled to Bombay by train, and then from there, I travelled on a ship to reach the Gulf.

The novel *Manalmozhi* detailed the life of Laanchi Velayudhan in a fictional language. His fleeing to Mumbai, becoming a sailor and dhow owner, and his expeditions to Dubai from Manappuram with the many migration-aspirants appear on the pages of this work (222-234).

Nandakumar said:

People used to say that Manappuram is a place where a large number of entrepreneurs from Kerala live. Except for my company, Manappuram Group, all the others are NRIs. M.A. Yusuff Ali (Lulu group), Dr P. Mohamed Ali (Gulfar), Dr Gopal (Ahalia Hospital), Flora Group, Muhamad Ali (Seashore Group), Hassan Hospitality, Suresh Valappad (Middle East) and more than half a dozen other entrepreneurs are from Manappuram.

Mobile Geographies of Manappurams: Network, Node and Trans-territoriality of the Region

From the 1960s onwards, people of Manappuram migrated to Gulf countries such as Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Initially, they went on the dhow of Laanchi Velayudhan from Chetuva to Dubai. Later they started going to Mumbai by train and then reached the Gulf countries via ship from Mumbai. Nowadays they go to the Gulf countries from the Cochin International Airport. They funded not only the welfare activities in this region but also made huge investments in the business ventures in Manappuram. The welfare activity by Gulfar Mohamed Ali through VIKAS Trust is a remarkable one among these. In 1973, Gulf migrants helped V.S. Keraleeyan financially to set up a new press in Engandiyoor to print the *Manappuram Times*. The Gulf-based economy is the source of survival for many families of Manappuram even today. From a money order economy, currently, it has changed into an e-banking economy.

Construction of houses, shopping complexes, banking institutions, management schools, private hospitals, sports complex, theatres and auditoriums are the infrastructural development that the Gulf economy has brought forth. This has not only elevated the housing standards of the region but also improved the health, education and recreational facilities available to the people. These private-sector ventures in health and education that emerged in the shadow of the Gulf economy is different from the educational and health institutions that were founded by the co-operatives and other collective schemes with the help of the Ceylon economy. Thus, Manappuram diaspora in the Gulf countries re-visualised and restructured Manappuram materially and mentally.

As in Ceylon, so in the Gulf countries, people of Manappuram come together in the name of different collectives. The everyday engagement of people through these collectives not only created identification among them but also

helped them envisage a region in their mind beyond their localities. The collective dwelling, inter-dinning, cultural programs and religious gatherings reproduced regional consciousness and social cohesion among them⁷¹⁵. Their native land, Manappuram, is not just reconstructed through these exercises but it also produces many Manappurams in the Gulf countries.

One of the nodes of these many Manappurams was the *Manappuram Times*. People of Manappuram who were working and settled in Ceylon, the Gulf countries and Mumbai subscribed to this newspaper and wrote letters as well as articles to the newspaper. The travelling of this print from one place to another through airmail helped create a wide linkage and identification among the people of Manappuram while re-producing this region at different places through this network. Today through social media networks, this region lives on in many countries. Put differently, the life of/in the Manappuram region not only happens locally in Manappuram but is produced globally from/in different parts of the world. Thus the (mental and material) mobile geography of Manappuram is supplemented with its own catastrophic and productive geographies.

⁷¹⁵ Sathyadevan, Personal Interview, 23.12.2016.

Chapter Six

Popular History and Construction of Manappuram: Memory, Culture and Genealogy of an Avarna Region

Formation of history and formation of region are mutually constituted. These two are produced through the interrelation between culture and region. The theorisation of Allen Pred (2008) on region sheds light on this problem.⁷¹⁶ He argues that the transformation of individual/society and the transformation of place/region are inseparable. Historical change is nothing but the change of geography. In his conceptualisation, the formation of biographies through language acquisition, personality development, and development of consciousness reciprocate the transformation of nature, i.e. transformation of terrestrial settings. He explains this by saying that region “is a process whereby the reproduction of social and cultural forms, the formation of biographies, and the transformation of nature ceaselessly become another, at the same time that time-space specific path-project intersections and power relations continuously become one another” (144).

He further argues that in this historical and geographical process of the formation of a region, people are not only mentally transformed but also transformed (by) their physical nature (140). In his viewpoint, nature and objects are subjects and have their own history much like humans. David Harvey (1990) also addresses this problem by critically engaging with C. Wright Mill’s argument on *sociological imagination* that suggests grasping the history and biography of the individual for an emancipatory understanding

⁷¹⁶ Allan Pred, “Place as Historically Contingent Process: Structuration and the Time-Geography of Becoming Places,” (first published 1984), *Regions: Critical Essays in Human Geography*, ed. in J. Nicholas Entrikin (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008) 131-149.

of society.⁷¹⁷ Harvey theorises space (region) as “a socially contested cultural configuration” (213) and delineates the symbiotic relationship between history and geography in their shared formations.⁷¹⁸

Indebted to these insights, a reflexive engagement on the interrelation between the production of history and the formation of the region would help to understand the cultural manifestation of the region of Manappuram for the purposes of this thesis. In this chapter, I would like to delineate how the remembrance of people, commodities, resistance and traditions of Manappuram reproduce historical snapshots of important figures and how these fragments of history show the (trans)formation of Manappuram as an *avarana* region for the present. To understand this process, I unravel written and oral memories that reproduce fragments of history. I describe in detail, different modes of articulation of popular history accounts through the remembrance of people’s contributions in the field of material construction, politics, literature, Ayurveda, spirituality; memories on production of *beedi*, screw-pine mat and vetiver; recollection of resistance of people against the practice of caste system, so as to understand the cultural manifestation of Manappuram as an *avarana* region. Commodities, resistance and traditions also have a life of their own like humans. In their being and becoming, all these lives are interconnected.⁷¹⁹ Therefore, in the context of this chapter, popular history means the life histories of people, commodities, resistance and traditions of Manappuram.

⁷¹⁷ David Harvey, “Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 80, No. 3 (September 1990): 418-434.

⁷¹⁸ He argues, “The sociological and geographical imaginations have to be interpenetrated more freely to create what I call a “dialectical utopianism” operating in space-time rather than in either space or time. This dialectical utopianism calls for full engagement of the geographical imagination since it requires a remapping of the world” (252).

⁷¹⁹ See theorisation on life of objects in Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, “The Cultural Biography of Objects” *World Archaeology*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (October 1999): 169

Avarna is a social category used to signify communities outside the four varna system. In the philological sense, the prefix 'ā means 'not or non' and the stem *varna* means colour or communities who belong to the *chatur-varna* (four-varna) system such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Thus, *avarna* means not-varna or non-varna. In the semantics of the word *avarna*, the meaning is determined by 'ā, through a negation of the meaning of the stem. This negation denies the essence of *varna* and rejects the essential theological meaning of the word *varna*. Therefore, it is a rejection of the rejection deployed by the strict categorisation of *chatur-varna*; a negation of the theology that *chatur-varna* system reified, a theology beyond the essentialism of varna.

In general, *varna* represents *savarna* (meaning communities belonging to the system of *chatur-varna*,) and *avarna* represents non-varna. However, today, especially in the context of Kerala, *avarna* has become a self-evident social category representing communities such as Thiyya (Other Backward Class), Mukkuva (Other Eligible Communities), Dalits⁷²⁰ other than *savarna*. Moreover, this word is used as an analytical category to critique the practice of the caste system from the standpoint of the *avarna*. This radical turn of the word emerges out of its discursive use in the anti-caste movement of Kerala from the early twentieth century onwards. Sahodharan Ayyappan, Mithavadi Krishnan, Pambadi John Joseph and other anti-caste thinkers use this as an analytical category extensively in their writings. Intellectuals who develop *avarna* as an analytical category are mainly indebted to the anti-caste theology of Sree Narayana Guru. Therefore, the deployment of the category *avarna* in this chapter is anchored on this conceptual premise.

⁷²⁰ In Kerala, the communities that are categorised as Dalits are some of the ex-untouchable communities such as Kanakkan (Padanna), Pulluvan, Mannan, Velan, Parayan, Kurava, Perumannan, Vettuvan, Panan, Pulayan and so on. In fact, OBC's like Thiyya, Ezhava, and the five Vishwa karma castes were also ex-untouchables in the context of Kerala.

Moreover, Manappuram appears as an *avarana* land in the speech of its inhabitants. They show up the prominence of the *avarana* population in the region. In the opinion of C.K.G. Vaidhyar, a majority of the inhabitants of Manappuram are *avarnas*. Thiyyas are the numerically dominant community in Manappuram, but very few of them were rich. A majority of them were from the middle-class.⁷²¹ A.G. Suresh also supported the opinion of Vaidhyar. In his view, historically Manappuram was a place where Brahmins had not lived. Now there are a few Brahmins who are priests (*shantis*) in temples at Vadanapally and Thalikulam. In the Triprayar temple also, a few Brahmins live and work as priests. Ezhavas and Muslims are the numerically dominant communities in Manappuram. Christians are very few in number. Dalits and Ashari communities also live here. Even though Vettuvass are numerically dominant among the Dalits, other Dalit communities like Kanakka, Pulaya, Paraya and Pulluva live in Manappuram.⁷²²

Vaidhyar added that even though Nairs were numerically lesser in strength in Manappuram they were considered the elite group. The Prakkot family in Thalikulam was an elite family. Another family, who were the *adhikaries* (traditional village officers), lived on the western side of Pattamkal. Blahayil Moopil Nair was one of the richest men in Manappuram. He possessed large tracts of land. Namboothiris⁷²³ did not live here. The Namboothiris who presently live in Manappuram were brought from outside for priestly jobs. A Moosad family that resides at Vatanappally also does priestly jobs. These communities practised caste discrimination against the *avarnas*. In the following discussions how biological fragments through anti-caste ideology manifested Manappuram as an *avarana* region is explicated.

⁷²¹ C.K.G Vaidhyar also pointed out that the richest family among them was Athiparambil. A.P. Raman was a prominent figure from that family. He was the wealthiest man. He owned approximately 500 to 1000 hectares of land. Another wealthy Ezhava family was that of C. Kelu's. He was the one of the first men who went to learn BA from Manappuram. C.K.G, Vaidhyar, personal interview, 06.05.2012.

⁷²² A.G. Suresh, personal interview, 13.01.2013.

⁷²³ Kerala Brahmins.

1. Registers of Fragments of History: Memories and the Question of Popular History

Souvenir, memoir, magazine, pamphlet, booklet, speech and conversation are the registers of memory about the region Manappuram. Production and reproduction of memory through these registers not only form fragments of history about the transformation of the region but also recall the pasts of the region into its present. These fragments of history are very short in size. Most of the time, each written fragment appears in these registers in one or two paragraphs, rarely over a few pages.

The *Nattika Firka Co-operative Rural Bank Silver Jubilee Souvenir*⁷²⁴ (hereafter *Jubilee Souvenir*) that was printed in 1981 is one of the earliest records that reproduces the fragments of the history of the people of Manappuram. Under the title “Smaraneyaraya Dhanyathakkal” (memorable blessed souls), this souvenir marks the short life-history of more than forty people who contributed to the region, Manappuram in different ways. Similarly, *Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal* (footprints of investigative knowledge),⁷²⁵ a memoir published in 2006 on the occasion of the golden jubilee of Velayudhan Panikkassery’s writings, also contains fragments of the history of the people who shaped Manappuram. Moreover, many other books and journals have produced these fragments of history on different occasions.

In addition to these, there are many commemoration committees in the name of famous personalities of Manappuram that organise programmes in their names. For instance, EVG Anusmarana Committee, Ramu Karyat Smritisadhasu, Edassery Moulavi Anusmarana Committee and Dheerapalan Chalipattu Anusmarana Committee are permanent platforms for organising

⁷²⁴ Nattika Firka co-operative Rural Bank Silver Jubilee Souvenir (Thrissur: St. Joseph’s I.S. Press, 1981).

⁷²⁵ Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal (Thrissur: Manappuram Times Suhrudvedi, 2006).

memorial programmes in the name of E.V.G., Ramu Karyat, Edassery Moulavi and Dheerapalan Chalipattu. The yearly public programmes of these committees not only invoke memories about these people in the minds of the inhabitants of Manappuram but also activates them to (re)form Manappuram.

As Peethambaran put it about the importance of remembrance:

Remembrance is a moment that introduces our important figures to the new generation who don't know about them, and a moment to revitalise the memory of the old generation who knew them. For instance, by memorialising Ramu Karyat, the renowned filmmaker from Manappuram, we could invoke his importance in the minds of both the generations.⁷²⁶

More importantly, other than these textual registers, one hears these fragments of history while engaging in conversations with the inhabitants about Manappuram. It was very evident in the interviews I had done with them. Therefore, I think that considering these oral accounts as a register of fragments of history is very important to understand the cultural manifestation of Manappuram as an *avarna* region.

An analysis of the *Manappuram Samskriti* (culture of Manappuram), one of the grand registers of fragments of history, shows us the process of the making of memory.⁷²⁷ This was a three-day programme for articulating and documenting the cultural heritage of Manappuram. For that, the programme committee organised a three-day seminar on the same subject that was held on 23, 24 and 25 of December in 2006. Consequently, in the same year, the organisers documented and published the content of the papers as a souvenir that delineated cultural articulations of Manappuram by titling it as *Manappuram Samskriti*. We can understand from this that oral production of memory in front of an audience in a seminar hall before it is written in a

⁷²⁶ Peethambaran, personal interview, 15.01.2016.

⁷²⁷ K.V. Unnikrishnan (ed), *Manappuram Samskriti*, (Thrissur: Published by Prof. T R. Haari, 2006).

souvenir is meant to evoke the memory of the past in the present of Manappuram.

The programme was initiated by Prof. V.R. Haari, a retired college principal of S.N. College Nattika. He was a member of the Thiyya community from an upper-middle-class background. Several people of Manappuram collaborated with him for the realisation of this programme. They spent around three years in preparation for this programme by conducting meetings and consultations. Jose Thadikkaran, a journalist from the Syrian Christian community and who runs a local newspaper called *Al-Hind* says, “Manappuram Samskriti means the culture of the place, Manappuram which people from Chetuva to Aala share”. By way of explaining about the aim of this event, V.R. Haari says:

There are certain histories that are always unwritten everywhere. Manappuram Samskriti intends to organise events to felicitate and publicly recognise people who were forgotten to be addressed by history until now. We also aimed to acknowledge Manappuram’s old and coastal antiquities.

Here it is clear that the production of memory through this programme about the people of Manappuram is aimed at writing the unwritten history of people who would otherwise be forgotten. He further says:

Initially, the souvenir was not in our plan, but after wide acceptance by the people, we decided to publish it. It is not a big history and there are no descriptive details in that souvenir. But it is a historical record.

These words not only explain the grounds that led to the publication of the souvenir but also tell us about the nature of history which this event could produce through the re-production of memory. Moreover, it is clear that the intention of the organisers was not to produce a professional history of Manappuram to develop it in a linear fashion, through origin and continuity with an integrated academic perspective, but to produce and record fragments of pasts (of people) of Manappuram for the use of the present. Moreover,

differing from a holistic and an objective approach that depends on “authentic” historical archives to write “big history”, here the fragmented, subjective memory of people became a historical record. Therefore, the very nature of history produced here is not only subjective but also fragmentary. In short, in this context, history is a collection of many fragments of history that are produced through memory.

Moreover, from the first sentence in *Manappuram Samskriti*, “A memoir to remember the eminent personalities from Manappuram who have passed away, and to welcome the vibrant new generation,” we can understand that the popular remembrance through this book is the older generation addressing the new generation, the future of the region. Additionally, the subsequent explanation of Haari⁷²⁸ also reflects the goal of this project. He says:

If we respect the old people of our region, we respect our *nadu*, the place, the region itself. We are not respecting mere individuals but the work that they have done for this society and their contribution as part of the history of our place and its better future and we respect how they attempted to uplift a downtrodden society.

This is not only a tribute to the place Manappuram through public felicitation of the people and their emancipatory labour, but it also reveals the intimate connection between the human body, human labour, the formation of culture,

⁷²⁸ After a period of inactive life, this Programme Committee rejuvenated itself and planned another programme in 2011. In the words of Jose Thadikkaran in 2011, “We have decided to announce a cash award of ₹25,000 and certificate (*prasasthipathram*) for cultural and literary achievement. For that, we declared we would confer awards on Sri. Sukumar Azhekkode, the famous orator and literary critic, and on Vaishakan, a famous novelist in Kerala. The news of the award came out in *Mathrubhumi*”. Haari said, “In the beginning we thought that the award should be restricted to a person who is from Manappuram, later we rethought the plan and considered entire Kerala. The award was given to Sukumar Azhekkode for his contribution over the years. Now we are thinking of considering one particular area to give the award each year”. They explained that the plan of the award programme was to rejuvenate the organisation which had been inactive for long. They are planning to extend their venue of felicitation to the home of the person who would be felicitated. As a part of this, they inaugurated the award programme by felicitating Dr Balan who served the people of Manappuram during the difficult period of small-pox and cholera which had badly affected Manappuram in the 60s and 70s and caused many people to lose their lives.

and region. For, by respecting human labour they respect the work done by the human body to construct the culture and the region Manappuram. This emphasis on body, labour, culture and region in the production of memory will become clear in the following sections. The fragments of history of the people who have appeared in the written and oral accounts such as souvenir, memoir, magazine, pamphlet, booklet, speech and talk of the inhabitants will be reproduced in detail in the following sections.

While travelling through these accounts we come across several short life stories of people.⁷²⁹ However, the reproduction of all of these here is not possible because of the volume of these life stories. Therefore, I wish to reproduce important ones among them to show how these fragments of history make Manappuram culturally visible as an *avarna* region. This chapter loosely arrays a few sections to reduce the convolution of narratives effected by memory. Those parts also demonstrate fragments of history of people, traditions, commodities and resistance produced by memories about the building of new environment, politics, literature, Ayurveda, spirituality, memories of production of beedi, screw-pine mat and vetiver, and resistance of people against the practice of caste system.

⁷²⁹ Such as Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar, V.K. Kumaran Master, O. Koran, I. Achuthan Nair, Abu M.V., K. Katakan, K.S.K. Thalikulam, V.K. Korunni Master, Polayil Krishnan, C.S. Gopalan, Sardar Gopalakrishnan, Pokkanchery Chandhu Vaidhyar, K.A. Jabbar, Tharanga Murali, P.K. Thresya, Vidhwan A.T. Devassy, U.K. Nair, Dr U. Narayana Menon, Vidhwan V.K. Panikar, Mahakavi Chetuva Pareekutty, D.M. Pottakkad, O.A. Francis, Parampathukandi Musakutty Sahib, Bratha V.K. Velukutty Master, V.R. Maman Chohan, Kochu Pannu, Philomina, C.P. Moitheen Kutty Sahib, Airoor Kovilakath Ravivarma Raja, N.P. Raman, Dr V.I. Raman, Koongattil Raman Menon, Prof. P.V. Appu, C.S. Abdu, V.R. Rajkumar, A.S. Pannikar Master, Habib Valappad, Chetuva Abdul Khadar, Sankarakurup, Abbas, Suresh Pattali, Dr Usaph Sidhiq, K. Radhakrishnan, K.S. Nair, Moitheen Sha, V. Krishnankutty Master, Kazhimbram Vijayan, I.V. Ramanandhan, B.A. Chathan and V.K. Gopinadhan Master.

2. Remembering Production of Spaces and Politics of life

2.1. A. P. Raman

The *Jubilee Souvenir* has the potential to present the gravity of the A.P. Raman⁷³⁰ effect in the minds of the people of Manappuram. The editor of the *Souvenir* wrote:

If we were to seat the sculptors of Manappuram on a stage in an order, without any doubt we could say that A.P. Raman will get a chair in the first row. Manappuram cannot have a history that excludes A.P... He desired to eliminate the humiliation faced by his Thiyya community and other *avarnas* from the *savarnas*. The curtain of his public action was raised from that wish. To save his community from the dominance of *savarnas* he stood on (sic) the side of the English who had no caste discrimination. The name of the school – George Durbar Memorial (GDM) – that he started to oppose caste hatred itself signals his position (114).

Some of the contents of his fragment of history appear in the souvenir *Manappuram Samskriti*, the memoir *Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal* (footprints of investigative knowledge) (*Anuashanabudhiyude*), the magazine of Maya College⁷³¹ and in the conversations of the people of Manappuram. The main reference points in these memories of him are these: The first high school in Manappuram was started in 1926 by the Christian missionaries in Valappad. That school struggled to survive due to financial constraints. Then, Raman used his influence to affiliate this school to the Malabar District Board for its smooth functioning. In 1933, Raman was the elected president of Ponnani Taluk Board and a member of the Malabar District Board.⁷³² At that time, using the annual funds of Ponnani Taluk⁷³³ and by raising funds from Manappuram and outside Manappuram, including from the Manappuram

⁷³⁰ He was born in a famous and elite Thiyya janmi family in 1890 and died in 1972.

⁷³¹ Praveen P.P., “A.P. Raman: Manappurathinte Vikasana Shilpi” (A.P. Raman: The Developmental Architect of Manappuram), *Magazine of Maya College* (1996).

⁷³² Shajith and Valsan Pokkacheri, personal interviews, 15.01.2012.

⁷³³ C.K.G. Vaidhyar, personal interview, 06.05.2012.

diaspora in Ceylon, he laid laterite over the Aala to Chetuva road (Praveen 47). The present National Highway-17 that crosses Manappuram from north to south is built on this laterite road.

Raman realised the need for a newspaper to inform the government of the grievances of the people of Manappuram. Therefore, under his editorship, he started the first weekly and printing press of Manappuram at Valappad. The name of the press and weekly was *Neethiman* (just man). In 1937, he built a ward in Valappad government hospital in the memory of Kongattil Rama Menon by collecting a public fund. He ran the *Nattika Firka PCC* successfully and seamlessly when he was the president of that organisation. Truthfulness and pragmatism were his two virtues. The bio-sketch on him in the *Souvenir* concludes by saying, “There would be a serious gap without A.P. (Raman) to define Manappuram” (114).

Here the history of Manappuram is not only inseparable from Raman’s life-history but also Raman’s life-history itself is the history of Manappuram that constructs the geography of the region. His emphasis on the immense labour of his body – as seen in the above fragment of history – that constructs a school, road, hospital and printing press symbolises the labour he invests to change the terrestrial setting of Manappuram. Moreover, resistance to caste practices deployed by *savarnas* against *avarnas* was the ideological force behind his move of changing the terrestrial setting of Manappuram. This ideological force is theological. Because spiritual anti-caste doctrines of Sree Narayana Guru were the force of this ideology. Therefore, in temperament, the space produced by Raman itself has *avarana* (non-Caste) nature. The fragment of history of Bratha: V.K. Velukkutty Master also shows this problem.

2.2. Bratha: V.K. Velukkutty Master

Bratha (brother): V.K. Velukkutty Master has appeared in the memoir, souvenir and journals as a genius from Manappuram. With his writing, oratory, thinking and social activism he stands out in the memory of the people. His life-history also repeatedly appears in written and oral discourse. In a conversation, Engandiyoor Chandrasekaran told me:

Bratha: V. K. Velukkutty Master gave much emphasis to the field of education. He used to offer night schooling for Dalits. The name of that school was Panchama School. At that time *savarna* society had denied education to them. This was the reason why he started the Engandiyoor National High School.⁷³⁴

His own educational journey is very exciting. After his failure in the tenth standard, he went to Mumbai with Bodhanantha Swami and joined the monastery of Njanandha Swami at Matumka in Mumbai. From there he studied for the matriculation and passed the tenth standard. While studying for his matriculation he was also a teacher of Mathematics and English at the same school. That monastery life attracted him to spirituality and he became a monk and took on a new name, Thyaganathan. However, he could not pursue his monkhood because of the sudden demise of his grandfather and father. Then he returned to Manappuram.⁷³⁵

He was a hard-core follower and practitioner of anti-caste theology proposed by Sree Narayana Guru. His name Bratha, meaning brother, itself is a derivative of the Guru's idea to accept everyone as one's brothers without a caste mind-set. His opposition to caste practices through constructive programmes led to police cases being registered against him. He "understood that caste can only perish by inter-caste marriage, inter-dining, education and

⁷³⁴ Engandiyoor Chandrasekaran, personal interview, 12.01.2016.

⁷³⁵ S.P. Kadavil, "Bratha: Velukkutty Master", *P.Y.C. Theatre Rajatha Jubilee Souvenir* (Kudaziyoor: Manappuram Times Press, 1984) 79-84.

economic equality” (*Jubilee Souvenir* 112). A. Ayappan⁷³⁶ wrote an obituary for him in the *Thaliyola* journal. He marked:

Bratha was an Ezhava leader who lived between 1888 and 1971 and developed Engandiyoor as a cultural centre. It is difficult to forget him because he started a school and library (which still exists in Engandiyoor). He was a good orator and a community activist. I still remember my journey to take books from that library by crossing two ferries and five *nazika* (two hours) distance. At that time, it was not easy for the Ezhavas to upgrade a primary school into a high school (17).⁷³⁷

As we have seen in Raman’s life-history, Bratha’s life is also the history of Manappuram. Similarly, his production of space in Manappuram by building a school and a library is also fuelled by the anti-caste theology of Sree Narayana Guru. More importantly, memory about him is evoked in the mind of the people not by history books but by the building of the school and the library; material constructions, as A. Ayappan points out. Therefore, geography and built-institutions, rather than books, produce popular history here. Parambathukandi Musakutty Sahib’s life-history in the following section also shows the significance of human action in the production of the region.

2.3. Parambathukandi Musakutty Sahib

Manappuram Samskriti illustrated a small life story of Parambathukandi Musakutty Sahib in its pages. Moreover, memory about him is still alive among the people of Manappuram. He worked for the cultural, social, and educational development of Manappuram in his lifetime, in between 1878-1936. As a member of the Malabar District Board, he got involved in the infrastructural development of the region. Sahib gave land to construct the Valappad government hospital and guesthouse that is popularly known as

⁷³⁶ Dr A. Ayappan was one of the famous anthropologists of India.

⁷³⁷ A. Ayappan, “Bratha: V. K. Velukkutty Master”, *Thaliyola*, Vol. 4, (1984): 17.

Musavari bungalow. He was a government contractor who built roads to Vennakkalkadav and Kuzikadav. He was a good orator and public figure. As a person much interested in sports and games, he encouraged the boat races. His boat had won several races. In Manappuram, the modern method of coconut cultivation was implemented by him.⁷³⁸

Even though Parambathukandi Musakutty Sahib was not directly involved in any anti-caste movements, his actions which made possible the existence of the hospital, road and sports indirectly challenged the spatial order of caste because those provided a possibility for bodily interactions by crossing the spatial order of caste that existed distancing and relating the bodies of the people. Hence, memory of him is not only induced by his spatial contributions but also by the possible changes that production made in the minds of the people. V.K. Kumaran's life-history elaborates this line of argument.

2.4. V. K. Kumaran

Re-inventing the presence of V.K. Kumaran (1907-1978) (popularly known as V.K. Kumaran Mash) in written and oral reminiscences of the people of Manappuram shows his remarkable role in the making of Manappuram. Without much change in details, his life-history appears in the memoir *Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal*, the souvenir *Manappuram Samskriti* and in the natives' day-to-day conversations. In a dialogue, Mojithan Mohanan called him a less acknowledged soul of modern Manappuram.⁷³⁹ Born in a middle-class Thiyya family in Thalikulam, he, his father and family were ardent followers of Sree Narayana Guru. He was a devoted reader of *Sahodharan* and *Mithavaadi*, two transformative anti-caste newspapers run by two different anti-caste intellectuals, Sahodharan Ayappan and C. Krishnan.

⁷³⁸ Varghese Mechery, personal interview, 04.05.2012.

⁷³⁹ Mojitha Mohanan, personal interview. 12.05.2013.

For many years he had served as the director of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP), one of the largest community organisations in Kerala. He also worked as a District Congress Committee (DCC) president and secretary at different periods. Even after passing the Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) (10th standard) in 1927 with qualifications to join college he did not have any possibility of landing a job at his place. Therefore, he migrated to Ceylon for obtaining a job. He worked in a European Company called Wallkaat and he became part of the community of Malayalis in general and of Manappuram in particular. With his friends, he organised a collective in Ceylon for the development of Manappuram (Kumaran 22-34).

After coming back from Ceylon in the 1930s, as a public-spirited activist, he redirected his activism for the development of his native region. He tirelessly worked for the educational, infrastructural and cultural empowerment of Manappuram his entire life. The *Jubilee Souvenir* in 1981 marks his contribution thus:

A ward in Valappad (government) hospital that has twenty beds, a government high school in Thalikulam, a cotton mill in Nattika, the public library in Thalikulam, Sree Narayana College of Nattika, and so many village roads in Nattika Firka are founded through the genuine effort of (Kumaran) Master and his fellow workers. By attracting people to the ideals of Sree Narayana Guru, he formed a volunteer-army that included two thousand people to challenge untouchability and caste-born injustice. That organisation has brought in great transformation in the (Manappuram) *nadu* (101-102).

Moreover, he also devoted his energy for disaster relief activities in Manappuram. The *Jubilee Souvenir* further mentions about his relief activities in the 1941 storm. He formed a relief committee with the support of others and started cottage industries to help the people of Manappuram recover from the inordinate loss caused by the storm. Similarly, when

Manappuram was hit by famine in 1952-53, with the other social activists he organised a relief committee and started gruel-supply centres in different parts of Manappuram (102).

Kumaran's appearance in the history of Manappuram is identical to that of Raman and Bratha. Because his action not only changed the course of Manappuram in a new direction through anti-caste events and disaster relief but also produced new spaces such as hospital, school, cotton mill, library and road for the material transformation of Manappuram. These ideations and materials both have the potential to keep alive the memory about his bodily labour that induced the futuristic production of the region. Thus, remembering him through these registers is an act of "acknowledging the soul of Manappuram" (spirit of history in Walter Benjamin's terms) for its own better future other than mere documentation of the past of the region. The memory on P.K. Tresya, in the following section, shows the production of memory between mental and material relations.

2.5. P. K. Tresya

The *Jubilee Souvenir* notes that P.K. Tresya was the first woman Chief Engineer of Kerala who was born in Edathuruthy, in a middle-class Christian family, in 1921. After obtaining her B.E. Degree from Madras Gindi Engineering college, she joined the Kerala government service as a section officer in 1944 and gradually rose up to the position of chief engineer in the Public Works Department (PWD) in 1971. Through this, she also became the First Woman Chief Engineer in India. She showed efficiency and responsibility in her job. In the highly corrupt PWD, her sincere service invited enormous attention. Moreover, she received love and care from the people for her service. She supervised many important construction projects of the government. She supervised the construction of the building of the then Kerala Legislative Assembly (*Jubilee Souvenir* 108). People of Manappuram

recall her as their secret pride.⁷⁴⁰ Different from the previously mentioned life stories, material construction outside Manappuram by the actions of Tresya has led to the generation of her memory within the region. One can argue in this context that as a person who raised the pride of spatial location of her birthplace, Manappuram, she becomes the history of Manappuram. However, the following life-history of V.S. Keraleeyan shows us the nuances of the interrelations between the human body, the body of the region and labour in the production of the region.

2.6. V. S. Keraleeyan

V.S. Keraleeyan, the larger-than-life son of Manappuram, diligently worked towards the making of the region. His ideas propagated through his newspaper and his material efforts through his social activism led the region Manappuram in a new direction. A memorial that appeared in *Manappuram Samskriti* written by Sidharathan on Keraleeyan remarks, “Keraleeyan was a prominent personality who visualised a humongous dream (about Manappuram) and worked continually towards actualising it.”⁷⁴¹ “Keraleeyan was the kind heart of Manappuram,” P.T. Baskara Panikkar commemorated.⁷⁴² Many parts of V.S. Keraleeyan’s life appears repeatedly in souvenirs, memoirs, books and journals. For instance, we can see many such details in *Thaliyola: V S Keraleeyan Memoir*,⁷⁴³ *V.S. Keraleeyan: Sculptor of the Development of Manappuram*,⁷⁴⁴ *Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal*, *Manappuram Samskriti*, and in the inhabitants’ day-to-day conversations.

⁷⁴⁰ Jose Thadikkaran, personal interview, 15.01.2012.

⁷⁴¹ *Manappuram Samskriti*. This book has no page number.

⁷⁴² P.T. Baskara Panikkar, “Kindheart of Manappuram”, *Thaliyola: V S Keraleeyan Memoir*, Vol. 9, (1991). No page numbers.

⁷⁴³ *Thaliyola: V.S. Keraleeyan Memoir*.

⁷⁴⁴ Velayudhan Panikkassery, *V.S. Keraleeyan: Manappurathinte Vikasanashilpi* (V.S. Keraleeyan: Sculptor of Development of Manappuram), (Thrissur: Green Books, 2005).

In a life story about him, George A. Allapad narrates that he was born on 11 February 1911 in Engandiyoor⁷⁴⁵ and grew up in Ceylon. After the death of his parents, he and his elder brother were raised by his uncle and aunt. His uncle who worked in Ceylon took him to Ceylon where he became a socially- and politically-oriented writer and journalist. His radical vision on social life was formed and informed by the anti-caste doctrine of Sree Narayana Guru and by his engagement with the diasporic political climate of Ceylon. For the dissemination of socialist ideology, he and his friends started a Malayalam magazine *Veerakeralan* in Ceylon in the year 1935, under his editorship. Then, after coming back to Manappuram, on 15 August 1949, under his editorship and ownership, he started *Manappuram Times*, a bi-monthly newspaper. This newspaper flourished for about 25 years. The main aim of the newspaper was the material development and social progress of the region Manappuram. In the opinion of C.K.G. Vaidhyar, *Manappuram Times* was the voice of Manappuram.

Manappuram Times laid emphasis on infrastructural-educational-agricultural-industrial development, disaster relief and progressive literary consciousness of Manappuram by following an anti-caste perspective. He understood that the dominance of the caste system in India was much more powerful than the external supremacy of the foreigner.⁷⁴⁶ This newspaper repeatedly published editorials, articles, features and opinions concerning these issues and for arousing the conscience of the people of Manappuram and the governmental authorities to realise these tasks. For the development of Manappuram, through the *Times*, Keraleeyan demanded roads, bus services, cottage industries, hospitals, irrigation projects and bridges. His campaign for Chetuva and Kottapuram bridges was laborious. For the actualisation of the plans for these bridges, he continuously wrote editorials and submitted memorandums to different governmental authorities for more

⁷⁴⁵ He was a Thiyya community member from a lower-middle-class background.

⁷⁴⁶ “Kerala Veeraputhran V.S. Keraleeyan” (V.S. Keraleeyan: Brave son of Kerala), *Malayora Shabdham*, 1988: 7.

than twenty years. He offered space in his newspaper for the budding writers of Manappuram by publishing their stories and poems.⁷⁴⁷ He also was a poet who published four books of poetry.

Furthermore, Keraleeyan was deeply involved in all the disaster relief activities of Manappuram. His selfless involvement in disaster relief is marked in detail in his biography written by Velayudhan Panikkassery (12-18). In the 1950s when famine broke out in Manappuram he not only published a special issue of the *Times* but also organised a committee in Kozhikode for delegating with the government and the media to solve the problem of food shortage. Then he did extensive groundwork to mobilise people towards relief activities for the famine. In relation to this, he could also get roads built in Manappuram by raising financial and labour contributions from the public. In the same decade, Manappuram faced a dysentery outbreak. Keraleeyan, then, informed the collector and the heads of the health department of the seriousness of this epidemic. Moreover, for creating wide publicity about this disaster he gave coverage to the problem in all the newspapers. Many of them wrote editorials regarding this calamity. Responding to his efforts, the government sent a mobile medical unit to Manappuram for the containment of the dysentery outbreak (Panikkassery 13-14). In the 1960s when cholera spread in Manappuram, Keraleeyan worked hard to get the government to convert the building of Kamala Nehru School into a temporary hospital ward. This helped to arrest the rate of cholera death. However, a considerable number of people died in this attack. There was no motor vehicle available to carry the bodies to the graveyard. So, Keraleeyan and others made temporary structures using sacks and bamboo sticks to carry the bodies to the burial ground.

⁷⁴⁷ If he came to know about the creative talent of any budding writers, he would visit their house to encourage them and invite their writings for publishing in his newspaper.

In a conversation, Engandiyoor Chandrasekharan qualified Keralaleeyan as “a man who crossed the depth of humanity” (Chandrasekharan). Velayudhan Panikkassery asserted:

V.S. Keralaleeyan is a selfless man who spent each moment of his life for the *nadu*. He is a person who took on all the problems of his birthplace (Manappuram) and made all the sorrow and troubles of the *nadu* into his own. He had no personal life distinct from his *nadu*.⁷⁴⁸

From Panikkassery’s recollection on Keralaleeyan, we can clearly understand why the life story of a person becomes the history of Manappuram. Here we find the loss of personal life of Keralaleeyan because of his selfless act is not a degeneration but a regeneration of self and the material body of the region for the wellbeing of the inhabitants of Manappuram. His body and mind had no separate existence distant from the body and mind of the region. Therefore “all the sorrow and troubles” of Manappuram becomes his own. This indistinguishability between him and region is emotive rather than rational and therefore, like Kumaran, he also literally cried⁷⁴⁹ and worked hard to recover the bodies of the inhabitants who were ill and to prevent the region from being hit by disaster. This recovery is made possible by two interrelated and simultaneous actions. On the one hand, along with the others, he attempted to recover the material body of the region by building a road, bridge, hospital, school and other infrastructure, and, on the other hand, along with the others, he attempted to rebuild the health of the inhabitant’s body by providing staple food, hygienic water and medicine. Here these two bodies are mutually constitutive; the body of the region should be well for the wellbeing of the inhabitant’s body. Moreover, as we have seen in the other fragments of history, *avarana* theology (anti-caste ideology), is one of the main

⁷⁴⁸ Panikkassery 5. Then on another occasion, Panikkassery wrote about Keralaleeyan, “He could identify with the interest of the land.” *Anuashanabudhiyude* 101.

⁷⁴⁹ At the time of the storm of 1942 both of them were crying and running here and there to help the people of Manappuram.

forces behind the struggle for this wellbeing. We can see a much deeper presence of this ideology and struggle in O. Koran's life story.

2.7. O. Koran⁷⁵⁰

O. Koran is remembered by the people for his vibrant political persona. The souvenir *Manappuram Samskriti* wrote:

As a man who experienced untouchability in his childhood, he was involved in political and social activism from his school days. Dalits were often beaten (by non-Dalit) up for using cloth-umbrella, blouse, shirt and saree. Similarly, a marriage procession of Dalits was attacked at Nattika. In response to that, a protest meeting was organised by the Dalits. He spoke for the first time in his life in that protest meeting. At that time, he was studying in the eighth standard (Unnikrishnan).

One can read his political profile in the *Jubilee Souvenir*.⁷⁵¹ He was the agricultural minister in the 1969-70 period in the Achutha Menon cabinet. He was a schoolteacher by profession. In 1952, he resigned his teaching job and contested from Alathoor constituency to Madras assembly. He was elected to the assembly in his first political battle. Then he was elected many times as the people's representative to the Kerala assembly. There was no-one like him in Manappuram who cared about Dalit empowerment. He was the lone voice raised against the slave trade in Wayanad in the Kerala assembly. He sang the poems of Kumaran Assan and tuned them with his own musical compositions. He constructed many roads in Manaloor panchayath when he lived there in 1965. Varghese Mechery recalls him as "a self-made persona who transformed Manappuram from below" (Mechery). This fragment of history is also repeatedly invoked in oral and written (*Anuashanabudhiyude* 110-111) discourse.

⁷⁵⁰ He is popularly known as Koran Master.

⁷⁵¹ He was born in 1919 in Valappad and died in 1981.

Along with the similitude between his life-story and Manappuram's history, one can see how his labour reconstructed the region from below because his low social position as a Dalit demanded much more spatial liberation through his political act than that of Raman, Bratha, Kumaran and Keraleeyan who belonged to the Thiyya caste. Moreover, he and his community's bodily moves essentially broke the spatially ordered system of caste that fixed the region into a structure of hierarchy. One can see the transgression of this spatial order in Sharadha Balakrishnan's life-story at another level.

2.8. Sharadha Balakrishnan

As a woman political leader who was active from the 1950s onwards in the public sphere of Manappuram, Sharadha Balakrishnan is remembered well by the people.⁷⁵² *Manappuram Samskriti* remembers her as writer and orator who took the initiative to found the Kamala Nehru School in Thrithalloor. As a Congress activist, she was involved in the strike at Seetharam Mill and was subjected to confinement. In 1958, she participated in the *Vimochana Samaram*⁷⁵³ and was jailed for ten days. She was given the Sahredhaya Award for her contribution to society. She was the president of the Sree Vidhaposhini Sangam and Desiya Mahilasamajam, chairperson of Thalikulam Social Welfare Project Committee, director of Vadanapally Service Sahakarana Sangam and president of the Kasthoorba Memorial orphanage (Unnikrishnan). As a subjugated self that lived through the spatial ordering of the dominant male, the journey Sharadha made through her political activism materially and mentally challenged and restructured the region. Therefore, memory of her has become the history of the region. This very political dimension of the manifestation of the region is particularly evident in Sardar Gopalakrishnan's life.

2.9. Sardar Gopalakrishnan

⁷⁵² Balachandran Vadakkedath, personal interview, 03.05.2012.

⁷⁵³ *Vimochana Samaram* was an anti-communist government protest by the Syrian Christians, Nairs under the platform of the Congress party.

Sardar Gopalakrishnan is a revolutionary icon of Manappuram. His radical life and fight against the inequalities of caste, class and gender are invoked frequently in oral and written discourse in the region. One of the memoirs recalls him as “The first martyr of the Indian republic” (*Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal* 111). He became a martyr to protect the fundamental rights offered by the Indian Constitution. Every year his martyrdom day is popularly feted by different left political parties and radical groups. Manjula Arunan says:

Remembrance forces us to think about our past. As part of the thinking of our past, we remember Sardar Gopalakrishnan. For us, the Republic Day of India is the Martyrdom day of Sardar. We are responsible for the revival of his memories.⁷⁵⁴

The *Jubilee Souvenir* remembers his life thus: In 1914, he was born in a middle-class Thiyya family at a place called Edathuruthy. Having passed the SSLC, he successfully completed his teachers’ training and was a teacher in the S.R.V. Higher Elementary school at Chandhrapinni from 1930 to 1935. Then he shifted to Dharmavilasam South Lower Primary School as a headmaster.

In this period, he was attracted to the Indian National Congress. However, his focus was on bringing down the caste system. He was the volunteer captain of Sreenarayana Smaraka Samajam that worked against untouchability and backwardness of the caste system. He always strongly opposed the atrocities committed against Dalits. His empathetic attitude towards the oppressed people made him one of the earliest Communists of Manappuram (*Jubilee Souvenir* 105).

Due to this attitude towards Dalits and peasants, he was beaten up by hired thugs several times. He joined the Communist Party in 1942 and took the

⁷⁵⁴ Manjula Arunan, personal interview, 13.01.2016.

initiative to form organisations of farmers and teachers. Sardar was one of the early leaders of the teacher's union in Manappuram. For three years he served in the military. Thereafter, he changed his name from Gopalakrishnan to Sardar Gopalakrishnan. He was very determined to give equal status to women in families. He worked as a headmaster in A.M. L.P. School at Perumpadapu between 1945 and 1948 after his military service. There was no difference between his theory and practice. He was an ideological man. Loving behaviour, truthfulness and braveness were the qualities he maintained his entire life. Sardar was one of the main initiators of the Perumpadapu library. In 1948, his Communist activism caused his teaching certificate to be cancelled by the government. Moreover, his campaign for the Communist candidate in the Malabar District Board election resulted in the issuing of an arrest warrant against him. Giving the slip to the police, he went underground and continued his activities.

Nevertheless, on the first day of the Indian Republic, 26 January 1950, his party decided to reclaim the Fundamental Rights offered by the Indian Constitution. They led a march from Perinjanam to Sreenarayanapuram to proclaim the freedom of expression. However, when the party designated him to lead this march, he was living underground. He was arrested by the police from Mathilakam. Then he was subjected to brutal lockup torture at Mathilakam and Valappad police stations. The inhuman police action made him the first martyr of the Indian Republic.⁷⁵⁵

Here Sardar's work against untouchability and the backwardness of the caste system, and his actions against the denial of fundamental rights by the Indian State were attempts to politically subvert the hegemonic spatial order of the caste system and the state that was built and inscribed over the region Manappuram. Thus, his political activity is an attempt to produce

⁷⁵⁵ P. K. Gopala Krishnan, "Sardar Gopalakrishnan", Indian Communist Party Rakthasakshikal 1925-1985 (The Indian Communist Party Martyrs 1925-1985), (Thiruvananthapuram: Prabath Book House, 1985) 110-115.

Manappuram that would emancipate it from the hegemonic spatial order. Therefore, today, for the people of Manappuram, his martyrdom is not only a living memory of the dystopic power of the state but also a spectre that haunts the hegemony of caste culture. In short, when thinking about the future of Manappuram, people remember Sardar Gopalakrishnan.

2.10. P. T. Baskarapanikar

In the reminiscences of people, P.T. Baskarapanikar appears as an adopted child of Manappuram. As his surname signifies, he was a *savarna* born outside Manappuram.⁷⁵⁶ However, he lived a large part of his working life in this region. He came to Manappuram to work as a teacher at Maman Chohan's School in Perinjanam. He was attracted to Communism when he was working at this school and became a silent party worker along with Sardar Gopalakrishnan. In a memorial note, one of his earlier students recalled the incident that caused his remarkable political entry:

At that time, a girl student from the fifth standard was attacked by three men. The headmaster of the school did not take this incident seriously. It was shocking to him because he believed that this incident would block the educational mobility of girl students. He organised a protest march to the police station with his student, and he gave a complaint against the attackers. The police registered a case against them and the culprits were convicted for a few years.⁷⁵⁷

From then onwards he started to work openly for the Communist Party. He could attract many youngsters to the party through the groundwork he laid in Perinjanam. When the party was banned, his work contract at the school was terminated and he shifted his party work underground. During this time, he had opportunities to live and eat with the lower-caste and the lower-class

⁷⁵⁶ Meerabai and Shajith, personal interviews, 11.01.2016.

⁷⁵⁷ T. R. Ayyappanmaster, "P.T. Baskarapanikar: A Memoire," Chirasmarana Sagav Sardar Gopalakrishnan Rakthasakshi Smaranika (Forever memory Martyr Sardar Gopalakrishnan Souvenir), (Edathuruthy: Sardar Smaraka Padana Kedram, 2001) 43.

people of Manappuram. This experience not only transformed his mind and enriched his knowledge about society but also sharpened his Marxian perspective. Subsequently, he was arrested, tortured and jailed by the police. After his release from jail, he contested in the election and become the President of the Malabar District Board. While he was in power, he brought in a lot of educational reform including the institution of an annual student festival with the cooperation of parents and teachers. From a good organiser of the Communist Party, he later turned out to be a good administrator, educationalist, orator, humanist, environmentalist and science writer. He was a man of higher thinking and simple life (Unnikrishnan).

This life-history of P. T. Baskarapanikar shows certain nuances in the interrelation between the formation of the history and the formation of the region. Because, against the notion that a person's regional consciousness is determined by her/his birth in a region, Baskarapanikar's consciousness was decided by his life in a region where he was not born. Moreover, we can clearly see that the development of his personality and consciousness, the crucial element of his life-story, is generated through his life in the region of Manappuram. Moreover, through this spatialised life, he was not only able to participate in the emancipatory production of Manappuram but also minimally destabilised his embodied *savarna* privileges through the *avarna* experience offered by the ontology of Manappuram. Airoor Kovilakath Ravivarmaraja's life shows another dimension of the *avarna* spatial experience.

2.11. Airoor Kovilakath Ravivarmaraja

The people's memory of Airoor Kovilakath Ravivarmaraja is that of the destabilisation of elitism. The people of Manappuram remembers him as a barefoot Indian National Congress activist who tried to weaken his elite privileges through his genuine activism (Thadikkaran). From the people's memory, the *Jubilee Souvenir* sketches his picture: "Nobody can forget

(Ravivarmaraja) Thampuran who walked through all the villages for the interaction programmes (of the Congress Party) by wearing khadi dhoti and shirt with a ‘service bag’ on the shoulder” (113). He was born in Airoor Kovilakam in 1897 and died in 1969. He was a hardcore follower of Gandhiji. His activism in the Khilafat movement caused him to be jailed by the government. From then he was known as the “Khilafat Thampuran”. Because of his involvement in the Guruvayur temple entry movement, he was imprisoned for two and a half years in Coimbatore Jail. However, when he was released from jail, his family outcast him; they did not allow him to enter his home. After that, he and his wife struggled to survive in a small hut without any income. Subsequently, he conducted a hunger strike for thirteen days in front of his family house to get his share of the property. As part of his activism, he was deeply involved in the Civil Disobedience movement, eradication of untouchability and anti-toddy movement (114).

One can see that the transformation that happened in Airoor Kovilakath Ravivarmaraja’s life through the *avarna* spatial experience of Manappuram is in a similar fashion to what happened in Baskarapanikar’s life because Ravivarmaraja also engaged with the spatiality and sociality of the lower caste and class people of Manappuram and was outcast from his *savarna* community. His title “Khilafat Thampuran” itself is the product of his engagement with the question of Islam that appears to be a non-*varna* affair in his cultural context. In the next section, E.V.G’s life shows how the imagination of the real is important in the production of Manappuram.

3. Imagined Real: Literary and Cinematic

3.1. E.V.G.

E.V. Gopalan (E.V.G.) was a novelist, playwright, teacher and journalist who brightened the history and geography of Manappuram through fictional language. Social realism was his style of scripting. This legendary writer is remembered by the souvenir, *Manappuram Samskriti* as the “novelist of Manappuram” (Unnikrishnan). His stories, novels and dramas illuminate the

sorrows and dreams of the old Chetuva, Nattika, Perinjanam and Mathilakam. He was born in a Thiyya family, in Valappad in 1916 and died in 1995. When he was studying in the ninth standard, he started his creative writing. The stories called *Dharmopathesha Kathakal* that he wrote at that time became the textbook for the Madras Government school syllabus in 1932. He was a teacher at Maman Chohan's School in Perinjanam along with P.T. Baskarapanikar and M.S. Menon. His participation in many progressive cultural movements not only expanded his creative universe but also cultivated many imageries about Manappuram. He was the president and main organiser of the Manappuram Kalasamithi and Manappuram Progressive Kalasamithi. Moreover, he worked as the president of the Perinjanam Standard Books and as a journalist for *Mathrubhumi* newspaper. He wrote around thirty fictional works such as *Innale* (Yesterday), *Vethana* (Pain), *Agnipareekshakal* (Trial by fire), *Thottavande Thopi* (Hat of the Defeated), and *Nalayude Ampukal* (The arrows of tomorrow).

We clearly understand through this life-history that E.V.G's creative universe is a product of his lived experience of Manappuram. However, he not only translated his realist experience of the history and geography of Manappuram into an imaginative language but also offered a possibility for the inhabitants of this region who read or listened to his works to re-experience "real" life of the region through his experience induced imagination. This imagination that reproduces the reality of Manappuram is "imagined real" rather than a "realistic real". Nevertheless, one cannot say simply that his fictional ideation alone produced Manappuram. Because his fictional ideation itself is activated by his lived experience. Moreover, his life-history has no explicit reference about his direct involvement in the anti-caste movement in comparison with the above life stories. However, if we read his legendary novel *Innale*, it becomes evident that the main plot of his novel, the role of the protagonist and other characters set in the locale of Manappuram, illuminate his own anti-caste activities in Manappuram. (E.V.G. 88-421). Therefore, he becomes a part of the history of Manappuram as a man who labours to produce *avarana*

stories of history and *avarna* history of Manappuram. Different from this, Chetuva Pareekutty's literary life expresses certain other dimensions.

3.2. Chetuva Pareekutty

Chetuva Pareekutty's literary corpus is recalled by the present generation of Manappuram as a reservoir of popular poetry. One can see the reproduction of this life-history in many oral and written forms. He is the doyen of the modern *Mappilapattu* (Mappila Song) genre like Moyinkutty Vaidhyar, though not extensively (Unnikrishnan). His creations transcend the frontiers of languages by interconnecting Malayalam and Arabic and by invoking the romance of life. He not only wrote songs but also sang those in a melodious voice. He travelled to far-off places, singing songs. The *Jubilee Souvenir* marks him as the author of the everlasting treasure of *mahakavya* (*Mappilapattu*) of Arabic-Malayalam language such as *Sowbhagya-Sundari*, *Aadi Ahadhana* and *Min Athulbary*. His songs in *Mappilapattu* not only represented a new trend but they were fascinating because of their tune, music and rhythm. He was born in 1848 in Chetuva and completed his primary education and religious learning from his birthplace (*Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal* 100). Then he learned Sanskrit from Vattiyatil Chathunny. People of Manappuram consider him as the region's gift to literary imagination and public culture (Vadakkedath).

However, though Chetuva Pareekutty wrote and performed vocally, he did not speak explicitly about Manappuram in the entire body of his work. The magnificent vocalist in him, along with his fictional talent in writing brought him popularity. Moreover, his life was transcendental in many ways. For instance, he went beyond the dependence on a singular language by drawing from Malayalam, Arabic and Sanskrit for his literary imagination and travelled beyond Manappuram to perform his creations. This fame is the capital that made him memorable, as the past of the region, as the history of

Manappuram. K.S.K Thalikulam's poetry is another creative body of work that is often recollected in the public domain of Manappuram.

3.3. K.S.K. Thalikulam

Kollara Shankaran Krishnan (K.S.K) is known as the Poet Laureate of Manappuram. Those who wish to revisit both the disastrous and pleasant past of Manappuram recall the poems of K.S.K. because his poetry captures all the nuances of tragedy and the delights of the past of Manappuram. A memorial note remarks, "K.S.K. Thalikulam is the great poet of Manappuram who is located forever in Malayalam literature as someone who has written many poems, drama and farce and have a peculiar newness, palatability and beauty" (*Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal* 106). He brought in the ecological aspects, climatic characteristics and historical experience of Manappuram in his works. He was born in 1903 in Thalikulam. After passing the tenth standard from the Kandashankadav school, he completed his teacher's training and joined as a teacher in Sreenarayana Gupta Samajam School at Karamukku. His main works are *Poomottukal* (Flower buds), *Onapattukal* (Onam songs), *Pranayadhoothan* (Messenger of love), *Pukanjakollipurath* (On a burning log), *Marupach* (Oasis) and *Randu Sahodharimar* (Marupanch and two sisters) and *Bhagyadeepam* (Light of Future). He believed that literature should be useful for human progress. Along with the creation of pleasure, his poetics addresses social questions. Ramu Karyat made a movie based on K.S.K.'s *Ammuvinte Attinkutty* (Ammu's lamb/kid), the evergreen poem in children's literature, as mentioned earlier. This film received the Kerala State Award for the Best Children's Film of the Year 1978 (Unnikrishnan). K.S.K. was born in a lower-class Thiyya family. In 1980, he died at the house that was constructed for him by his friends.

Along with the historical experience of Manappuram, the distinct emphasis on ecological specialities and climatic character of the region are the central

motifs in K.S.K's poems. He brings compassion and kindness as fundamental virtues of his imagination for subverting the discriminatory practices of the caste system that were generated by productive, reproductive and property relations of the region, and that in itself produces Manappuram and is in its turn a product of the region. Like K.S.K., imageries of E.V.G. also try to destabilise these three interrelated relations. For the inhabitants of Manappuram reality of the region is more expressive and effective in his poetry than the structured rational language of prose. Therefore, as we understand in the case of E.V.G, the "imagined real" created by K.S.K. exists as an ever-present memory within the inhabitants for recreating Manappuram in the present. This "imagined real" created by K.S.K. makes him part of the history of Manappuram. The cinematic imagery produced by Ramu Karyat also engages with Manappuram distinct from its literary imagery.

3.4. Ramu Karyat

Ramu Karyat's name enters the conversation of people as a renowned film director who raises the pride of Manappuram sky-high. The words of the organiser of the Manappuram Beach Festival 2014⁷⁵⁸ reveal how the people perceive Karyat. He said, "This is the land of Ramu Karyat, who was the director of the national award-winning film *Chemmeen*."⁷⁵⁹ A notice of the memorial programme for him organised by the Chetuva Ramu Karyat library remarked, "We are conducting a memorial-dais ... in the land of V.S. Keraleeyan and Ramu Karyat who lifted Manappuram to the peak of fame."⁷⁶⁰ The first national award for a Malayalam cinema was awarded to Ramu Karyat's film. (Unnikrishnan). His film *Chemmeen* received the gold medal from the then Indian president (*Jubilee Souvenir* 118). Bratha V. K. Velukkutty Master encouraged him to act in a drama when he was studying at school. Subsequently, he became an actor and a singer in his school days.

⁷⁵⁸ The Manappuram Beach festival 2014 conducted at Kazhimbram remembered Ramu Karyat, Kazhimbram Vijayan, Kunjunni Mash and others who contributed to the cultural field of Manappuram.

⁷⁵⁹ Ramadas, personal interview, 16.01.2016.

⁷⁶⁰ See notice of the programme that was conducted on 9.12.2006.

He was a close disciple of V.S. Keraleeyan. His active involvement in the public sphere of Manappuram made him very famous at a young age. Keraleeyan and he stayed in Shobana Parameswaran Nair's studio for the publication of *Manappuram Times* and a magazine called *Sound*. It was during this time that, through the friendship with Shobana, Karyat was attracted to the cinematic world.

He faced serious difficulties in financing his films. However, when T.K. Pareekutty and Babusetu started to produce his films he could not only make good films but also take the fame of Malayalam films to national and international levels. *Thiramala* (Wave) is the first film he directed, even though his first award-winning film is *Neelakuyil* (Blue Cuckoo). *Minaminug* (Firefly), *Abhayam* (Shelter), *Mudiyanaya puthran* (Prodigal son), *Moodupadam* (Mask?), *Chemeen* (Prawns), *Maya Dweep*, *Ezu Rathrikal* (Seven nights), *Nellu* (Paddy), *Malamkatu* (Mountain wind) and *Ammuvinte Attinkutty* are the other films he directed (*Anuashanabudhiyude Kaladippadukal* 104). Most of his films were screened in the schools of Manappuram.⁷⁶¹ In fact, people have a very common visual experience of watching his films. He and the characters of his films are the main protagonists of a novel about Manappuram. In this novel *Manalmozhi*, we can see many productions of the spatial imagination of Manappuram through his imagery.

By directing a film based on K.S.K.'s poem, Ramu Karyat translated the poetic imagination of K.S.K. to cinematic imagination. Moreover, he used the beaches of Manappuram as his locations to produce his iconic film *Chemeen*. While watching *Chemeen*, the people of Manappuram reimagine landscapes and terrestrial settings of Manappuram rather than following the cinema's storyline.⁷⁶² In this fashion, he adapted novels, short stories and poems to

⁷⁶¹ Alli Ramadas, personal interview, 16.01.2016.

⁷⁶² Ramdas, Alli Ramadas, Shajith, and Thadikkaran, personal interviews.

make his film scripts. In comparison to the narratives of the novels, short stories and poems, the production of imagination by the cinematic narrative are much definite. The images created in the mind of a reader while reading the narratives of the novels, short stories and poems are comparatively free because of the plethora of definitive visual and sound narratives in cinema. In other words, the narrative of cinema fixes and frames the visual and auditory senses of the viewers, therefore it enframes the imagination of the people in comparison to novels, short stories and poems. At the same time, the affect and effect of cinema are much higher in comparison to novels, short stories and poems. For instance, an illiterate person can also watch a film and extend his/her imaginative universe. Therefore, the films of Ramu Karyat, based on narratives and locations of Manappuram when screened in cinema halls and schools inside and outside Manappuram, produced Manappuram differently. Moreover, the novel *Manalmozhi* that was based on Manappuram and the cinematic imagination of Ramu Karyat re-reimagined and re-reproduced Manappuram. In short, a multitude of productions of Manappuram through movie locations, cinematic imagination and based on literary imagination and literary imagination-based cinematic imaginations, and the fame he generated by making films makes him ever-present in the history of Manappuram. At this juncture, the literary imagination of Vidhwan. A.T. Devassi also demands attention.

3.5. Vidhwan. A.T. Devassi

The memory of Vidhwan. A.T. Devassi has been preserved through the children's literature written by him. He wrote stories, poems and children's literature. The *Jubilee Souvenir* remarks that as a teacher who seriously contributed to the education of children, in 1963, he received the Kerala State Award for Best Teacher. He taught for forty-four years (Unnikrishnan). *Naveenabalakathakal* (New children's stories), *Balaganangal* (Children's songs), *Kindergarten*, *Balasangeethangal* (Children's music), *Policukari* (Policewoman), *Manjadimanikal* (Red Lucky seed beads), and *Palam*

(Bridge) are the main literary works by Devassi. He was born in 1903 in Engandiyoor and died in 1980 (Thadikkaran). As we see in others, Devassi was also a creator of the literary imagination. However, his target reader was children rather than mature people. Therefore, his imageries based on the context of Manappuram is probably more influential on the consciousness of the people of Manappuram. This is so because childhood learning and reading experience through children's literature mould the sociality and consciousness of an individual other than one's engagement with literature after her/his maturity.

4. Memorising Ayurveda: Vitalising Bodies of Manappuram

Life of traditional medicinal practitioners of Manappuram is always invoked in public talks and the popular print culture of the region. This life represents many traditions rather than a homogenous one. Siddha, Ayurveda, country medicines (*Nattu Vaidhyam*), Unani and an amalgamation of these traditions are the ways they practice medicine while treating a patient. C.K.G. Vaidhyar observed:

Vaidhyars of Manappuram are the ones, who gave a human face to Ayurveda practice. These families of *Vaidhyars* have the ideal tradition of social service. Therefore, even today they are clearly remembered (by people)" (Unnikrishnan).

Pokkanchery and Choleyil were the foremost families among them. However, Pedikaparambil family, Kolanthra family, Valiyaparambil family, Kundayil family, Arayaparambil family, Kakanattu family, Kumalaparambil family, Tarayil family, Olakkot family, Naalummakkal family, Paduvingal family, Kadiyavettill family and Kannakulam family are also involved to a great extent in following and providing services in traditional medicinal practices at Manappuram. Moreover, Kunnikulam Vasudhevan Vaidhyar, C.K.G. Vaidhyar, Kuttikumaran Vaidhyar, Komathukattil Tayyan Vaidhyar, Vayapulli Sreerajan Vaidhyar and Jamal Vaidhyar were also famous for

their consultations. Dr Kolanthra Ramakrishnan asserted, “There were *Nattuvaidhyars* in Manappuram who had talent and knowledge enough to criticise the Namboothiris, Moosads and Ashtavaidhyas” (Unnikrishnan). To understand the making of Manappuram it is necessary to follow the memory on Pokkanchery Chanthu Vaidhyar and Cholleyil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar.

4.1. Pokkanchery Chanthu Vaidhyar

Pokkanchery Chanthu Vaidhyar is remembered by people as the originator of the Ayurvedic tradition of Manappuram. The *Jubilee Souvenir* demands the whole of Kerala’s medical world to recall this legendary physician with respect. The *Souvenir* further reminds the reader that the renowned Cholleyil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar was one among the thousands of disciples of Chanthu Vaidhyar. This lineage itself was enough to prove the depth of knowledge and praxis of Chanthu Vaidhyar. He was born in 1832 in the Pokkanchery family of Kozhikode. There is a hearsay that he is the disciple of Vattampoil Choyi Vaidhyar of Kallai, Kozhikode. Through many years of learning, he became a great scholar and practitioner of Ayurveda. The people of Manappuram (Valappad) also came to know about his gift and skills. After continuous requests from the people of Manappuram (Valappad), he shifted from Kozhikode to Manappuram, where his mother’s family house was situated. Many people came to be treated at Manappuram (Valappad) from faraway places because of his popularity. Moreover, several of his pupils stayed with him for learning, and he had a building constructed for in-patients. Like Cholleyil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar who was his brother-in-law, he had many other eminent disciples such as Aandi Vaidhyar and Appunni Vaidhyar from Paravoor, Cherthala Manakkottam Kesavan Vaidhyar, Kakkanad Mama Vaidhyar and Karattu Parambil Koru Vaidhyar.

It was the system that the servants of the Travancore Raja would wait in front of his house until he was free to invite him to Travancore for consultation. He used to treat patients from the Travancore palace. There are many stories

about his skill in treatment that saved many lives from the edge of death. These stories created a halo around him that spread its aura from Manappuram. He died in 1905. After him, this legacy was taken forward by his nephew, P.C. Ramakrishnan Vaidhyar and his sons like Dr P.R. Vikrama Singh, Dr P.R. Jayathilakan, Dr P.R. Premlal and Dr Sidhartha Sankaran. As the article on the traditions of the Pokkanchery family revealed, “For Pokkanchery Vaidhyars, Ayurveda was not only a hereditary occupation but also a way of sacrifice and social service” (Unnikrishnan).

Here Pokkanchery Chanthu Vaidhyar’s fame that emerged from his medicinal knowledge and his care towards the bodies of all people in general and the inhabitants of Manappuram, in particular, was the catalyst that generated the memory on him. This knowledge and his practice make him not only a saviour of the inhabitant’s bodies but also a producer of Manappuram because the rescuing of the inhabitant’s bodies from dangerous illness protects the material production and biological reproduction of Manappuram that is possible mainly through the bodily force of inhabitants along with natural and manmade materials. Moreover, his treatment that healed all sections of society transgressing untouchability and the discrimination inherent in the caste system cured the diseased social body of Manappuram and perhaps created a collective identity of the region. This signifies the *avarna*, non-varna, and anti-caste undercurrents of his knowledge practice. Similar to what we see in the case of P.T. Baskarapanikar, Chanthu Vaidhyar was also not born in Manappuram. However, his consciousness was decisively decided by Manappuram where he was not born. This shows the possibilities of personality development and the development of consciousness beyond birthplace. We can see many examples of mismatch and twists between regional consciousness and place of belonging in these life-stories. Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar extended this service and elevated the Ayurvedic knowledge to another level.

4.2. Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar

Abhinava Dhanvantari (Modern god of Ayurveda) was Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar's name among Ayurveda scholars of south India. He was not only a guru of Ayurveda and a glorious physician but also a writer of many Ayurvedic texts. *Astangahrydhayam*, *Ayshkaameeya Vyakyanam*, *Athmabodham*, *Vishoochika Sudharshanam*, *Vrithiprabakaram*, *Vichara Chandrodhayam*, *Naragenmadhsham*, *Samoohyaprarthana*, *Sree Kunhimamy Samhita*, *Chikilsa Nottukal* and *Rasasaram* are the works he authored. He contributed innovative ideas to the Ayurvedic medicinal practice through these texts. He taught thousands of students who stayed at his house. For treating patients, along with Pokkanchery Chanthu Vaidhyar, he used to travel to Tamilnadu, Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode.

He was the personal physician of Sree Narayana Guru. He went to treat the Guru at Varkala, Aluva, Vaikom and other places whenever the Guru had any serious health issue. Guru would feel relaxed only when he was being treated by Kunhimamy for his diseases. There is no illness that cannot be cured with the treatment of Kunhimamy, Guru told people many times.⁷⁶³ He was born in Edamuttam in 1865 and died in 1932, after 67 years of service to humankind. Guru's anti-caste doctrines influenced him deeply, and because of that, he was involved in the move for the abolition of untouchability, Dalit empowerment, school building, road construction and temple building. He gave free medicines, free food and money to return home to all the patients who visited his Ashram (*Thaliyola* 2: 47).

As in the life of Chanthu Vaidhyar, here also we can see how Kunhimamy attains glory through his medicinal treatment of people in general and the inhabitants of Manappuram in particular, which then fuels his memory.

⁷⁶³ Once Guru told, "Ammiyil amaratha marunnila; immiyil aaratha kanakkila; mamiyil amaratha rogavumilla." (There is no medicine which cannot be ground in grinding stone: There is no mathematical problem which could not be solved by immi [one of the smallest unit I weighing. Immi is also considered as a person]: There is no illness which cannot be cured by Mami [Kunhimamy Vaidhyar]) in *Jubilee Souvenir* 101.

Kunhimamy's knowledge and practise not only saved the lives of many inhabitants but also produced Manappuram through material production and biological reproduction by the rejuvenation of diseased bodies. Moreover, he was directly involved in building new structures such as school, road and temple, and anti-caste activities such as untouchability eradication which reconstructed Manappuram at another level. This multidirectional engagement by him was the result of his intimate connection with Sree Narayana Guru. By treating Sree Narayana Guru, he revitalised one of the bodies of *avarana* theology that disseminated anti-caste ideology. More importantly, Chanthu Vaidhyar, Kunhimamy Vaidhyar and their thousands of students not only extended the horizon of the traditional medicinal practice of Manappuram by curing and saving many lives but also envisaged an ethical universe that offered care to the other on the material soil of Manappuram and beyond. We see other dimensions of this *avarana* theology in the life of Malayala Swami and Monk Dharma Skandha.

5. Recalling Spirituality: Cultivating Body and Mind

The spiritual legacy of Manappuram is indebted in a major way to Malayala Swami, Monk Dharma Skandha, Sreeramandha Swami, Saint Vazakulathu Kunju Poojari and Pastor P. Paul. All of them were propagators of the anti-caste spiritual life in different ways. Their place of involvement was located far from Manappuram. Among these spiritual personas, Malayala Swami and Dharma Skandha are two figures who are always recollected by the people of Manappuram.

5.1. Malayala Swami

Thaliyola, a magazine from Manappuram published a special issue on Malayala Swami's memory (*Thaliyola* 5). He was a follower of Sree Narayana Guru (Unnikrishnan). Based on his ideology, Swami founded the Vyasa Asrama in Andhra Pradesh for the dissemination of spiritual

knowledge to all sections of society. He established many schools and other institutions, especially for the educational empowerment of Dalits and women. Today, this institution has many branches all over Andhra, and has extended its scope and reached a larger circle of disciples (*Thaliyola* 5: 15). Many of his disciples used to visit Engandiyoor in Manappuram to touch the sacred birthplace of their guru. He was born in a Thiyya family in Engandiyoor in 1885. His earlier name was Velappan. After preliminary education, at the age of fourteen, he absconded from home. Then after wandering in many places in India, he came back home after ten years. Seeing the spiritual turn that he seemed to have taken, the natives of his place started to call him Velappa-Bakthar (devotee-Velappa) (*Thaliyola* 5: 21).

Subsequently, Malayala Swami went to meet Sree Narayana Guru, when he came to know about his arrival at a nearby place, a monastery at Perigottukara. At that time, Sivalinkadhasa Swami was the caretaker of that monastery. With the blessing of both Sree Narayana Guru and Sivalinkadhasa, he started to live in that monastery. Afterwards, he became a disciple of Sivalinkadhasa and learned Sanskrit and many spiritual texts including Sree Narayana Guru's texts. The spiritual ideas of Guru made a drastic change in Velappa-Bakthar. With the emergence of an inner conscious, he started to devote himself to "Others (Aparar)". Seen within that light, he dug a well, build a stone vessel to store water for cattle and constructed a porter's resting place (*Thaliyola* 5: 23).

In 1912, he absconded from the monastery and wandered again to many places, and thus reached Tirupati. There he meditated for long years and wrote a book in Telugu called, *Sushka Vedhanatha Thamobaskaram*. This book criticises the caste system and the inhumane practices in the Hindu religion. His interpretation of the Vedas and Upanishads provoked the orthodox groups and they dispelled him from Tirupati. His teachings caused a change in the caste consciousness of his followers. They called him Malayala Swami. An

invocation in one of the memoirs shows how the people of Manappuram perceived him (*Thaliyola* 5: 13). It says, “His life gave self-confidence to many of the downtrodden and lower-caste people of Andhra through education. This is a matter of pride to all the people of Manappuram” (*Thaliyola* 5: 19).

Compassion for the other is the central concern of the spirituality of Malayala Swami, as it was with his guru, Sree Narayana. In *Athmopadesa Satakam*, one of his key spiritual texts, Sree Narayana Guru pronounced, “Acts that one performs for one’s own happiness should aim for the happiness of Other (*Apara*).” This ideal of Narayana Guru’s *avarana* theology is present in the preliminary spiritual act of Malayala Swami. As mentioned earlier, in the initial days of his mystical life, as part of service to others he had constructed a well, a water vessel for cattle and a resting place for porters. Moksha, the subjective search for sacred life, was not the prime concern of his spirituality. His thinking is about the Other. Hence, he wrote against the caste system in his spiritual text in Telugu. Interestingly, he wrote this text after a long period of meditation and contemplation. Schools and educational institutions in Andhra that he built for the empowerment of Dalits and women signify the meaning of his spirituality. Even though he did not directly work towards any change in Manappuram, his *avarana* theology, spirituality of selflessness, the cultivation of kind mind and body are the key reasons why he is remembered as a historical figure of Manappuram. As a history of the present of Manappuram, he is remembered. This theological orientation can be seen in Monk Dharma Skandha’s life also in the following section.

5.2. Monk Dharma Skandha

Monk Dharma Skandha was a Buddhist scholar of Pali and Sanskrit language. He took the initiative for the revival of Buddhism in Kerala along with C. Krishnan in the period 1930-1950 after coming back from Ceylon. In an article, Vidhasagar commemorates his contribution to re-establishing Buddha

Dharma in Manappuram. Dharma Skandha opened branches of the Buddhist mission of Kerala in Engandiyoor and Kothaparamb. Kozhikode was the headquarters of this mission. He ran an orphanage and other social service activities under these two branches.

He was born in Engandiyoor. His earlier name was Balaraman. He moved to Ceylon after acquiring knowledge in Sanskrit and traditional medicinal practice. There he joined KCR Vaidhyar's dispensary for higher learning in medicinal practice. Then he practised as a physician in that clinic for a while. Subsequently, he was attracted to the doctrines of Buddha and became a Buddhist monk. In his life, up to his death, he treated patients without fees. His approach to society still invokes his memory in the minds of Manappuram.

As we have seen in the memory on Malayala Swami, the compassionate life of Monk Dharma Skandha resonates in his life-story. His care was not towards the self itself but for the Other. For the curing of the mind, he treated the body primarily. His free Ayurveda consultation of patients and his involvement in establishing a library and other social service activities in Kerala show this understanding. As we see in all the other life-histories, here also we cannot find any prioritisation of knowledge or practice. Knowledge is for practice and practice for knowledge was the way of life that he followed. His revival of Buddhism in Kerala was an anti-caste spiritual project. The anti-caste intellectual, Mithavadi Krishnan was the spearhead of that movement. Perhaps the *avarana* (non-Varna) theological signification that he engendered in Manappuram was the reason behind his memory lingering in the region. This memory is for the future of the region rather than about the past as such.

6. Memory, History and Multiple locations of Regional consciousness

The nuances of the interconnection between belongingness and regional consciousness are one of the very significant problematics these fragments of history open up in front of us. Because the locality of self or locatedness of body is considered as the precondition for regional consciousness⁷⁶⁴. Contrary to this, many of the subjects of the history who were appended as the epitome of regional consciousness and regional identity of Manappuram did not really have a very long spatially located life in Manappuram. Socialisation and personality development of these people happened in their life in many different places, away from Manappuram.

For instance, the celebrated soul and body of Manappuram, V.S. Keraleeyan grew up in Ceylon. Consciousness about him is a product of his engagement with the political sphere and the Manappuram diaspora at Ceylon. Also, after he came back from Ceylon, he rarely lived in Manappuram. He spent much of his life in Ceylon, Thrissur and Kozhikode. Other people also had migrant, migratory and fled life, far distant from Manappuram. V.K. Kumaran's life in Ceylon, Bratha: V. K. Velukkutty Master's life in Mumbai, Sardar Gopalakrishnan's military life in north India, Ramu Karyat, O. Koran, Pokkanchery Chandu Vaidhyar and Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar's lives spent in many other places shows their impermanent life in Manappuram. These examples corroborate that without a very long terrestrially settled life in Manappuram they still *belong*⁷⁶⁵ to Manappuram and they expressed a profound regional consciousness of/about Manappuram.

This is contrary to the theorisation of Anssi Paasi, who argues, "While people's roots are typically associated with their place of birth, they can, of course, identify themselves with new home regions too. When families move, there can also be difference in the forms of identification that emerges from

⁷⁶⁴ Robert David Sack, *Homo Geographicus* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) 1.

⁷⁶⁵ Emphasis is mine.

the diverse experiences of various generations.”⁷⁶⁶ Because, though cultural icons of Manappuram lived long in many places they did not express identification with those places as they did with Manappuram. As I point out in the fifth chapter, instead of complete identification with the distant places that they lived in, people of Manappuram made those places into another Manappuram. The Manappuram diaspora in Ceylon and Gulf countries exemplify this. This demonstrates the multiple locationality of a regional consciousness of Manappuram and multiple locationality of memory about Manappuram.

The relationship between popular history⁷⁶⁷ and memory⁷⁶⁸ is another problematic one can address in this above production of fragments of history. As we observe above, we can clearly understand that production of memory through fragments of history not only produced a professional history of Manappuram that linearly progressed through origin and continuity, but it also produced and recorded fragments of pasts (of people) of Manappuram for the use of the present. Moreover, fragments of history that evoke the past and history of Manappuram signify the subjective nature of past and history.

Udaya Kumar’s work on personal narrative of Kerala shows the production of history in the writing of the autobiography⁷⁶⁹. In a similar manner, here fragments of personal history generated by memory produce history. However, this production of history emerges out of the popular wish of inhabitants or a collective desire of people rather than the personal wish of a single person. Significantly, production of history through memory generates

⁷⁶⁶ See Anssi Paasi, “Bounded Spaces in the Mobile World: Deconstructing ‘Regional Identity’” (first published 2002), Regions: Critical Essays in Human Geography, ed. J. Nicholas Entrikin (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008) 392.

⁷⁶⁷ For a discussion on the popular and history in the Indian context, see Partha Chatterjee, “History and the Domain of the Popular,” Seminar (February 2003): 522. Available from: <http://www.india-seminar.com/2003/522/522%20partha%20chatterjee.htm>.

⁷⁶⁸ A work that critically approaches the question of history is, Ashis Nandy, History's Forgotten Doubles, History and Theory, Vol. 34 (May 1995): 44-66

⁷⁶⁹ Udaya Kumar, Writing The First Person: Literature, History, and Autobiography in Modern Kerala (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2016).

values, ideals, morals and ethics from the past (generation) to the present (generation) of Manappuram, rather than truth, fact and objective evidence as positivist history does. Therefore, the reappearance of pasts through fragments of history are *avarana* values for the present of the region rather than an absolute past discovered by (claimed) objectivity and authenticity of professional history. More interestingly, this *avarana* values generated in the present are ethical forces to the future.

The cultivation of casteless imagination and practice are very important while thinking about the past of Manappuram where the caste system and its practice was visibly prevalent. In the early decades of the twentieth century, journey through the river was restricted by the practice of caste. For the schooling of *avarana* students, crossing the river to the opposite shore was necessary because schools were located outside Manappuram. However, *avarana* students were not allowed to cross the river via the ghat of Triprayar temple by the *savarnas*. To reach school they had to cross the Vennakkal ghat. Similarly, C.K.G. Vaidhyar points out:

We (*avarana*) did not have entry to any of the temple of *savarnas*. Temples like Triprayar, Thiruvanchery, Vadanapally and Thirumangalam Temple of Engandiyoor prevented the entry of *avarnas*. In the name of ritual pollution, *savarnas* kept a distance from the *avarnas*. In Triprayar temple, there was a wall to prevent the entry of lower castes. Like this, all the other temples of upper castes prevented the entry of lower castes (C.K.G. Vaidhyar).

While asking questions about Manappuram, the Dalit community members remembered their resistance against the practice of the caste system. This shows the struggle even within the *avarana* fold. This memory also appears as fragments of history. As we see in O. Koran's bio-sketch, the resistance of Dalits against the caste system was recalled by people when I talked to them. This resistance not only shows the conflictual social relations in Manappuram

that existed through the productive and reproductive social relations but also reveals the struggle even among the *avarnas*, between Thiyyas and Dalits. In their conversations, the attack on the marriage procession of Dalits, against their use of cloth-umbrella, blouse, shirt and saree, and the resistance offered by the Manappuram Harijan Sangam (M H S) provided much more details. We can see the social context of O. Koran's political entry and other situations in these memories of the Manappuram Harijan Sangam.

7. We will Re-knot the Chain that Unknots: Manappuram Harijan Sangam

T.C. Mohanan, one of the anti-caste activists from the Dalit community recollected about MHS:

There was a charcoal shop opposite to Valappad Vennikkal Temple. At that time goldsmiths would use charcoal for their work. The owner of that shop was a man called Ammavan (uncle). There, on a board, in big letters, the name 'Manappuram Harijan Sangam' was written. By collecting 50 ps. from its members, the Sangam (group) raised its working fund. The 1950s was the period of its activity. The meetings of the Sangam were held in that shop. It was not established by the ideologies of Ayyankali and Ambedkar. They organised to resist the violence unleashed against them, for a release from the unbearable physical attack.

Raman, one of the active members, of MHS revealed that the meeting of MHS was held once in two months. A majority of the members were daily labourers. Therefore, due to their temporal inconvenience, most of them could not attend the meetings. Around fifty of them would attend. The eradication of untouchability was the main agenda of the meetings. Women also would attend the meetings. They were not involved in the discussions of the meeting. Ettikoran Mash would speak at length about the objectives of the meeting. Raman, Ramankutty, O.A. Velayudhan and C. Mathiyan were involved in the

discussions. The Sangam functioned for around ten years. In 1957, at the time of Raman's marriage, the Sangam was active. Raman married under the banner of the Sangam. At that time, MHS documented the gifts which the bride's family gave to the bridegroom and kept it as a record.

One of the main organisers of MHS was Ettikoran Mash. Parukkutti, the wife of Ettikoran Mash, disclosed:

After completion of the 10th standard, my husband had gone to teacher's training. I don't remember when Manappuram Harijan Sangam came to be established. It started a long time after my marriage. I have attended many meetings of the Sangam. So many of us have attended various programmes. Other women also attended these meetings. Most of the time it was held in Valappad. But women were just listeners, they did not speak anything.

Similarly, in the opinion of Sreevalsan (son of Ettikoran Mash) MHS started after his birth (he was born in 1951). It was established while he was 5-years-old. He recollected the meetings of the Sangam that he participated in along with his father:

In our MHS, all the untouchable castes such as Vettuva, Pulaya and Paraya had memberships. There were no separate programmes for each Dalit castes, all the castes among Dalit were joined together. Each caste cooperated mutually. All this unity disappeared after the establishment of caste organisations for each caste. Along with my father, father of Mohanan, O.A. Velayudhan and Ayyappan (who was a barber by profession) also worked for this organisation. It started for the unity of the Dalits.

T.C. Mohanan recalls:

In those days, the caste atrocities done by non-Dalits were faced by the Dalits. Dalits had to encounter physical attacks. Dalits had to set back immediately if anyone had been beaten up by non-Dalits. In retaliation,

non-Dalits not only faced physical attack but also faced pollution by the touch of untouchable Dalits. The untouchability of Dalits was crucial at that time. Dalit women were not allowed to cover their breasts, and they were not allowed to wear clothes that went below their knee. They were forced to wear stone-chain (*kallumala*) as neck ornament; this *kallumala* is also known as *vadkanelas*. Dalit men were not allowed to wear white clothes. If they wore white cloth, it should be coloured with charcoal. If a Dalit wore a white cloth, the landlords would consider him as an undocile man and would beat him. Like the Dalits, the Thiyyas were also polluting to the so-called upper castes. However, the pollution between Dalits and Thiyyas was decided by a limited distance among them. If anyone crossed that limit, he would be beaten up. Because of pollution, the upper castes could not beat Dalits directly. If they needed to beat a Dalit, they would use other Dalits for that. For instance, they would make a Pulayan beat a Paraya or a Vettuva.

In Edamuttam or Edathuruthy, a marriage procession was opposed by the upper castes by unknotting the ceremonial chain of the bride. By re-knotting the chain of the bride, the MHS resisted upper caste oppression. At that time, the Dalits had no right to knot the ceremonial chain or to hold a cloth umbrella. However, in this marriage, both of these denied rights were reasserted. That was the reason behind the violence shown by the upper castes. The marriage procession was coming via Edathuruthy. Perhaps it happened either in 1949 or the 50s. While upper castes unknotted the ceremonial chain, Dalits asserted that they would not move from there without re-knotting the chain. At last, the upper castes had to give way in front of the Dalit demand. The Manappuram Harijan Sangam was that strong. Then, holding up the umbrella they proceeded with their procession. “We will re-knot the chain that was unknotted’ was the slogan they raised on that occasion.

Even though the Dalits had started organising much before in certain places, the idea had not spread much here. Today Dalits are organised on the basis of different sub-castes. But in those days, all sub-castes were organised as one group. The political parties created sectarianism among Dalits. For example, “When a Dalit organisation would try to solve the problem of a Pulaya man, the Communist party would ask the Vattuva what was the benefit he would accrue by solving the problem of a Pulaya? Similarly, they would revise this question to the Pulaya while the issue was of a Vettuva.”⁷⁷⁰ This was a technic the party deployed to split Dalits, otherwise, the independent organising of Dalits would have caused the party to lose its cadre base.

The memory of MHS not only recalled the subversive past of Dalit communities against the system of caste but also invoked the name Manappuram through the name MHS. The acts such as physical resistance against non-Dalit violence, eradication of untouchability, denial of caste symbols (such as stone-chain), restructuring of economic activity of Dalit life and transgression of the sub-caste system among Dalits are attempts to disembody caste embodiments from the body of the Dalit. Therefore, re-memorising of these acts perhaps forces one to meet the anti-caste wants of contemporary Dalit life. Put another way, this memorising of the resistive past is a demand of the now rather than nostalgia. Because the practice of caste is still vibrant in the region through deep-rooted structures.

We could see in the above life stories how anti-caste activities and resistances of A.P. Raman, Bratha Velukkutty Master, V.K. Kumaran, V.S. Keraleeyan, Sardar Gopalakrishnan, Cholayil Kunhimamy Vaidhyar, Malayala Swami and Monk Dharma Skandha imagine Manappuram as an anti-caste/*avarna* region. Moreover, anti-caste activities of the Thiyya community resist the practice of caste in general and help the Dalit in certain contexts. However, apart from memory on O. Koran, there were no references about direct

⁷⁷⁰ T.C. Mohanan, personal interview, 13.01.16.

violence on Dalits and their resistance against it; and even that was a clear signification of the anti-caste activity in the region. This, perhaps, show a different regional experience of the Dalit and the distinct subjectivity formation of the Dalit within the *avarana* imagination. Moreover, Dalits face caste discrimination different from the Thiyyas in everyday life. This may be the reason memories about Manappuram appear in Dalit accounts differently from that of the Thiyya community. Memories on popular commodities open up another formation of history and region.

8. Remembering Popular Commodities: Beedi, Screw-pine Mat and Vetiver

Handicraft is another area that emerged in the conversations of people when I asked them about Manappuram. They recalled the production of beedi, screw-pine mat, fishing, *panachi* (Gaub tree fruit), coir and vetiver as part of the identity of the region. These cultures of production appeared not only as a short history of commodities such as beedi, screw-pine mat and vetiver but also as a nostalgia of survival. We can see how these memories engage with the present of the region as a process of production of commodities and the process of production of the region Manappuram. Moreover, this delineates how space, labour, natural raw materials and work culture intersect with each other in the process of production. Valsan Pokkanchery's words reveal this about the labour sector, "In those days a large portion of the people were in a state of constant hunger. The main kind of work available was the making of beedi, crafting of screw-pine mat, fishing and production of vetiver."⁷⁷¹ In this section, I discuss the production and associated discourse on beedi, screw-pine mat and vetiver.

The other areas of labour that people engaged in for their livelihood in Manappuram are clear in Peethambaran's words. He revealed:

⁷⁷¹ Valsan Pokkanchery, personal interview, 15.01.2012.

When we say Manappuram, it was a *nadu* of handicraft, once upon a time. That means Manappuram was the *nadu* of labour that was done mainly by hand. The main labour sectors at that time were weaving of screw-pine leaf, the spinning of coir and making of beedi”.⁷⁷²

8.1. Historical Snapshot of Manappuram Beedi

There were many beedi companies in earlier times.⁷⁷³ Among the companies that existed in Manappuram,⁷⁷⁴ one of the main local companies was the Manappuram Beedi. This enterprise was owned by Kadar Saivu from Nattika. After his death, it was run by his second son Majeed.⁷⁷⁵ He is also known as Manappuram Majeed. For almost 45 years, Kadar and Majeed ran this company.⁷⁷⁶ Around 15 years ago, Majeed stopped production in the company.⁷⁷⁷

In the opinion of Peethambaran:

The reason behind naming the company as Manappuram Beedi was the fame of the place, Manappuram. The company takes upon itself the heritage and culture of Manappuram by using that name. On hearing this name of the company, perhaps an emotional attachment is triggered in the minds of the people of Manappuram. Because it is an opportunity to be proud, for the people of Manappuram, when there is an enterprise in the name of their *nadu*.

⁷⁷² Peethambaran, personal interview.

⁷⁷³ These were Kohinoor beedi from Thiroor, Three Photos Beedi from Aalathoor, Pakshi Mark from Kollam Kodu, Saleem Beedi from Chalakkudy, Sunlight 33 from Kanjani, and a big company called Raja Beedi Company at Chavakkad. Apart from this, certain local beedi companies such as Kaja beedi from Thalikulam was also quite famous.

⁷⁷⁴ There were many beedi companies in Manappuram. Among them, the companies that worked in Edasherry, Thalikulam centre, Kaithakkal, Nattika mosque and Nattika beach contained either 15-20 or 40-50 workers.

⁷⁷⁵ Now he is running a stationery shop at Nattika. Many of them stopped production 15 years ago. See interview with Peethambaran.

⁷⁷⁶ His father Kadar ran it for 25 years and he ran it for 20 years.

⁷⁷⁷ Majeed, personal interview, 16.01.2016.

Majeed also added that this was the name of the place, from Aala to Chetuva. There are a lot of institutions that carry this name. The company was named so by his ancestors.

Manappuram Beedi was not sold in many places. It was only sold in the local areas. Peethambaran recalled:

There were 40 workers when I was working there, the number of workers might have gone up to a maximum of 50. The beedi which was made by those 40 or 50 workers were sold out the same day. The raw materials such as the leaf, tobacco and thread were bought from the wholesale market, and given to the workers. There was no system of working from one's house at that time. All the workers came to the company and nobody took raw materials home for work. We used to start work by 8.30 in the morning and it would continue up to 10.30 at night. At that time, the working hours were too long and the wage was less. When I started working in this sector, the wage was Rs.2 for making 1000 beedis. Then it increased to 2.30, 3, and 4 after many protested. Now, one gets 147 for 1000 beedis".⁷⁷⁸

Peethambaran was one of the workers who could make beedi with speed, so he could make 2000 beedis per day. Workers themselves cut the leaves with scissors. Out of one leaf, they could cut out enough for two or three beedis. Leaves came from Kadappa forest in Andhra and Mumbai. Andhra leaves were quite big. Therefore, they could cut the leaves for three to four beedis. Flammability was the speciality of these leaves. However, these did not have any special smell. There was a special process to increase the taste of the beedi by heating bundles of it in regulated temperature. Afterwards, the bundles were packed and labelled for supply in the local market. The owner could collect the price from the market for the next day of the supply. Many people used to smoke beedi in those days.

⁷⁷⁸ Peethambaran, personal interview.

Peethambaran added:

The beedi company does not need much infrastructure. It only needs a sloped, thatch roof shed to sit and make the beedi. Manappuram Beedi Company was in Nattika. A shed that had two verandas and a big central room. Workers would do their work sitting on the verandas. There was a petty stationery shop near the verandas which the workers used to depend on for basic necessities. The workers in this company were from Nattika and Valappad. The owner of Manappuram Beedi was a Communist. Therefore, the labourers had his protection and cooperation; he gave salary to the labourers without any delay. He was extra decent, a man who was respected by everybody. Even today, beedi workers get lesser wages in comparison with other labour sectors. In those times, life was not expensive. People would have a nice meal only at the time of Onam and Vishu, or at the time of marriage. Therefore, they could meet their living expenses through this job. At that time, the majority of the people were headload workers. A few of them turned to beedi work. However, most of my neighbours were beedi workers. Among them, many become rich through Gulf migration” (Peethambaran).

The life story details of Peethambaran would help us to understand the social and political background of this production sector. After studying up to the sixth standard, he joined the Apple Photo Beedi Company. Then he shifted to the Manappuram Beedi Company. In those days, there were not many jobs available other than beedi-making. Most of the population who did not have much education or good jobs were poor. They used to go for coolie work after studying up to the sixth or seventh standard. Beedi-making was considered as a work that could be learnt easily and could even be done at adolescence. Therefore, Peethambaran could learn this work easily. He took a Communist party membership when he was a beedi worker. Then he would do party work along with beedi work. The Manappuram Beedi Company was a place where

most of the Communist politicians in the place were working at that period. It was the main working centre of the Communist party. Manappuram Beedi Company started in the 1950s. The first trade union formed in Manappuram was by the beedi workers of this company. It was only after that trade unions emerged in other sectors. Abdul Khader was the first president of the trade union, the secretary was Kochumuhamad and the treasurer was Vasu. This Nattika Firka (Manappuram) beedi workers union functioned in the entire region of Manappuram.

Among beedi workers, there were many artists. It was a peculiarity of this labour sector of Manappuram. Most of the beedi workers were Communists. Other party orientation was very rare. Moreover, all of them had a very progressive outlook about society. Muslims were the majority of workers. Thiyya, Deevara and Dalit people were also engaged in this work. However, the Dalits would get more wages than this when they worked as coconut-tree climbers, so they chose that rather than beedi work (Peethambaran). Struggles by trade unions were mostly for a wage increase and for improving the work atmosphere. However, strikes failed many times. Finally, only in the period of emergency, did the workers start getting bonus. Then they slowly started to get pension and other welfare benefits (Peethambaran).

There was a serious reading culture among the beedi workers. In the words of Peethambaran:

There were no weeklies that we had not read. Every beedi company would buy three or four newspapers and weeklies. More than that, we continuously took books from important libraries such as Thalikulam Public Library and Mahatma Library at Triprayar, where we had a membership. We would take books with a sportsman spirit. Almost everyone, from the aged to the young, read books. Most of the time, someone from among the workers would read aloud and the others would listen; each of them would read a few lines at least. We read classics like

Maxim Gorky's *Amma* (Mother) and other translations of Russian novels, Bimal Mitra's novels and Malayalam classics like *Randidangazi* (a unit of measure) and *Chemeen*. It was a wide reading culture; we cannot remember how time passed so fast. We read *Janayugam Weekly*, *Kumkumam*, *Navayugam*, *Deshabhimani*, *Mathrubhumi* and *Kerala Sabdham*. There was always debates on the subjects that we read. There were different kinds of opinion expressed on each subject by the workers, even though most of them were Communists. It helped to improve our intellectual capacity.

Earlier, women had not started coming into this field. Therefore, there were no women workers in the Manappuram Beedi Company. Later, women also entered this sector. In Thalikulam, Nattika, Engandiyoor and Vadanapally many women joined this field. Most of them were not married. A few of them continued this job after their marriage also. Peethambaran was the first trade unionist to organise the women beedi workers in Manappuram area. He organised thousands of women beedi workers. Today, all the beedi companies have stopped their production because of unprofitability.

This commodity history of Manappuram Beedi was mainly recollected by Peethambaran. Therefore, this fragment is also his life story. Moreover, if we go through the memories, we get general information about beedi companies in the 1950s and the production process of Manappuram Beedi. These are the life stories of Manappuram Beedi and the people who were engaged in its production. For instance, if we closely analyse the production process, we can see commodity chain, market network, spatial and social division of labour, formation of labour union and cultural production by reading: (1) Coming of the beedi leaves from Kadappa (Andhra) and Mumbai, (2) purchasing of tobacco and other raw materials from other markets, (3) production of beedi in a spatially divided company atmosphere by using all those materials and the force of the labourer's body, (4) packing and

marketing in the local market, (5) profit returns and wage distribution, (6) formation of trade unions to assert the rights of labourers, (6) and recreation by reading. These not only mark the history of Manappuram Beedi but also reveal the making of the geography through the production process of beedi.

We can see here an intimate relationship between human force, manmade material and natural material in the production of beedi, and in the production of Manappuram. Here without leaf and tobacco, man cannot make beedi, without producing beedi, the labourer cannot get wage and with the smoking of a beedi, man gets into a pleasant mood. This is the agency of beedi in the production and consumption network, an agency of a commodity in the making of Manappuram. Moreover, beedi work is not labour that existed in the traditional division of labour in the caste system. Therefore, beedi work offered a possibility to people belonging to different castes and religions such as Mappila, Thiyya, Dalit and Deevera to interact with each other through their work even though the workforce involved in beedi production was lower-class. This kind of minimal possibility to complicate the caste system can be seen in the production of screw-pine and vetiver.

8.2. A Short History of Screw-pine mat and Vetiver

Varghese Mechery's memory reveals the past of the screw-pine mat. He said: Once in our Manappuram, on each side of land parcels, screw-pine were grown. People would cut those screw-pine leaves, and remove its spine. Then they would dry it in the sunlight and prepare it for making mat. That was the hand-work or cottage-work of many houses in Manappuram. Mats from Manappuram were famous outside too. It was in much demand. This mat-crafting helped us to eradicate hunger in our land.

Krishnan also recalled the use of screw-pine. In his opinion, people not only sold handmade mats in markets but also gave processed screw-pine leaves for money. It was an income-generating activity for women at that time. In that

period, in each place of Manappuram, there was a weekly market. Friday, Saturday and Tuesday were the alternative market day in many places in Manappuram. People sold their handmade mats in those markets and bought essentials for their livelihood. Many of the makers of mats sold their mats at famous markets outside Manappuram, such as Kandashankadav and Kattur. They bought back tapioca mainly. It was the staple food of the poor then.⁷⁷⁹ Jose Thadikkaran added that every panchayat of Manappuram had a market. Many women sold their homemade and handmade items in those markets. They bought meat and other essentials from those markets. Women made mats under the light of the kerosene lamp even at night to sell those in the next-day market. Poverty was very high in those days (C.K.G. Vaidhyar).

The weaving of vetiver was the main craft of a place called Chaligad in Manappuram. In the past, people cultivated vetiver in many parcels of lands in Manappuram. Moreover, people brought processed vetiver from Chavakkad and Attappady to make mats and hand-fans. Those mats were exported to Kolkata and other north Indian towns. People of Manappuram went to north Indian towns to sell handmade products of vetiver. Many families survived through this collate industry (Krishnan).

As we see in the life story of beedi, here also we can see the production process of screw-pine and vetiver. They also had a commodity chain, market network, and spatial and social division of labour. However, in comparison to the beedi, the raw material such as screw-pine leaf and vetiver root are natural products available in the lands of Manappuram. Moreover, the labourers did not work under an entrepreneur, especially in the case of the production of the screw-pine mat. The women from Dalit, Deevera and other communities collected screw-pine leaf from barren lands and processed that from their house. It was a cottage handicraft product that in comparison located its production process in Manappuram. However, the market for these

⁷⁷⁹ Krishnan, personal interview, 06.05.2012.

products was relatively wide in comparison to Manappuram beedi. Because, while Manappuram beedi sold out in Manappuram, screw-pine mat sold out mainly in markets outside Manappuram. While the production of the beedi was trans-regional, screw-pine mat's conception was trans-regional. All three popular commodities were involved in the production of Manappuram differently. In short, memories not only generated fragments of history of these commodities but also show the geography of the production of the region.

9. Avarna Region: Anti-essentialist Utopia and Ethical Future

Fragments of history formed by the memories of people not only show the transformation of terrestrial settings of the region by human labour but also invoke chips of pasts that signify anti-caste values, ideals, morals and ethics behind human labour that also work as a force driving this transformation. In a historical sense, here, the formation of history and transformation of the region is mutually constituting. However, if we closely observe the process of creation of history, we can understand that those are produced by the memories for the use of the future of the region and that production manifests Manappuram as an *avarna* region. Most of the fragments of history show the force of the anti-caste ideology that was instigated by the *avarna* theology of Sree Narayana Guru and others in the transformation of Manappuram. Therefore, demonstration of anti-caste ideology by memories not only indicates referents to the past but also a force to the future that imagines Manappuram as an *avarna* utopia.⁷⁸⁰

This anti-caste imagination, *avarna* utopia, of Manappuram is probably a continuous act of destabilisation of essentialism rather than a fixing of an immutable and eternal identity for the region. Because *avarna* utopia denies

⁷⁸⁰ For further discussion of utopia, see Ruth Levitas, The Concept of Utopia (Bern: Peter Lang, 1990) 1-9; for an understanding about the utopia envisaged by anti-caste thinkers, see Gail Omvedt, Seeking Begumpura: The Social Vision of Anticaste Intellectuals (New Delhi: Navayana, 2009).

the essence of the caste system that fixes the identity of people by their birth and rejects the Brahmanical theology that engenders the caste system and envisages an unbounded and essence-less region. As I have discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the formation of (word) *avarna* is possible by the negation of the essence of *varna*. Therefore, *avarna* utopia does not exist through the numerical majority and cultural supremacy of so-called *avarna* communities but by the rejection of essential identities and cultural hegemony.

Following Walter Benjamin, one could argue that in this context, appearance of *avarna* is not as a chip of the past for one can recognise the past of the region “the way it really was” but as a “means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger”.⁷⁸¹ *Avarna* is a messianic power that redeems the future of the people. Therefore, imagining Manappuram as *avarna* by memories is a force for an ethical future.

⁷⁸¹ See Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History” in Illuminations: Essays and Reflections (New York: Schocken Books, 2007) 254

Conclusion

In the main chapters of this thesis, I have discussed the formation of Manappuram as a region. Through the delineation of different formations of regions, this thesis has addressed problem areas related to everydayness, memory, history and geography and has tried to answer the seminal question whether region is mental (a construct) or material (real). Archival methods, ethnography and textual-reading are the three methodologies deployed independently and jointly in these chapters.

The second chapter has argued that the manifestation and the animation of the region by the everydayness illustrate the disembodied embodiment or the embodied disembodiment of region. In sum it is argued that region is (de)materialised simultaneously through everyday practices. It is through the forms of everyday expressions like chatter, colloquy, oratory, interior monologue, and creativities (in the intimate space) and through various other enterprises and collectives in the name of Manappuram that the corporeal body of Manappuram emerges. Manappuram appears as a material reality precisely through the manifestation and animation of the region by the people. However, the region simultaneously dematerialises through complex nuances that consists of the same everydayness.

This chapter has also shown how memory, one of the everyday practices, exposes the intricacies of the (de)materialisation of the region because region, just as everydayness, also appears as memory. The region, as a material reality, seems to be in contrast with the region as a memory. In fact, ruminations, recollections, and the nostalgia about Manappuram seem to render the region more as a memory. Memory exemplifies the region as being disembodied and incorporeal, contrary to the corporeal existence of the region. Paradoxically, Manappuram appears to still “exist” in the present, contrary to the imaginative memory on/of the idea of loss. Therefore, I have

put forward the argument that the memory of Manappuram might not be about erosion, but rather about the erotic.

Manappuram is retrieved through the memory and the everyday practices of the region. The people “possess and dwell” and therefore belong in that retrieved region. Consequently, Manappuram is not a given, but it is something that always appears and disappears or rather it neither appears nor disappears. This necessitates the fleshing out and retrieving of Manappuram constantly through memory and the everyday. Manappuram, then, ruptures the meaning of place as we conceive it in our times. In fact, it erases the distinction between memory and material reality; or rather, it lingers on the fringes of memory and material reality. Memory may transgress the boundary of the past and the present, or the idea of the past might be diluted in memory and in the present. This implies that time has probably been melted down in memory. Therefore, one can say that Manappuram dilutes the distinctions between the past and the present; the mental and the material; the real and the construct; time and space, etc.

Chapter Three debated the idea of kingship in the context of Manappuram through the fabrication of the status of *pramanis* (chiefs) and *kudikal* (subject), and the ordering of inhabitants under a graded structure of status by the discourse of lease. This discourse shows the presence of sovereignty during the early colonial period; and this is quite contrary to what transpired in the late colonial period. A striking feature is the possibility of having multiple sovereign claims. One can see how this discourse facilitated Cochin and the English to emerge as the key players in the region to compete for the sovereignty over Manappuram during early modernity.

Further, this chapter discusses in detail the discourse of lease, which produces the ideas of kingship, subject and sovereign within the historical milieu of the region during the period. The chapter further explicates how in the discourse

of lease, the possession of the land is too complex to be reduced to terms of kingship, subject, and sovereign. We also see how the emergence of kingship, subject and sovereign configure the power of the region. The configuration of power is constituted by tenets such as ownership of land, fiscal power, and juridical power. More than the possession of land, control over revenue, a right of life and death, the power (Cochin or the English) here is preoccupied with the right to control the mobility of subject and object. For example, we have seen how the possession of the land of the *kudikal* was complicated due to changing landlords and *jenmam* rights. We have also seen how the Airoor Raja is presented in the discourse of the lease as a mere Raja of the ‘past’; and yet he is denied the possession of any land. Similarly, the discourse of the lease generates the presence of Cochin as a sovereign in the modern ‘present’. But in spite of the possession/possessory rights of the land, Cochin struggled to achieve true sovereignty on Manappuram due to the absence of the right of life and death, and the right to control over the mobility of subject and object. In contrast, the English were indeed a sovereign power in the true sense — colonisers with the right of life and death and right to control the mobility of subject and object, without even holding possession of the land.

Thus, it becomes evident that the right to control the mobility of the subject and object is the decisive element that defines power. Power in this context combines with the colonial modern authority and with the native traditional authority and is, therefore, a “collaborative”. Power constitutes itself not only through the politico-juridical-fiscal system but also configures itself through traditional socio-cultural power.

The Chapter Four contested that Manappuram as a place had no “real proof of ownership”, was “not regularly divided”, and could not “be properly surveyed and mapped” (Moens 138, 139). It had no “proper map” because the natives were distrustful and suspicious about the colonial land measurements in the Dutch period (139). Though the discourse of dispute and the historical

narratives that entered the region's historicity strived to provide the normative idea of region, the entire project of claim and contestation over Manappuram failed to delineate a homogenous region, with strict boundaries ruled by a singular sovereign.

Further, I argued that language, (re)production of evidence, geographical markers and representation of narration played a pivotal role in marking a boundary that facilitated the creation of a concrete, physical administrative region called Manappuram in the context of the dispute. This is also a kind of 'mapless-mapping' of the region through narrative, legality, language and geography. The 'evidential' and the 'factual' narratives have been analysed as a substitute for a map that offers "concrete" and "accurate" boundary for the region.

I contend that the process of marking the boundary, characterising the physical nature and setting the closure was not merely an enterprise to define the region, but also an attempt to territorialise it. Furthermore, the narratives on principalities and non-principalities, myth, lived expression of name, measuring and oracle unpacked by the Dutch memoirs suggest a script of the past for the region.

This Chapter also discussed in detail the act of territorialisation that transpired through the attempts of the British to reify the region by settling different contestations and claims which however remained unsettled due to the multiple, heterogeneous, inconsistent and conflicted nature of the contestations and claims. I have argued that it is these multitudes of claims and contestations that in fact render Manappuram immune to the process of territorialisation, unlike "many ordinary kinds of places" that "become territorial to exist as places" in modernity (Sack 19).⁷⁸² However, if we

⁷⁸² Even though Brenner and Elden observed that in Sack "the term is very difficult to dissociate from place" (355).

perceive the process of territorialisation in the historical context of Manappuram, it is evident that contrary to his observation, Manappuram seems undocile to the process of territorialisation in modernity.

Further, this chapter discussed how the Dutch memoirs and the discourse of dispute aim to constitute a linear past and a homogenous region. The discourse tries to establish and maintain the sovereignty triggered by the lease and by doing so, attempts to settle the contestation and claims on the region so that a physically homogenous region is offered. This can be seen as an attempt towards territorialisation and production of modern history, which forms the backdrop of the formation of the modern region as well. In fact, the mapping of boundary and scripting of the past not just serve as a mere backdrop for the modern region; rather they are the very roots of consciousness about region. The Dutch accounts could have potentially revealed a homogenous script of the region's past. However, what these accounts reveal are multiple claims which instead of solidifying mono-history writing on the region uncover several possible histories.

Chapter Five has delineated the movement of people, money, knowledge, newspaper, commodity and labour within Manappuram through the circuit of roads, schools, industries, electrical system and water supply system that are mainly realised by the external linkages of Manappuram with other places such as Ceylon, the Gulf countries, Mumbai and Kozhikode through the migrants from Manappuram. It is argued that the networking of Manappuram with other places and the environment and textual discourse produced through this trans-territorial flow of people, goods and ideas acted as the main catalyst in the formation of the region Manappuram.

The Chapter elucidated the process of the making of the region Manappuram not only as it happens locally in Manappuram but also as it is produced globally from/in different parts of the world. This (mental and material)

mobile geography of Manappuram is supplemented with its own catastrophic and productive geographies that exist in the interrelation between the disaster and the development of Manappuram.

Chapter Six analysed how memories of people, commodity, resistance and traditions of Manappuram produce fragments of history, and how the history by these fragments signify the (trans)formation of Manappuram as an *avarana* region for the future. Moreover, it explicates how this “history for now” is distinct from linearly written professional history that seeks (claimed) facticity, truth and authenticity of past.

This Chapter further elucidated how the popular history formed/composed/constituted by the memories of people not only signifies the (trans)formation of terrestrial settings of the region by human labour, instigated through the anti-caste ideology, but also imagines Manappuram as an *avarana* utopia by invoking chips of pasts that signify anti-caste values, ideals, morals and ethics as a force to future. I extended my argument further that *avarana* utopia does not exist by a numerical majority and cultural supremacy of so-called *avarana* communities but by the rejection of essential identities and cultural hegemony. In this chapter, it becomes obvious that the popular history produced by memory is not only invoked by textual significations but is also invoked by materially or physically built up environments such as schools, libraries and bridges, constructed by personalities who became the history of Manappuram by/through the memories of people. I argue that this reciprocal relationship between material construction and production of memory show the mutual constitution of region by materiality and mentality.

Therefore, this thesis puts forward the argument that region is formulated through mutual intersections of mental and material by exposing the juxtaposition of the binary opposition between the real and the imagined. The

thesis further posits that regions are perhaps *mentally real* and *materially construct(ed)* in the context of Manappuram, where both conjointly constitute each other without any binary, by complicating the duality of the same. The intermixing of the binary not only interrelates but also complicates each other. Thus, I postulate that in the context of Manappuram, mental or construct apparently is real. Similarly, the real or the material arrives as a construct. The juxtaposition of the binaries (real/construct) may complicate the ideal and physical fixity and the boundedness of real and construct. (*Bounded* not only signifies the physically bounded, but also connotes the ideally bounded). It not only complicates the presence and absence of real or construct but also nullifies the very idea of the essence by the complex position of region as a simultaneity of embodied disembodiment or disembodied embodiment.

I further argue that it not only negates or nullifies the essence that is incorporated or attributed to both real and construct or mental and material, but rather negates the idea of essence in the constitution of region. Put differently, this thesis posits that perhaps there is no essence to the region of Manappuram and its identities. Therefore, the region appears here as anti-essential. In another context, Doreen Massey argues that space is “anti-essential”, but her argument is limited to a political sense. To take this argument of Massey forward, this thesis has argued that Manappuram seems to be anti-essential not just politically but also conceptually and materially.

Conceptually speaking, this might nullify watertight separations between space and time through the complexity of their mutual interrelations. Materially it negates the binary of real and construct or mental and material by corporeal absence and incorporeal presence or corporeal presence and incorporeal absence of the region. Politically it denies caste and the state in the context of Manappuram, by negating caste by envisaging the *Avarna* utopia for an ethical future and nullifying the administrative idea of the state. The idea of anti-essentialism arrives here through quite different registers as

well. In the context of Manappuram, the very idea of region is complicated with impermanence and anti-essence. This means that the impermanence and anti-essence of the region is arrived at through its everyday, simultaneous, embodied disembodiment and disembodied embodiment; *Avarna*-utopian imagination; juxtaposition of smooth time and space; mobile geographies; de-territorialised historical dispositions; and memories (popular history) of human and non-human entities.

The region is perhaps something that neither appears nor disappears but is always becoming. It offers simultaneous belonging and not belonging because it has never had an administrative existence nor a historical existence as a physical region. Moreover, it is not culturally embedded with specific traits. On the one hand, the region's corporeal absence perhaps signifies nothingness. It is not only a part of infinite space, but also an element of infinite time. Also, the region's corporeal absence signifies temporal pause, which offers re'form' to its corporeal presence or its continuous impermanence. So re'form'ing is a continuous process.

Temporal pause is a prerequisite for the corporeal absence and incorporeal presence of the region. The temporal pause might be a significant element of time or one of its reflexive natures, probably a duration, or an interval as well. Time is usually characterised with its speed and slowness, but here it also offers pause that does not necessarily suggest the stagnancy of time, but rather it offers a meditative contemplation. Such space-time, in fact, offers an anti-essential, impermanent region of Manappuram. In fact, the embodied disembodiment and disembodied embodiment which offers anti-essentialism and impermanence to the region also (re)forms and complicates the consciousness of region, its valorisation and its fetishising by negating the essence of the region, and of the identities.

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