CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION
CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSION

The golden age of novel writing in Malayalam was heralded by the titans Kesava Dev, Thakazhi, Basheer, Pottekkad and Uroob. The great tradition in the field of fiction was their creation. It was Uroob who became a powerful link between the classic great tradition and the experimental movement of the formative forces of the moderns that emerged in the sixties. This period is the turning point in the history of Malayalam novel. From sociological realism, novelists of Malayalam literature were turning their attention to psychological realism. Freud, Jung, Adler, Henry Bergson and William James propounded theories and promoted movements that insisted on subjectivity, inwardness, points of view and insight into the collective unconscious of the human race. World literature was emerging with a new face with the dawn of the twentieth century.

What is significant to note in the phenomenon is that the literature of Kerala, in common with other regional Indian literatures was passing through the various stages of its integration with World literature through such movements. The imprint of modernity borne by World literature in the twentieth century is nothing but the tendency of "inward turning" as Leon Edel maintains in "The Psychological Novel". The fading out of this peculiar trait of modernism starts in the west with the end of the Second World War where we had to wait till the sixties just to see the glimmering of psychological modernism in Malayalam novel. The time-lag that separates the Indian response from the world situation in literature is evidently enormous. The critic would be perfectly justified if he were to maintain that what happened in the Malayalam novel prior to the sixties was not integration but imitation, no better than the clever art of Ventriloquism.1

And hence, it was M.T Vasudevan Nair "who took over from his great predecessors and blazoned a new trail, thus marking a new turning point in the history of Malayalam novel."2
Literature is the external manifestation of the internal urges of human psyche. As early as the fourth century B.C., Aristotle applied this idea while defining tragedy. His classic definition of tragedy is the combination of the emotion of pity and terror to produce catharsis. From Sir Philip Sidney, the English renaissance poet to the romantic poets, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, every creative artist who insisted on imagination and propounded theories of the same was directly referring to the artistic response to human psychology. However during the twentieth century, Sigmund Freud and his followers took up psycho-analytic theories to fathom even the unconscious aspects of human psyche. Freud, a brilliant creative genius demonstrated that "like the iceberg, the human mind is structured so that its great weight and density lie beneath the surface (below the level of Consciousness)."

The treatment of the unconscious cannot be isolated from the stream of consciousness as the flow of thought sometimes projects repressed wishes and desires which govern the course of a person's thought. Human personality is a changing, evolving, growing, accumulating experience. In its process of becoming, it remains new every moment. This personality, the ever growing enigma is something which the twentieth century psychological novels wanted to examine as closely and candidly as possible. The psychological theories repeatedly reminded that everyone is abnormal in some way and the so called neurotic condition is the general condition of the people. We have learnt nothing essential about ourselves. Psychological novelists hence took upon themselves the assignment of exploring man's psyche.

The empirical world produces the neurotic personality; but that personality is able to yearn for contact with what is stable, for knowledge of the centre of meaning. It is then with the overwhelming trend in fiction of our time to investigate meaning in human personality rather in social action and reaction that stream of
consciousness is allied. Representing an extreme concentration on unuttered consciousness, it produced its landmarks, towering ones, but it was subsumed by something basic in the nature of fiction; the need for surface action and external reality to make whole reality, to make whole reality as man knows it, for man, as Joyce has illustrated, is only half-aspiring.4

To read the unconscious and analyse its coherent and incoherent states, the traditional devices of narration proved inadequate. Samuel Richardson was the first English novelist to devote himself to the delineation of contemplation, reflection and the dramatising of consciousness. His novels that reveal an introspective analysis of mind and his characters show a tendency to analyse their minds. Tobias Smollett, a writer of the picaresque fiction, uses language to experiment with its capacity to reveal two or more layers of meaning. He used puns and distortion of words which resemble the puns that are available in James Joyce’s ‘Finnegans Wake’. Laurence Sterne used the psychological time and dramatised the consciousness of his characters. His characters look backward and forward in time; thereby bear a striking semblance to Mrs. Dallaway or Orlando.

Charles Dickens, though not a psychological novelist was certainly concerned with the delineation of human character. George Eliot and Meredith were more concerned with human motives in their novels than Dickens. With George Eliot the novel turned inward. She was a contemporary of Turgenev, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. Though she was experimenting with the analysis of human mind, her mode of description was traditional. Though her novels did not represent Bergson’s inner duration, she attempted to depict psychological time. The characters of Meredith goes a little ahead of George Eliot by dramatising the consciousness of characters and his characters have greater subjectivity than those of George Eliot. The chief traits of
Meredith’s novels are subjectivity, delineation of generalisations, detailed analysis and the dramatising of feelings.

In the late nineteenth century, many writers of fiction thus became more and more interested in portraying the identity of self and it became apparent that the techniques of which psychological themes are to be handled must also undergo a change. The problem of character depiction became more acute and the need for new tools was also equally acute. Henry James’ impressionistic portrayal of mental states employed a narrator to present his own subjective views and delusions and thus emerged the new technique of narration called the Single Point of View. Henry James adopted the ‘undramatic’ conventional method where the novelist simply narrated the impressions of the characters. He also followed the dramatic method in most of his novels to delineate the impressions. He identified himself with the consciousness of one character or the other and described the thoughts. He plunged straight into the minds of these characters enabling him to project his consciousness. He remained invisible and silent. But he allowed the reader to see the interior life of his character by minutely recording the mental impressions.

The technique of Single Point of View propounded by Henry James was inherited by Joseph Conrad and Dorothy Richardson. He modified James’ impressionism and moved closer to the Stream of Consciousness technique. His ‘Lord Jim’ published in 1900 is a psychological novel which portrays the movement of mind backward and forward in time. The novel has several narrators and every narrator takes the reader into his own point of view. Thus there are a series of impressions that assume the colour of the prejudices and passions of the persons to whom they belong. Joseph Conrad used his technique to demolish the conventional
pattern of narration. In his unconventional method of story telling, he was very close to the Stream of Consciousness technique.

Dorothy Richardson was the first exponent of the Stream of Consciousness technique. In her work 'Pilgrimage' she depicts the emotions, feelings, recollections and visualisations of her character Miriam Henderson. The novel has no story, no dramatising, and no climax in the conventional sense. But she presented Bergsonian reality, time and intuition in her novels. She employed an omniscient narrator and used dots and dashes to denote the discontinuity of thought, a very important trait of her Stream of Consciousness technique.

Virginia Woolf became the first successful novelist of the Stream of Consciousness technique. Her novels depict psychological time and inchoate state of consciousness. The problems of reality, the question of individuality, the impact of time on man, the uncanny mystery of death became matters of analysis in her novel. With her indirect interior monologues, she enabled the reader to have a glimpse into her inner life. Her stream of thought ran in short sentences and explored individual consciousness and showed the change in human personality and traced the impact of time on man.

William Faulkner used the Multiple Points of View in his novels, like 'The Sound and the Fury', 'Absalom! Absalom!' and 'As I Lay Dying', for the presentation and interpretation of human experience. This particular narrative method helped Faulkner to actively participate in the analysis of the psychology of the characters. This gave Faulkner a new way of presenting a theme where in the absence of an authoritative voice, the reader was given a new responsibility of evaluating an
experience in which he is a participant too. The technique afforded a deeper insight to the reader into the complex reality that cannot be understood or portrayed in a straight and simplistic way. The progress of the action of the novel besides being a process of gradual unfolding of the situation is also a process of perception and understanding for the reader. The constantly shifting focus of narration offered the reader to view the total human situation through comparison and contrasts.

Carl Gustav Jung is the foremost mythologists of our time. Psychology and mythology, according to him are concerned with the motives that underlie human behaviour. Psychology is experimental and diagnostic and has close ties with biological science. Mythology on the other hand is speculative and philosophical and is closely related to religion, anthropology and cultural history. When psychology tends to disclose facts about individual personality, mythology reveals about the mind and the character of a people. Mythology is the symbolic projection of people's hopes, values, fears and aspirations. As Mark Schorer says "Myth is fundamental, the dramatic representation of our instinctual life, of a primary awareness of man in the Universe capable of many configurations upon which all particular opinions and attitudes depend." Jung considered that the myths represented the collective unconscious although every nation has its own distinctive mythology. Although they have their specific shapes given by the cultural environment in which they grow, a myth is universal.

... Similar motifs or themes may be found among many different mythologies, and certain images that recur in the myths of peoples widely separated in time and place tend to have a common meaning or more accurately, tend to elicit comparable psychological responses and to serve similar cultural functions. Such motifs and images are called Archetypes. Stated simply, Archetypes are universal symbols.
Jung explained that Archetypes are not inherited ideas or patterns of thought, but they are predispositions to respond in similar ways to certain stimuli. In his book ‘The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious’, he theorised that myths are the projections of innate scientific phenomena. The psychic instincts found in the human race are older than historical man. Jung indicated further that Archetypes reveal themselves in the dreams of individuals and that dreams are “personalised myths” and myths are “depersonalised dreams”.

Jung found a very intimate relationship between dreams, myths and art in the sense that all the three function as the media through which Archetypes become accessible to consciousness. Hence the great artist is the person who possesses the primordial vision which is a special sensitivity to archetypal patterns and the artist alone has the gift of speaking in primordial images to transmit the experiences of the inner world through art. Hence it is logical for the artistic genius of a writer to resort to mythology to give his personal experience its most suitable expression. This is so because “The primordial experience is the source of his creativeness; it cannot be fathomed, and therefore requires mythological imagery to give it form”.

James Joyce’s portrayal of the psychological time, his delineation of character in an unconventional way, the new techniques he used to probe into the conscious and the unconscious, his employment of the interior monologue to portray the movement of mental states, establish him not only as an innovator in fiction but also as a founder of a new genre. James Joyce’s used myth in his ‘Ulysses’ and ‘Finnegans Wake’. Joyce’s acquaintance with psycho-analysis was great. He had personal acquaintance with Jung. Joyce depicts daydreams, hallucinations, fantasies, Oedipus complex, inferiority complex and incestuous relation in ‘Ulysses’ and exhibitionism and incest
in 'Finnegans wake'. Insanity, Neurosis and sexual perversions like Masochism are represented in 'Ulysses'. Both these novels bear the impact of Jung's collective unconscious. Joyce's 'Ulysses' introduces Greek mythology in it. Leopold Bloom is Ulysses and Molly Bloom is Penelope, his wife. They represent the archetypal man and woman. The dream in 'Finnegan's wake' is juxtaposed with myth.

D.H. Lawrence had his own views of the unconscious where in he emphasised the role of the instinctive life of man and propounded his theory of blood conscious. He studied mythology, theology and yoga to fathom the mysteries of the unconscious. His novels 'Women in Love', 'The Plumed Serpent' and 'The Woman Who Rode Away' conform to the Jungian psychology of collective unconsciousness.

During the early sixties in Kerala both the creative writers and their reading audience were in a state of transition from sociological realism to psychological realism. Kerala was experiencing powerful political changes brought about by attitudinal and ideological shifts. Society showed strong and visible changes resulting in the decline of certain traditional practices. The Nair community was one of those which were the worst hit economically and psychologically. The 'janmi' and 'kudiyan' practice disappeared due to the land reform acts and gave way to arable lands owned by the once peasants. As a result, the Nair tharawads had to let go its authority and supremacy over the less fortunate. The foundations of the tharawad system had started shaking bringing down ancestral pomp and glory. M.T took to writing when the Nair tharawads were reeling under the pressure of steady and strong social changes.
M.T like his predecessors did not attempt to portray the sociological aspects of the community in its hard times. He rather essayed to portray the psychological traumas, unspeakable sufferings and silent sorrows experienced by individual men and women of the Nair community, thereby tried to fathom the depth of the enigmatic inner self individually. M.T was extremely fortunate in being at the right place, at the right time, with the right attitude towards literature.

(The West had already perfected appropriate tools and techniques a writer may need for getting a glimpse into the hidden aspects of human psyche. Freud, Jung, Adler, William James and Bergson have convinced men of letters that man’s mind is the most fascinating theme for literary produce. Henry James, Joseph Conrad, William Faulkner, D.H. Lawrence, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce have also invented techniques and used them with individual variations to assess and analyse, to fathom and familiarise, to understand and accommodate human mind at its best as well as worst. They had also prepared their readers to become active participants in the common quest for the complete comprehension of the human mind. These writers had even trained meticulous and methodically in accepting baffling changes in the graphic representation of mental proceedings. Dropping of punctuation marks, use of dots and dashes etc were some of the desperate experimental attempts made by these masters of psychological fiction to draw literature as close as possible to life.)

M.T received the tested and time proven tools of narrative techniques from his Western acharyas and applied them to his analysis of the psyche of an ordinary man in the soil of Kerala. M.T’s genius takes the fullest credit of using the literary techniques to their optimum capacity. Until the arrival of ‘Manju’ in 1984,
a psychoanalytical approach to the musings of the unconscious mind was unknown to the reading audience of Malayalam literature. M.T was the earliest of most demanding writers who refused to use easy methods that assured immediate understanding to the reader. He rather insisted on his reader acquiring the basic requirements that would make him eligible to be M.T’s reader. M.T shook his reader vigorously out of his passivity. Appreciation and aesthetic delight became rewards to win which the reader had to work. Undoubtedly M.T attempted to elevate the status of his reading audience to world class.

‘Naalukettu’ throws light upon the psyche of the protagonist who is a rejected representative of a Nair tharawad. Appunni is the symbol of the agonies and aspirations of an unwanted nephew in a matriarchal family. Insults, provocations, domestic banishment and emotional estrangement experienced by a sensitive fatherless child are projected through the character of Appunni. The mysterious mental world of an idiot boy is expressed through the character of Velayudhan in ‘Iruttinde Atmavu’. The emotionally impoverished and an essentially escapist’s psyche are exhibited through the character of Karunakaran Master in Vanaprastham.

M.T gains allowance to enter into the inner psyche of these individuals through the Single Point of View technique. The vision and perception of these individuals and their assessment of others may not surely be complete or comprehensive. Yet it is the most effective tool because the protagonists are projecting their emotional lives from their personal points of view. The readers may choose to disagree with the verdicts and versions of these characters, yet they cannot deny the truth that they were allowed to stay as confidants to these protagonists. M.T, the conscious artist thus selects a vantage point from which, according to his judgment, the action of the story could be
best seen and felt. He has also enabled his reader to confront and experience life directly without the authorial intrusion to distract attention and concentration. Through the Single Point of View, M.T has undoubtedly enhanced the intensity of his reader’s aesthetic enjoyment.

M.T himself has accepted that ‘Manju’ was a difficult and challenging novella to him. Its first version left him extremely dissatisfied compelling him to render it in a more condensed form. His artistic intuition instructed him to eliminate everything that may interfere with achieving the organic unity of the novella. M.T as a Stream of Consciousness novelist represents the chaotic states of mind of Vimala with its incoherence in Manju. The mind of the protagonist is permanently in a state of timelessness and M.T presents her personality in a ceaseless flow of varying thoughts. The concept of timelessness of time can be too difficult for an unprepared reader to comprehend. Superficial or single reading of ‘Manju’ may be of no avail to a reader who refuses to undertake intellectual exertions. Manju presents the pre-speech level of Vimala and the genius of the writer surfaces when he includes the speeches of Sudhir Kumar Misra in the pre-speech of Vimala. M.T deliberately distances himself from conventional narration thereby becoming more demanding and compelling. The reader is given no support what so ever from the author. Vimala reviews her past and future which are perpetually present in her present.

M.T in ‘Manju’ presents both the controlled and considered thoughts of Vimala as well as the uncontrolled flow of memories. Her mental states are always changing making repetition impossible. Yet, one mental state penetrates into the other, promoting a relay race of rapid reviews and retrospections. Vimala is in a chaotic flux of memories in a ceaseless flow. Stream of Consciousness technique is
the only tool which can convincingly communicate to the reader the artistic experience of the author. M.T makes a generous use of various aspects of the technique in evolving an insight into Vimala's mind. Her present is not an isolated affair as it is the lingering of the past and the continuation of the future. Through the direct and indirect interior monologues, Vimala's composed state of consciousness, moods and memories, desires and depressions surface and show that they are in constant state of transformation. M.T's handling of the technique envisages his mastery as a conscious craftsman.

'Vilapayatra' as a work of fiction places considerable burden upon the reader because the novel's real theme is not explicit. M.T uses challenging method of narration, the Multiple Points of View that takes the reader closer to the characters, closer to the reality of consciousness. The seemingly simple subject matter like the brothers' meeting at the ancestral house to take part in the funeral rites of their father is approached by M.T in a unique way where he shifts from one character to another informing the reader what each one is thinking and how each one assesses his father. Multiple Points of View is a technique popularised by Faulkner and in M.T's hands it educates the reader with the fact that the whole truth can be understood only when the reader along with the characters gets over his limiting sensibilities, predilections and obsessions. This method is not only unique but also is very convincing in helping the reader to listen to various points of view before passing his verdict. This technique becomes a sustaining medium that provides a rich dividend of aesthetic delight. Strangely, Narayanan Nair, the father character who is dead, controls every aspect of the novel by remaining adamantly alive in the memories of the sons.
Life as projected in ‘Vilapayatra’ appears to be a cruel joke. The absurdity of the emotion expended by each son on the occasion accounts for everything when they all disperse after one of them commenting that their father was a hypocrite. M.T by constantly shifting from one mind to another presents the diverse attitudes and responses to life each individual cherishes. Multiple Points of View proves to be the most congenial tool for M.T who delighted in the microscopic analysis of man’s mind. This kaleidoscopic viewpoints on one central situation bring out both the best and the worst of those involved in an unhappy private family event.

Man’s psyche is undoubtedly the most absorbing subject for study. Its boundless variety, innumerable shades of emotions, inexplicable fears and doubts and inexhaustible passions baffle every avid learner of human psyche. Mythology is a rich reservoir of all the above mentioned aspects of man’s mind. Mythology pulsates with powerful characters that represent both the conscious and the unconscious. They project both individual and collective emotional requirements and intellectual aspirations of humanity as a race. Some of the mythological characters continue to remain the emblems of collective unconscious. Bhimasena of Mahabharatha emotes and acts, believes and behaves like a Demigod and not like an ordinary man. But M.T’s Bhima is demythified and demystified. He is a representative of those men who are emotionally intelligent. Until the arrival of M.T’s Bhima, readers never had a chance of coming across a character who could command reverence and respect, compassion and commendation all at once. M.T’s Bhima is humanised so as to humanise the readers. His stately bearing is not born of physical might but of integrity and empathetic attitude expressed in every ambience.
Direct interior monologue and indirect interior monologue render M.T ample scope to examine the emotional inner self of Bhima. *Randamoozham* is thoroughly unconventional in its structure and technique though M.T has taken up a theme handed over by tradition. Most remarkably M.T dramatises the feelings of his Bhima making him dynamic, who is always growing and changing, viable and mutable. Bhima often falls into retrospection, peeps into his memory and gets carried away by the uncontrolled flow of thought. M.T by presenting a new Bhima creates enough room to accommodate new projections of all the characters that play crucial role in Bhima’s emotional life. Draupadi and Kunti, the two most powerful women who decide the destiny of almost every other character assume new proportions under M.T’s treatment. Draupadi is pictured as one torn between strong likes and dislikes while Kunti is portrayed as a women with extraordinary capacity to bury great secrets regarding royal lineage, which may cause political pandemonium, deep down her conscience. M.T’s scholarships is the various versions of Mahabharata and his undying hunger for complete awareness of human mind enabled him to efficiently use mythology as a narrative technique.

Art should have a close correspondence with life in order to be meaningful. Hence an author’s attempt to project his vision offering new insights into life warrants unique artistic techniques. Though technique is not an end, it is necessarily a means with potent instrumental functions. Technical skill however extraordinary and wonderful it may be becomes meaningless and cumbersome if it fails to convey equally extraordinary insights into human life and experience. Hence the significance of a technique is always in relation to the rendering of various human experiences and the effective communication of the same to the reader. The impact of such techniques
on the creative genius of men of letters is worth exploring only when they help the readers in understanding, appreciating and evaluating a work of art better.

The main concern of this study is to examine the various ways in which writers of psychological fiction handled new techniques to fathom the enigmatic inner-self of man. Writers of psychological fiction have consistently and consciously been experimenting with new techniques to keep alive themselves and their readers to the evolutionary process of man's mind. Hence it becomes imperative for the reader to comprehend along with the writer the importance of "the writer selecting the appropriate angle of vision from which he will best be able to illuminate and interpret his material and most important of all, make it seem authentic".

The present study examines the Western impact on the techniques of M.T. in his fiction. M.T is greatly responsible for raising Malayalam fiction to the level of art form. His lyrical prose, concern and compassion for fellow beings, his skill in controlling and shaping his material, and infinite insight into the workings of human mind have enabled him to excel as a writer of psychological realism. As an avid reader and an enthusiastic experimenter with techniques he had enjoyed and was enthralled by the masterpieces of his western acharyas. He is the earliest psychological realist of Malayalam fiction who manipulated with the western techniques like the Single Point of View, the Stream of Consciousness, Multiple Points of View and use of Myth to communicate to the reader the meaning and significance of his art. M.T is ever in a relentless search for artistic control of the medium. His works are replete with daring experiments in the use of techniques propounded by the west. But M.T is no mere imitator. The excellence of a technique is not in itself but only in its artistic execution. M.T the master craftsman has put these
techniques to brilliant use to excite the aesthetic sensitivity of his elite reading audience of Malayalam literature now and for ever. Future researchers may do well to take up studies in the masterpieces of regional literature and highlight the artistic magnificence of the master literary craftsmen of our mother land. India has always been generous and plentiful in her literary produce and a healthy traffic of literary works across the nations and continents will be a panacea for many a mental ailment suffered by humanity.
NOTES


2 Ibid. 6.


7 Ibid. 179.
