



Influence of Modern Malayalam Poetry In Folk Tradition

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Language and literature spin off from a community of human beings who have been nomadic. In all languages, oral literature was passed by word of mouth. *Vaytharikal* (uttering percussion syllables vocally) are a group of sounds that have no particular meaning or idea.

The quest for the primordial literary form in Malayalam traces back to the song tradition. Poetry is the first form of literature that appeared in all languages. In Greek *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, *Beowulf* in English and the Vedic texts of Indians support this view.

N. Krishna Pillai quotes, Until the time of Ezuthachan, ordinary Keralites enjoyed literature that was immersed in music. The author of *Ramacharitha*, the Niranam poets (the three poets from the same family by the names of Madhava Panikkar, Sankara Panikkar, and Rama Panikkar) and Cherussery were the ones who nurtured the song literature that existed before them.

Leelavathi also comments “Songs are the rising point of any literature in the search for the roots of Malayalam poetry.” (20) The poem itself begins with small rhythmic passages. G. Sankarappilla said that the stream of song was flowing from the imagination of the society, pointing out that the song tradition sprung from oral tradition.

All these observations highlight the origin of poetry. Unique images of folk life are reflected in folk poetry. Dreams, disappointments and sorrows about life are all lurking in them. Modern Malayalam poetry has evolved from folk poetry. Human beings lost their folk tradition and tribal life. The reflections of unique folklore can be observed in the deep structure of the poem. Poets recreate the customs, discourses, sayings and legends of the society in myriad ways.

Folk Culture

Early compositions draw vitality from folk rhythms and melodies. The source of primitive poetry in any language is folk melody and folk music. Folk dichotomies have been used in *Ramacharitham*, *Kannassan poems*, *Krishnagatha* and *Thullal poems*. There is a legend behind the song tradition of *Krishnagatha*. *Krishnagatha* is a poem composed in the melodious metre of manjari in memory of a lullaby sung in connection with the king's gambling game.

Vanchipattu (the boat song) also has the unique folk song tradition of Kerala. This is due to the peculiar geographical features of Kerala. Most of the ancient works were based on oral tradition or folk songs. An instance of this is Ramapurathu Warriar's *Kuchelavrittam Vanchipattu*. Folk songs can be found in the works of Kunchan Nambiar. In addition to the linguistic prosody, he embodied the expressions found in the folk dance forms of his time.

Folklore has influenced Asan, Vallathol and Ullur. Dravidian metres were used in Asan's '*Chandalabhikshuki*', '*Duravastha*' and '*Karuna*'. This influence is most evident in Vallathol. The lightning bolts of Valluvanadan life can be seen in some of Vallathol's poems.

The poet himself asserts that the rhythm of Ullur's poem '*Premasangeetham*' was inspired from the song sung by the women who came to husk paddy at his house. Thus the prosody of the poem is due to the variety of folk rhythms and oral traditions that were prevalent in the society.

The dominance of the folk song tradition is most evident in the poems of Changampuzha. He has adopted many folk metres like Omanakuttan, Maveli, Thiruvathira, Kurathi, Kalyani and Tharat. Poems like 'Ramanan' and 'Yavanika' and other poems like 'Apoomala' and 'Kavyanarthaki' are similar. Changampuzha's interest in ancient lyric poetry is a characteristic of romantic poets in general. Poets try to compose melodious songs like the ancient ones because the melody and rhythm of the old songs are blended with the original.

*Atharam paatukalannu chithathil verunni vanna moolam
innavaye pole nerthunertha sundara ganame njagal padu*

(Because such songs are rooted in the mind
We sing beautiful songs today)

Changampuzha has sung the above quoted lines in *Innathe kavitha*.

The poems of P. Kunjiraman Nair and Vyloppilly are abounded with the rural atmosphere of Kerala. Throughout the poems we find lamentations about the loss of traditional culture and art as a result of the Reformation. In addition to that, the throbbing of nostalgia linger in them.

In Vyloppilly's poems, the inherent culture is more dynamic than the seeming nature of Kerala. As M. N. Vijayan points out, "It is not only the external nature of Kerala, but the totality of culture" (23). *Thachande makan* (The carpenter's son), "*Malathurakkal*" and "*Atbhutha Mani*" are examples. The kuravas who sing auspiciously, the onam games, onam songs, thekku singers athiraravu, the dawns of vishu in villages etc. In this way, Vyloppilly immortalizes his poems by embodying the spirit of Kerala life. The poem *poonkozhiikal kuvunnu*, is composed by alluding to the famous folk song '*neram poi neram poi pookaitha marapatti*'.

The influence of folk tradition can be seen in many of G. Shankara Kurup's narrative poems. Poems like '*Chandanakattil*', '*Perunthachan*', '*Munnaruviyum Oru Puzhayum*' and '*Inakuruvikal*' are life stories that evoke the spirit of village life.

Folk Culture was an influential force in N. V. Krishna Warriar and Edassery. *Pazhaya Pattu* (Old song) and *theevandiyile pattu* (Train song) are full of the spirit of folk tradition. In *Pazhaya Pattu* (Old song), all the malayan tribes decide to offer human sacrifices to appease the kuladeiva (family God) Bhadrakali, the deity who rules over the Ezhumala, for which they gather on Amāvāsyā (the last day of the lunar month). The Goddess chose the king's daughter who is not sixteen yet as her idol. When the king raised his sword to perform the sacrificial act, the son of the Hindu Priest head, who ran forward like a storm, trampled on the idol in defiance of that injustice. At that time the earth shook and the mountain split in two and everything got caught inside the boiling lava. C. J. Thomas sees the young man a representative of those who fought against injustice and laid the foundation of human civilization. As Leelavathi points out, the poet reveals the prehistoric mind that sees natural disasters as the wrath of mother Goddess, bringing to light the blind beliefs ingrained in the consciousness of mankind and the subtlety of genocide, better than rationalist's arguments can do.

*Karineela kannu chuvanu kondum
Mayilpeeli kundhalazhinju kondum
Malavaga poomalayadi kondum*

Mullamottu maril thulumbikondum (26)

The princess' dance is reminiscent of the *pampinthullal* (Serpent dance) seen in our countryside. One of the most ingrained concept in the human mind is 'Mother Goddess'. The expectant mother of protection becomes the destroyer. There are also myths about this dualistic aspect of motherhood or cosmic nature. Bhadrakali, Chamundi and Sri Kurumba are some of the names of the deities worshiped in Kavu (sacred grove). This dualistic attitude of the mother can be seen in Edassery's poems '*Kavile Pattu*' and '*Poothappattu*'. Pootham is a symbol of motherhood, who goes from house to house after the makara koithu (march season of harvest) owing to her love for her son and dances to the rhythm of the small drum and the clamour of the chilamb.

Kavile Pattu is a poem that conveys the experience of *kalampattu*, *vela* and *thalappoli* in the Bagavati kavu of Kerala. The culture of Kerala is portrayed through honey overflowing in a clay pot, a floral

inflorescence, panjavarna podikal (a colorful field made of five-colours), level-headed lantern, a chendamela rising with deafening rhythm of firecrackers, etc.

*samayamāyī samayamāyī tēriṛaṅṅukambē
sakala lēāka pālaneka samayamatālabē (27)*

The songs that invite the mother Goddess to depart are still heard in Sreekurumbakkavu in Malabar. Edasseri was able to express such archetypes that lie at the base of social consciousness in his poetry.

Akkitham's early poems contain the sweetness of mythology and folk songs, e.g. *Vennakallinde Katha* (The story of the marble). Sugathakumari, Vishnu Narayanan Namboothiri, and N. N. Kakkad's poems try to find new meanings for myths. In his poem '*Malayidichil*', Kakkad embodies the devaluation of rural culture.

*oru khāṇḍava vanattin oru śaṅkham,
oru vill oru tēr oru kālindikk
oru peṅṅ vilapēśiyāl talakāṅilla
pārt'thanāyālum pārt'tha sārathiyāyālum (28)*

The poet points out the alienated traditional culture that came through the devaluation of the civilized culture. Sugathakumari's *Kaliyamardanam*, Vishnunarayanan Namboothiri's *Dileepan* are the poems belong to this genre.

M. Govindan's poems are derived from the source of folk culture. The poet tries to convey the uniqueness of the folk light in the style of expression and expression. Poems like *Kurinjpattu*, *Arangettam*, *Piravi*, *Meenpidutham*, *Nattuvelicham*, Kannante Katha, Vayalinde Swapnagal (Dreams of the field) and Kurukanum Poochayum (Fox and cat) belong to this category.

Vayalar, O N. V and P. Bhaskaran, Thirunallur Karunakaran composed folk tunes in poetry. Vayalar's *Pashayulla Varambu* (Glutinous Boundary) *Vaikom Kayalil* and *Mulankadu* can also be considered in this group.

kattum vellauṁ taḷḷikerumpol kazhchakenthorupoleda (29)

Vayalar wrote the poem *Arival Thalamurakalilude* (Through the Scythe Generations) with reference to the tune of the folk song *onnam kunnin meloreeradi kunninmel* (On the first hill..). Thirunallur's poem *Rani* (Queen) encompasses folk tradition. O N V's *Pazhayoru Pattum* and *Thottangal* embody the sweetness of folklore and folk songs. Modern poets have been influenced by mythology and tradition to express the tragedies of contemporary period. Traditional culture can be seen in the poems of Ayyapa Paniker, Kadamanitta, Sachidanandhan, Ezhacheri, Vinaya Chandran, Punalur Balan and Cherian K. Cherian.

*ente karinteāliyurakkiṭṭa - teṭuttu putacceāru
tappuṁ enre viralttumpeāppiyetuttu keāṭṭippāṭi viḷikkunnu
ṅān keṭṭippuṅaru kāli ṅekkippiḷiyu peruṅkāli (30)*

The sound of surrendering oneself before the Goddess is reflected in the poem *Kattalan*. The same expression can be seen more or less in the poems *Shantha'* and *Kurathi*. Kadamanitta replaces the folk song *Karutha Penna Karinkuzhali*.

Niranjapenne niraroovi
karimpanakal thagatha penne...
Neyyunaru neeyunaru... 31

The above lines are from *Shantha*.

The concept of Kali, which was gaining ground in the minds of Keralites, is expressed in the *Devasthva* with a lively rhythm and expression. The first part of the poem is about the gentle Goddess.

*Niswwasa vegam kudikanu, momal nadathiya meni
Pulkithalodanu mazhathilazhthi...(32)*

The poet longs. By the time that goddess of protection reaches the conclusion of the poem, Thrikannu moonum thurannardrayayithilaku

*Kuthiku, jwalichandakaram mudiku
Karalande vakshasilongiyadichavittichathach (33)*

The poet asks her to become a destroyer. The original character of mother Goddess, exists powerful in *Kadammanitta* poem.

Sachchidanandan's poems *Navumaram*, *Moonu Pattukal* (Three Songs) and *Kozhipank* belong to the folk tradition. Sachchidanandan tells the story of the defeat of *Nallathevi Nattamma* who dreamed of changing the language of the people and changing her way of life.

kēālāyil kēālamāy tulaḷunna

maññil keāliyunna nāvumāy padunnu (34)

Sachchidanandan's poems include Pulayan's song and Panan's kaduthudi. When evaluating Sachchidanandan's poems, Narendra Prasad said that it makes sense that he chooses only myths from the past and characters who can give his own emotional relevance. Sachchidanandan, who believes that poetry is a means of communication, reinforces poetry by combining folk myths, imagery and the melody and rhythm of folk songs.

Ezhacheri Ramachandran's *Neeli* is a poem that subtly connects with tradition and leads the reader to the bitter truths of the present. The poet attempts to understand the meaning of reality through the analysis of the myth of neeli (ghost) which remains a nightmare in the mind.

pārvatipuram kaḷiññittiri naṭakkavē

pāṭayēārattu ṅān kaṅṭu eccilila nakkittuṭaykkunna

kuntiyāy okkattirunnu vākīrunna karṇane

keāttānvaruṃ balikkākkayēppāyikku-

mardhanagnāṅgiyām pāṅṅikkurattiyāy cīrāmanettuḷaliṭṭu naṭattunna

pāvaṃ kuraññāṭṭiyāy am'mikeāttunna

villupurate ccivakāmiyāy (35)

The poet witnesses the tragic sufferings of a woman whose life is sacrificed in the midst of decades of suffering. The different faces of the persecuted woman change into the image of Neeli trapped in myths and beliefs. Through the Dravidian mythical *neeli* the poet seeks to ignite the flames of anger that are lost somewhere in the fundamental class femininity.

D. Vinayachandran's poems focuses on folk culture. The poem *Kolangal* has a reminiscent of the padayani kolams. The tunes used in the poem are also from Padayani. His poem *Rathi* (Night) is a threatening image of Keralite where the goodness and harmony of the countryside has been lost somewhere.

Vinayachandran is mindful about some archaic reminiscences while singing the tragedies and contradictions of human life. Poetry draws its energy from this traditional source.

ottaykk duḥkham cumakkunneāracchanre(

cita ślēākañṅaḷ cilappatikārañṅaḷ appacciyēātunnu vēṭāḷa kēḷikaḷ

appurattannuṃ karaccil karintiri

nīyavum rāmarāmayennuruviṭṭu cittaśēākañṅaḷ vilakkukaḷ nērcckaḷ

The mournful hymns of a lonely father.

There were tears on the other side

Eternal, ramarama, grief, prohibitions, vows)

The poet expresses the intensity of unrest and isolation through folkloric expression.

nīyenre dain'yamē ninnu perukunnu niyanēkañṅaḷāy ninnu karayunnu

nīyenre dīrgha pratīkṣayāy prār'thanā dīptiyāy

peṅṅineārāñāyi gaṅgaye kīrtticcu keāḷḷuṃ

bhagīratha dīkṣayāy ī tēābha nirddaya parvattilum dayā-

pūramāy śāntiprabhāvamāy tīraṅ

(Thou art multiplying out of my benevolence,

and I am weeping from everlasting

I will glorify the Ganges as a woman

with the light of prayer as my long-term hope.

It will be a full-fledged peace process, 37)

The honesty and courage of the folk singers are resonated in these lines. Vinayachandran's poems are full of proximity to the ancient hymns and hymns of the language.

Madhusoodanan Nair's *Naranathu Bhranthan* is a poem that exudes the power and spirit of the Indian tradition. The poet is dreaming of recreating the lost tradition through the legend of Naranathu Bhranthan.

Of the afterlife

There will be... mixed with souls like a tree song...

It will have the color, aroma, and warmth..

For the first time since then, faithfulness has spread through the earth

Through the retelling of this myth, the poet finds meaning in life and an optimistic belief.

Madhusoodanan Nair's sentimentality through Naranathu Bhanthan is personal and traditional.

Modern Malayalam poetry is inextricably linked with folk tradition. Traditional culture exists in all the poems mentioned above. The folk culture of Kerala is not limited to these poems and poets. At this stage of life's complex and problematic situation, the writer explores his own heritage and culture.

Ellam nashichu poyitilla pogilla

Vallathum sheshikum enn vijarichirike...

Baviyude thelivarna jaivs prabavam (39)

(It simply came to our notice then.

Suppose something is left

What a pleasure to liver

Faith in the pellucid biological impact of the new future, 39) These lines attest to this.

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