1. THE DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

As a literary type the dramatic monologue is a comparatively new comrade. It has its antecedents in the soliloquy of the Elizabethan play. In a dramatic monologue, a single speaker reveals his own personality or mind or tells his experience in a particular dramatic situation to a listener or to a group of listeners. It is the poetic form that is essentially a tabloid play.

Robert Browning wrote many poems of this kind, where he 'discarded the simulation of the painted scene' to 'take for a nobler stage of the soul itself'. Though he was not the first to use this form, he made the best use of it by combining dramatic immediacy with psychological penetration.

The main attributes of this poetic form are (1) a single person, other than the poet himself, speaking at a critical
moment. (2) The chosen dramatic moment or crisis in the speaker's life is a crucible in which his character is melted till all the scum is separated from the scintillating gold. This can be illustrated with the help of some of Browning's poems. In Andrea del Sarto, Andrea is face to face with the tremendous tragedy of his personal and artistic life when the grey evening sky opens the dark night of his soul and mind. 

1. THE DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

As a literary type the dramatic monologue is a comparatively new comer. It has its antecedents in the soliloquy of the Elizabethan play. In a dramatic monologue, a single speaker reveals his own personality or mind or tells his experience in a particular dramatic situation to a listener or to a group of listeners. It is not a static bit of narration but a dynamic revelation of a soul in action. A dramatic monologue, is, therefore, said to represent in brief compass what is essentially a tabloid play.

(3) The speaker addresses one or more other persons, whose Robert Browning wrote many poems of this kind, where the "discarded the simulation of the painted scene" to "take for a nobler stage of the soul itself." Though he was not the first to use this form, he made the best use of it by combining dramatic immediacy with psychological penetration. The speaker's style of relating what he desires to say, is controlled to a great extent. The main attributes of this poetic form are (1) A single person, other than the poet himself, speaking at a critical
moment. (2) The chosen dramatic moment or crisis in the
speaker’s life is a crucible in which his character is
melted till all the scum is separated from the brittle
gold. This can be illustrated with the help of some of
Browning’s poems. In Andrea del Sarto, Andrea is face to
face with the tremendous tragedy of his personal and
artistic life when the grey evening grows upon his mind
just as upon the surrounding scenery. In Fra Lippo Lippi,
the monk stands with the hand of the policemen on his
throat, because he has stirred out into the street at
midnight. In The Bishop Orders his Tomb, the Bishop
is at the point of death after a long life of voluptuous
and opulent indulgence. All are situations critical enough
to throw up the character and achievement of the speakers.
(3) The monologue is so contrived that the main focus
addresses one or more other persons,
whose presence gives additional depth and meaning to what
the speaker is saying, by unspoken but clearly understood
life-story in condensed within the few lines of the mono-
responses. Andrea talks to his wife. Fra Lippo Lippi
logues. Thus Andrea narrates the sad tale of his past
explains himself to the policeman; the Bishop speaks to his
failures as an artist and a lover. Fra Lippo Lippi narrates
sone. The listener though without a speaking part, plays
the story how he was a loutling, brought up in a convent,
a very vital role in the dialogue. The speaker’s style of
relating what he desires to say, is controlled to a great
extent by the kind of listener he has at the moment. In
a soliloquy, the speech is made, as it were to nobody at all, the audience in the theatre may be merely said to overhear the soliloquist thinking aloud. It is said that a dramatic monologue is like overhearing one end of a telephonic conversation. Though we see and hear but one person, we are aware that the talk is shaped to a certain extent by the personality at the other end of the line.

We know the auditor's presence; but, who he is and what he says or does, we understand only by the clues in the discourse of the speaker. In Browning's Andrea del Sarto the painter Andrea's wife Lucrezia never says a word — but she has a more intensive physical presence in the poem than many of the dramatic personae in a famous play.

(4) The monologue is so contrived that the main focus is on the interesting temperament or character revealed by the dramatic speaker — through narrative talk — a whole life-story is condensed within the few lines of the monologue. Thus Andrea narrates the sad tale of his past failures as an artist and a lover. Fra Lippo Lippi narrates the story how he was a fondling, brought up in a convent, dramatic monologue must have not only a speaker other than where he was compelled to paint, saints and saints saints and saints and saints only and how he escaped out into the street to hear young girls singing in joy. The Bishop reveals his indulgent and sensuous life of jealousy and rivalry,
of his stealing of the Lapis Lazuli (a mineral), his love for the tall lady with her talking eyes, and his desire to be buried in the particular corner of the church.

Even in the Elizabethan dramatic soliloquy made its point by direct statement, the principal device of Browning's dramatic monologue is dramatic irony. The speaker is never fully aware of the implication what he is saying or thinking and reveals to the reader dimensions of his own personality which were better hid. For instance, the Duke of My Last Duchess shows his own cruelty and avarice, laying them bare to the go-between in the new marriage settlement he is trying so eagerly to arrange. Browning's dramatic monologues draw their effect not from the mere revelation of an individual mind but from an entire dramatic context, which is established by the words of a single speaker and supplemented by setting, audience and the adept use of nuances of language.

To sum up, the four main characteristics, the dramatic monologue must have not only a speaker other than the poet, but also a listener, an occasion and some interplay

---

1. Lapis Lazuli — A bright blue stone — used by Egyptians and Greeks and other ancient people for ornaments.
between the speaker and the listener. The poem that satisfies all these four criteria and could be termed a 'typical' dramatic monologue and that which has only three of the necessary criteria, 'a formal monologue'. This classification leads to difficulties because it does not then cover even all the dramatic monologues of Robert Browning and Lord Tennyson. Browning's Childe Roland and Tennyson's St. Simeon Stylites have only the dramatised speaker and the

Therefore, purely reflective and lyrical than narrative or descriptive, Childe Roland to The Dark Tower Came, is the story of a Knight who has undertaken a pilgrimage to a certain dark tower, the way to which is full of difficulties and dangers and the right road quite unknown to the Knight. Those who had preceded him on the path had all failed; but inspite of despair he is impelled to go on. The he meets a hoary Cripple, and after overcoming nightmarish experience ultimately he reaches the Tower. "Childe Roland", says stopford A. Brooke, "is nothing more than a gallop over the moorlands of imagination."

One of the most really dramatic of Tennyson's poems, theological in theme. It is a conventional liberal Protestant attack upon asceticism in its extreme. "It is so ably, so robustly and yet so delicately done that its spirit and its qualities belong to the whole range of ascetics, from Stylites down to the slightest sunder of flesh". Stopford A. Brooke.

In The State of Experience, Longfellow calls of Stylites and Childe Roland to The Dark Tower, thus as approximations.
occasion. Yet they are among the best and the most famous of all dramatic monologues.

Browning's Rabbi Ben Azra is a dramatic monologue by virtue of its title only. Otherwise it is a direct statement of a philosophical idea, because there is no characterisation or setting. Because the statement is not conditioned by a speaker and situation, there is no way of apprehending it other than intellectually. The poem is, therefore, purely reflective and lyrical than narrative or dramatic.

Because of these difficulties, instead of grouping the various dramatic monologues into two water-tight compartments as 'typical' and 'formal' Robert Langbaum prefers to classify them as typical monologues and approximations. He defends it, saying that the other classification would ignore the importance of the 20th Century poets like Yeats, Eliot, Pound, Frost and others who have taken some liberty with the form as perfected by Browning.

Mere mechanical resemblance is not what matters in judging a good dramatic monologue. It is when we look inside,
when we consider its effects, its way of experiencing meaning, that decide if it is ripe for judgement. Sometimes we welcome as particularly illuminating some of the 'approximations', because without the mechanical resemblance, they give the same effect as the so-called 'typical' dramatic monologues.

An excellent example of this type of poem is afforded by Browning's *My Last Duchess*. The speaker is a stern, severe, Italian nobleman who is about to marry the daughter of a rich count, to whose agent he is speaking in the picture gallery. The ambassador has perhaps asked what the picture was, hidden behind the curtain, which the Duke had not drawn. This query has provoked the answer, which the poem gives. It is the portrait of his last duchess, for he is a widower. Then he tells his companion of 'the depth and passion of her earnest glance', which was not reserved for her husband alone, but the slightest courtesy was.

---

5. In a Marton Lecture of 1925 which remains the best study of the dramatic monologue, M.W. MacCallum sees sympathy as its way of meaning; "But in every instance............ the object of the dramatic monologue is to give facts from within. A certain dramatic understanding of the person speaking, which implies a certain dramatic sympathy with him, is not only the essential condition, but the final cause of the whole species" - M.W. MacCallum - *The Dramatic Monologue in the Victorian Period*, p. 14.
sufficient to call up 'that spot of joy' into her face. 'Her heart' said the duke 'was too soon made glad; too easily impressed'. She smiled on her husband (she was his property and that was right). She smiled on others (on everyone in fact) and that was an infringement of the rights of property which this dealer in human souls could not brook; so he 'gave commands', 'then all smiles stopped together'. The concentrated tragedy of this line is a good example of the poet's power of grouping a whole life story into two or three words. Then they go down, the Duke and the agent, and as they descend he discusses the question of dowry he is to receive with the woman who is to succeed his last duchess.

Most characteristic of Tennyson's monologues is a certain scoreless, a longing for rest through added. This emotional bias is presented in Titrone and the Charlie song? Duke's character (At the kindest interpretation, his character is that of a cold-blooded, loveless egotist), his jealousy, greed and lust and also throws some light on the nature of Duchess - a noble soul and her gentle nature misunderstood by the sordid Duke. It is one of the greatest dramatic monologues in all literature, because so profound and so astonishing a life-drama has been

7. Song of The Lotek - over (Companions of Ulysses) the faultlessly expressed in fifty six lines.
Tennyson developed a form that resembled the dramatic monologue in *Ulysses, Tithonus* and other poems. Both Browning and Tennyson started dramatic monologues as a reaction against the romantic confessional style. But their methods were different. Browning always sought for extraordinary motives that come from the highest moral and intellectual refinement. Tennyson never looked for them. Tennyson’s dramatic monologues are much simpler than Browning’s. They also depend upon setting. Unlike Browning, Tennyson does not create original characters in original situations. He is content with familiar situations. Tennyson also relies more freely than Browning upon direct statement to make his point known. *Ulysses* for instance proclaims a view of life. Most characteristic of Tennyson’s monologues is a certain life-weariness, a longing for rest through oblivion. This emotional bias, is presented in *Tithonus* and *The Choric Song*.

---

6. According to Greek legend, Aurora, goddess of Dawn, was enamoured of a young man, Tithonus, and asked Zeus, King of gods, to give him immortality. Her request was granted, but the boon was in vain, for he was not given immortal youth. Immortality for men without youth, and with its memories, is an accursed gift. Tennyson uses this theme with exquisite tenderness for men.

7. Song of the Lotus-eaters (Companions of Ulysses) who had rejected life for infantile voluptuousness.
with an over richness of landscape, imagery and cadence.
The same weariness and longing for rest is the emotional
bias of 'Ulysses' also, the finest of his dramatic monologues.
Here the Greek hero speaks at a crucial moment of his
career reveals much of his character in the process, but it
is not until almost the end of the poem that we are
conscious of the comrades he is addressing, and even then we
learn very little about them.

Extra-ordinary moral positions and extra-ordinary
emotions make up the characteristic subject-matter of the
dramatic monologues written after Browning and Tennyson.
Swinburne's dramatic monologues (A Hymn to Proserpine,
Faustine, Itylus) follow the style of Tennyson, exploiting
extra-ordinary emotions, especially the Tennysonian
longing for oblivion. Again it is proportionately as
important in T. S. Eliot's hands as in Browning's. In
fact Eliot has contributed more to the development of
the form than any poet since Browning. He has increased
its economy of expression and intensity of feeling by
employing a good deal of symbolism in its development.
'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' is a good example
of the use of symbolism to give an added dimension to
the character revelation of the dramatic poem. The Journey
of 

the 

of A Song of Simon are also good dramatic 

monologues.

This English poetic form also has found favour with 

many Malayalam poets. A study of some Malayalam dramatic 

monologues will reveal how the poets have tried to imitate 

it with success very often. For convenience they could be 

classified as typical ones and approximations as has been 

done by Robert Langbaum. Through a study of some English 

dramatic monologues he has shown how some of the approximations 

have the same illuminating effect as the so called typical 

ones, if not more.

(1) Asanne Marana Chinta Satakam.

K.C. Kesava Pillai’s Chinta Satakam (1895) (Thoughts 
of a dying Man) is a new venture in Malayalam poetry. It 
marks a significant departure from the practice of composing 
poems on generic puranic (mythological) themes on 
traditional methods. It is evidently new in theme and 
treatment. The long monologue has a dramatic setting 
imitating the technique of Robert Browning. It begins 
without the usual formal invocation. The theme is introduced 

8. This poem was judged the best in a poetic contest held by 

the Bhaskaposhini Sabha, a literary society.
straightway. The hundred and odd stanzas sum up the whole
gamut of feelings that flash through the mind of a dying
man, bidding farewell to the comforts and glories of the
material world. The poet also frees his poem from a
lavish use of traditional figures of speech and introduces
new ones like personification. The parting words of the
old man to his 'bed and pillows', give a striking example
of this device.

O! my bed, my dear bed,

Crested You've me so long, so lovingly
Gave me joy to my heart's fill
Relieved me of all my burden of sorrow
Let me bid you to-day for ever
A sad Virgilian farewell.

This poem can be taken as the first approximate attempt at
the dramatic monologue form. Though it has not all the
essential qualities required for this pattern, it has a
certain distinctive characteristics which claim our
attention. Except for the first stanza where the poet
introduces the old man and the last in which he generalises,
the rest of the poem is in the good tradition of this
English poetic form.

9. Translation, cf. the Original Text in the end, No.2.
It will be seen from the following analytical study that the poem has a dramatic situation and a speaker. Though the active presence of a listener or more is not suggested, the poem can still be considered an approximation to a dramatic monologue. In this context it has to be remembered that in Rabbi Ben Ezra, the Jewish scholar addresses the youth in general. There is no active listener in the poem, yet it is considered to be a good dramatic monologue.

The speaker of the poem is a pious old man in his death-bed. His dying speech is a penetrating study of emotions which welter in his mind, now that his natural forces are too enfeebled to restrain them. The thoughts freely expressed in a critical moment in his life give a clue to his life and character. His wife and children, it may be presumed, are at the bed-side; though it is not stated so. The speech reveals a love of material life with all its glories and luxuries. The old man is unwilling to leave the world. But he knows he has to bow to the inevitable. He reviews his past failures and successes. Remembers his duties as a father, as a husband and as a local leader; how they will all suffer when he goes from this world. Fear of death haunts his mind but finds
consoling desire for a monument and the life-long envy of consolation in the words of the sages about re-birth. He pictures in his mind the funeral ceremonies, the subsequent bereavement of the family. The poet presents, with such a masterly insight into human psychology, the entire thoughts and feelings that flood the mind of the dying man, that the reader is at once moved to quick sympathy for the departing soul.

Browning's dramatic monologue. The Bishop Orders his Tomb at St. Francis's Church resembles Kesava Pillai's poem in its dramatic context, and in the love of material pleasures revealed by the speakers. The worldly-minded Bishop in the poem 'lies in his state-chamber dying by degrees'. He has much to tell his sons. He is not at all anxious to leave a life which he has found very satisfactory for a future state about which he has neither anxiety nor concern. He tells them that he has been a Don Juan with many hearts broken to his credit; he has jealous quarrels for wealth and position and power. Even at the moment of death his desire is that his tomb should occupy a more prominent place than that of his rival's, it should be splendid in design and rich in ornament. Round this

10. Don Juan, the hero of Byron's epic satire of that name is a charming, handsome and unprincipled young man, who delights in succumbing to the beautiful women he meets.
consuming desire for a monument and the life-long envy of
his ancient rival Gandolf, cluster the passions and thoughts
of the dying man. These reveal a pagan and humanistic
Bishop, his life indirectly tells us of the baseness of
indulgent and epicurean existence. The poet also intended
it to be a satire on the Renaissance epoch which though it
did good service to humanity in thousand ways, was much more
concerned with flesh than spirit.

K.C. Kesava Pillai too must have intended his poem
as a mild satire at the outlook of the old men of his time,
which was more material than spiritual.

(2) Ghinta Vishtayya Sita (Reverie of Sita):

In form, Kumaran Asan's Sita may be grouped with
Browning's Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister or Tennyson's
St. Simon Stylites for they are poems with only the
dramatised speaker and the occasion. The entire poem
'Sita' is not cast in the dramatic monologue form, but
a major part of it, excluding a few stanzas at the beginning
and some at the end, is an excellent approximation
to this new pattern.

Browning's Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister is not a
soliloquy at all, but a dramatic monologue. Though Brother
Lawrence does not hear the imprecations of his colleague (the Spanish monk) directed against him, the speaker is entirely absorbed in them and manages to communicate about Brother Lawrence and himself. While the speaker prides himself on his piety, he makes clear that he is a religious hypocrite.

Tennyson's *St. Simeon Stylites* is also a dramatic monologue, though no one hears it. The utterance of St. Simeon is strategic. Though he is praying and arguing his way into heaven, he wishes to be understood in a way other than he intends.

As an approximation to a dramatic monologue Asan's 'Sita' resembles Tennyson's *Ulysses* in many respects. As in *Ulysses* here also the speaker is drawn from the classical legend - from the Hindu epic Ramayana. The speaker - Sita - speaks at a critical moment of her career, reveals much of her character in the process. The deserted wife is a victim of the surge and swell of pent-up emotions, thoughts and memories of a long period of 12 years of separated life. As in *Ulysses* (who in old age aspires for more adventure) also it is a kind of emotion with unnatural intensity, that we come across, which may be even
considered morbid because it is in excess of rational motive. Again in Ulysses Tennyson's purpose is to proclaim a view of life—mankind's need to pursue knowledge and experience in spite of danger. For this purpose, Tennyson uses not the Ulysses of Homer, who wished only to reach home and rest, but the Ulysses who appears in Dante's Inferno, urging his men to voyage onward for ever, because it is in the nature of mankind never to rest from travel. Similarly, Asen's Sita who subjects her husband to a cross-examination, is to a great extent a mouth-piece of the poet's views on the ups and downs of matrimonial relationships. That is why these thoughts appear strange to her epic character.

Sita's outburst is, therefore, not to be understood as true or false but as characteristic. The sudden change in mood in her speech is only typical of the fickleness of the human mind, particularly in a predicament. She has been wronged undeservedly and it is natural that she turns a rebel, aggressive and unabashed. But it is certain, that the poet never expected her character to be so understood. The basis in the style of address, the unpremeditated outburst, as in the Spanish Cloister and Simeon Stylites
corresponds to the particularity of the perspective. It is this absorption in the particular perspective that makes the speaker's self-revelation incidental to her purpose.

She compromises with the ordinances of society. Because duties must give way to the personal love of her man, she gives way to the love of country, and nothing should interfere with larger issues of life. She also turns this a serious thought: the laws of piety.

The ordinary mood is that of the forsaken Sita.

What comes from her are the complaints of an afflicted wife. It is the rebel in her that puts Rama in the witness box and bids a graceful good-bye to everything near and dear and subjects him to a severe cross examination. She knows that it is the jealous and the scandalous world that next morning she reconciles the son to a husband. There she urged her husband to abandon her despite the great 'fire-test'.

In a mood of undisguised moral indignation she questions the justness of her husband's action.

Has not this mean act
Confirmed the scandal about me,
Of the fear-blind king
What a hurry to save your skin.11

But, the past twelve years of her stay with the Sage Valmiki made her almost a hermitess. She had acquired saintly qualities capable of transcending earthly passions and desires.

11. Translation, cf. the Original Text at the end, No.65.
This 'idealistic' mind now asserts itself and she repairs to a calm of resignation. She does not yearn for a reunion with her husband nor does she find any blemish in his character. She compromises with the ordinance of destiny. "Lesser duties must give way to the greater, love of wife must give way to the love of country, and nothing should obscure the larger issues of life." See Sita in this noble frame of mind; she is all alone in a far off hermitage, for no fault of hers. She reached the hermitage thousands ago. 

How sad are the ways of justice, 
The kings also are fettered fast. 
My lord had to banish me 
And be my idolater.12

Finally, Sita overcomes the tumult of her earlier passions and bids a graceful good-bye to everything near and dear in this world, including her lord, king Raghava. Next morning she accompanies the sage to Ayodhya. There, she goes to the presence of the king and his courtiers and glances for a short while the remorseful face of Rama. As a climax to the swelling emotions and their conflict in her mind, next moment, she sets free her struggling soul from the 'prison-house'.

(5) Karuna Ghagga (The Master Carpenter):

A certain sympathy with the speaker is not only the essential condition, but the final cause of a dramatic of a good dramatic monologue. But for the brief interrup-
monologue. This final cause is very well achieved in 'sita'.

sita should have normally adorned the royal palace of
Ayodhya, but for her misfortunes. And now;

The blooming branches of 'vaka' tree
spread a canopy over her head
The bed, she sits and thinks, is made
Of grasses green and blue in hue. 13

...The psychological study of a tragic rivalry between a father
she is all alone in a far off hermitage, for no fault of
and his son, with perfect detachment and objectivity,
hers. She reached the hermitage twelve years ago ......
...the sage would soon come back with an expected message,
and she should then decide to go or not to go to Ayodhya.

A really embarrassing position. The reader's heart goes out
in full sympathy to the plight of the deserted consort.

Asan has evidently followed in this poem the English
tradition of exploiting extra-ordinary emotions and
especially the Tennysonian longing for eternal-rest through
oblivion.

(3) Perum thechan (The Master Carpenter):

Perum thechan fulfils most of the essential characteristics
of a good dramatic monologue. But for the brief interrup-

13. Translation: cf. the Original Text at the end, No.67.
The father he soon learned the art and became even a greater

tion of the auditor in the end; it would have been a
typical imitation of the form perfected by Browning.

The poet, G. Sankara Kurup, tells here the story of an
old carpenter, belonging to the magnificent cycle of folk-
legends about the twelve children of the Brahmin Vararuchi
and his untouchable wife. It is a remarkable
psychological study of a tragic rivalry between a father
and his son. With perfect detachment and objectivity,
the speaker (i.e., the Master Carpenter), reconstructs his
past to pass a judgement on his achievement.

The master carpenter is the speaker of the poem.
He is one of the twelve sons of Vararuchi who killed his
own son out of sheer professional jealousy. The listener
is his wife Nani. It is several years after the terrible
tragedy. The old man is in the sick-bed. A certain
sense of relief, from the rheumatic ills he had been
suffering from, makes him mentally alert. Successive waves
of thought about the past flash through his mind, which
reveals his life and character.

The carpenter’s story illustrates the fact that

The carpenter was a very popular craftsman. People
hailed his artistic genius. A son was then born to him
who turned out to be a chip of the old block. Taking after
the father he soon learned the art and became even a greater genius than the father. This was the beginning of the birth of jealousy in the parent's heart. And the crisis came when the ruler of the land asked him to build a palace in consultation with his son. Accordingly both were on duty. The father was on the roof, on a beam and the son just below it. The 'green-eyed monster', jealousy at once possessed the old man. A week moment in his life and alas! he dropped the sharp chisel from his hand and it fell on the neck of the unsuspecting son below, cutting it clean into two pieces. A gruesome tragedy indeed! The world took the event for an accident. But the master carpenter alone knew that it was a 'deliberate slip'. The whole event passed through his mind. A tear drop rolls down the cheek. He complaints to his wife that the house is full of dust. Then comes the explanation from the old man women that the beams have not been dusted for long. The very mention of the word beam sends a shock of guilty memory through his whole body. And the reflection ends abruptly without any confession.

The carpenter's story illustrates the fact that nature is pretty much the same under whatever conditions we examine it evil passions find their congenial soil in all minds, they know no barriers. The same idea is to be
found in *The Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister* by Browning. The speaker of this monologue is a Spanish monk. He is filled with hatred and jealousy for the saintly Brother Lawrence, whose chief worldly interest lies in his flowers and trees. The monk reveals his coarse and evil mind in his mutterings against the good brother. In petty ways he annoys the co-brother by mangling his fruits and flowers. He even speculates on the likelihood of securing his eternal damnation by putting in his way 'a scrofulous French novel'. His evil meditations are broken by the Vesper bell, and full uncharitableness the old hypocrite shuffles off to prayers. A theme that shows how, to inferior and evil natures, the lofty and noble soul is generally an object of hatred and jealousy.

Most successful dramatic monologues of Browning deal with such reprehensible characters. He delighted in making a case for the apparently immoral position. This combination of the aesthete and the villain creates an especially strong tension in *My Last Duchess*, in *Porphyria's Lover* and in *The Bishop Orders his Tomb*. The Duke, the lover of Porphyria and the Bishop are all Machiavellians who defend themselves by an amoral casuistry. No less criminal is the act
of the master carpenter who kills his son to uphold his 'prestige' in profession. An extra-ordinary moral position indeed. The repentant sinner, afterwards threw his axe into the western sea and sat for years on its shore in meditation. And then emerged from the sea the land called 'Kerala' which he modelled according to his ideas. But that land now

(4) Mazhuvinte Katha (The story of the Axe):

"It's people rebel" he says:

This poem by Nalapat Balamani Asma is yet another good example of a dramatic monologue, without a listener. It has a dramatised speaker. The speaker is Parasurama, the legendary founder of the land of Kerala and the son of the great Brahmin sayyed, Jamadagni. The occasion is centuries after his eventful life. He is seated on the top of the Mahendra Mountain, gazing intently at the land of his creation and contemplating on the past and the present.

He remembers how God Siva blessed him with an axe to hack out vice wherever it is found. Its first victim was his own mother, whom he killed at the father's order on a charge of immoral thoughts. Distressed in mind he wandered around the land. When he returned, he found his father's hermitage looted and attacked. The angry son's retaliation measures soon opened up a dark chapter in Kerala history. The Kshathriya King Kartha Veeryarjuna was killed.
through narrative talk is not very popular in Malayalam poetry. His descendants killed Jamadagni in return. Following this, the furious Parasurama annihilated the entire Kshatriya class. The repentant sinner, afterwards threw his axe into the western sea and sat for years on its shore in meditation. And then emerged from the sea the land called 'Kerala' which he modelled according to his ideas. But that land now does not remember him who was only a symbol of violence. 'Its people revel' he says:

Not for me;
Not for this warrior ever haunted by memories of past crimes,
But for Mahabali, who found strength in humility
And saw the Lord in the foot that pressed him down, 14

social life, Christopher Stone writes: 'Ridicule is society's most effective means of curing insensitivity. Parasurama, the hero of the story of the Axe was a legendary warrior. So was Ulysses, the great Greek It explodes the pompous, corrodes the well-meaning eccentric, goads the fanatical and prevents the incorruptible warrior. Tennyson's fine dramatic monologue is based on from achieving success. Truth will prevail over it, false this warrior's brave exploits. The hero holds out death in one form or another as the irresistible inevitable goal of the journey. A weariness and a longing for rest is his emotional bias. This will often cause a government to abandon a bill, a lover is couched in the contrasting language of adventure, giving an added complexity of meaning to the poem. The case of the warrior Parasurama is not different. He too reveals a deep longing for rest from a life of violence and adventures.

Christopher Stone, Parady, p.6.

This intense and dynamic fashion of revealing character
through narrative talk is now very popular in Malayalam poetry. After the English tradition poets like N.V. Krishna Warrier Vyloppilil Sreedhara Menon and many others have presented in their poems characters in extra-ordinary situations who extemporise their ecstatic experiences.

2. SATIRIC POETRY

Satire can be a literary form and use various approaches and techniques. Often these have

About the paramount influence that satire¹ has on social life, Christopher Stone writes: 'Ridicule is society's most effective means of curing inelasticity. It explodes the pompous, corrects the well-meaning eccentric, cools the fanatical and prevents the incompetent from achieving success. Truth will prevail over it, falsehood will cower under it; and it is well-known that when reason, indignation, entreaty and menace fail, ridicule will often cause a Government to abandon a Bill, a lover his mistress, a young brother his setatorial indiscretions.'²

¹The word satire is from the Latin Satira, a later form of Satura which means 'medley'.
²Christopher Stone, Parody, p.8.
He adds that the powerful weapons of ridicule are satire, parody, burlesque, caricature and the like.

'Great vices are the proper objects of our detestation, smaller faults of our pity; but affectations appear to be the only true source of the Ridiculous. It is when affectation has grown upon man's vitals like a tumour that satire has been forged and shaped to cut it out.'

Satire can take almost any literary form and use various approaches and techniques. Often these have specific reference to topical and political subjects, concrete descriptions, realistic pictures of the seamy side of a society or personality - sometimes scurrility or obscenity. Thus there are political satires like Dryden's 'Absalom and Achitophel' and Byron's 'The Vision of Judgement'; personal satires like Dryden's Mac Flecknoe and

4. This Tory party poem was written for Charles II and it adorned his triumph over the Whigs.
5. This is the outcome of Byron's feud with Southey's poem 'A Vision of Judgement', which denounced the libertinism and irreligion of Byron and Shelley.
6. This poem is a severe personal attack on the poet Thomas Shadwell.
is a verbal parody on Wordsworth's own lines:

Pope's 'Dunciad'; social satires like Johnson's 'The
Vanity of Human Wishes' and Pope's 'The Rape of the Lock'.

Two voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty voice.

A parody imitates the characteristics of an
author. The imitation may be of a particular work or of
the parodied writer's manner in general. On its highest
level a parody may become a subtle and analytical criticism
in which the parodist displays the essential characteristics
of the work or writer parodied and by implication comments
upon them. The simplest form is the verbal parody. This
is word-rendering. J.K. Stephen's cruelly apt comment on
Wordsworth's total out put of verse,

Two voices are there; One is of the deep
And one is of an old, half-witted sheep.

7. It is an attack on Lewis Theobald who had passed adverse
criticism on Pope's Shakespeare.

8. The poem is a formal indictment of human folly.

9. This poem was written to ridicule the social vanity of his
day.

10. The Greek word-parodia-means an ode which perverts the
meaning of another ode.


13. From Italian Baria which means 'cockery'.
is a verbal parody on Wordsworth's own lines:

The disparity between theme and treatment. The reader's
pleasure results from the recognition of the subject that
is being ridiculed.

Two voices are there, one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty voice. 12

Besides, the parodist attempts also form-rendering and

sense-rendering. To a large degree these two go together,
and is known as a style parody. Hilton's Octopus is a
good example. It is a stinging criticism of the whole of
Swinburne. In metre, in style and in sense, it is modelled
upon Swinburne. It is witty, yet it is an almost savage
criticism. A parody can aim at good-humoured mockery or
savage mockery.

In a burlesque something is made to appear ridiculous
by ludicrous exaggeration or grotesque parody. The work
may ridicule the style and manner of other works. It may
treat trivial, frivolous material with mock dignity as in
Pope's Rape of the Lock, or treat lofty, serious subjects in
a vulgar, slap-stick manner as in Butler's Hudibras. In
this sense the essential mark characteristic of burlesque is
hold up to ridicule the weaknesses of every class of society,
from kings and potentates to the ordinary middle-classes among
whom it enflates itself.

12. Wordsworth, "Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of

Switzerland.

13. From Italian burla which means 'mockery'.

the disparity between theme and treatment. The reader's
displeasure results from the recognition of the subject that
is being ridiculed.

The greatest name in Malayalam verse—satire is that
of Kunchan Nambiar (18th century). He made a powerful use
of satire in his 'Thullal' compositions. Social satirical
poetry. Characters like 'Vingathangal' initiated
satire reached great heights in his hand. He also had
occasional digs at individual characters whom he considered
following it, prominent satirists of the time like Condy's
stumbling blocks to social progress. Usually, 'situations'
and 'peculiarities' in social life were the targets of his
attack. He stands unique in the whole of Malayalam
English. Among the outstanding satirists of the Age the name
literature. The period of his literary activity corresponds
more or less to the great Augustan age in English poetry
which forms a high-water mark of modern satire. Like

Pope's Satires, Nambiar's 'Thullals' have also a value as
a contemporary record, in as much as they represent the
characters and reflect the manners of the period.

"There is no story he has dealt with, in which he does not
hold up to ridicule the weaknesses of every class of society,
from kings and priests to the ordinary middle-classes among
whom he lived." 14.

14. K.M. Panicker, *Literatures in Modern Indian
Languages*. Ed. by V.K. Gokek. p. 107
After a long interval satire emerged again in Malayalam poetry in the twentieth Century. The spurt of personal satire in the poems of the Venmani Nampoothiri in the last quarter of the Nineteenth century must not be ignored. English satire, particularly the Augustan satire, helped considerably Malayalam satire in its re-emergence in the 20th Century. It stimulated the dormant spirit in satirical poetry. Magazines like 'Vidoooshakan' imitating the English 'Punch' weekly appeared in the language. Following it, prominent satirists of the time like Sanjayan (M.R. Nair) and Seetharaman (P. Sreedharan Pillai) introduced in Malayalam poetry most of the satiric forms known in English. Among the outstanding satirists of the Age the names E.V. Krishna Pillai and Changampuzha Krishna Pillai must also be remembered.

E.V. Krishna Pillai was a major satirist of the age. He used his pen against officials and politicians. He could not tolerate either power-corrupt bureaucrats or delirious political leaders. *Police Ramayana*, is a mock-heroic poem, in which he attacked the repressive policy of an English Police Commissioner. In his autobiography *Jeevitha kiran Smeranaikal*, he confesses that his delight lay in exposing persons whom he hated. 'E.V.' also turned to good-humoured
mockery, social foibles and weaknesses. He did not spare individual poets and literary movements from his terrible weapon. *Asanna Yathra Dasakam* is a well-known parody on K.G. Kesava Pillai's *Asanna Mazara Chinte Satakam*.

M.R. Nair, who wrote under the pen-name 'Sanjayan' is easily the greatest light-satirist of the Age. It was during his time that various English literary types were imitated in Malayalam. Sanjayan was a popular English lecturer. He was also a good writer in that language. He was fond of the novels of Charles Dickens, particularly the *Pickwick Papers*. He was an avid reader of the *Punch* weekly edited by Sir Owen Seaman. Shakespeare's plays influenced him considerably. Falstaff was his favourite character. He had most of the famous lines in Shakespearean plays by heart.

Sanjayana was provoked by the decadent social milieu in which he lived. Therefore he used his pen, dipped in acid, against all whom he considered guilty of violating social decencies. His was not the savage mockery that rejected, but the amused raillery that sought to cure, absurdities and vices and win over people to sanity. He believed that satire in its maturest form must be a moral concern.
To quote Sanjayan: "It is true for Malayalam poetry that this gifted satirist left us too early before he could fulfill his brilliant promise."

Laughter is the flower
And ridicule the thorn
Of satire, the new-born Rose. 15

As a satirist, M. Gopacharon Pillai (pseudonym: Sanjayan) has an enviable place in Malayalam poetry. But there can be no doubt that Sanjayan's shafts of satire, pointed by wit and winged by verse, have always hit the targets with force and precision. When Sanjayan was 'with the throttling hands of death of strife', he wrote a letter to one of his wellwishers. This reveals his sincerity of purpose: "......All of the articles published during the past three months have been written with a sinking heart - but how literary types, now in vogue in other languages, and the little the world will guess it! That is the buffoon's or example of Sir C.B. Seamen, Sir J.C. Squire, E.V. Knox and comedian's curse. Thanky, the poor fellow must laugh even when his heart is bursting within him - As for Sanjayan, well, he must write. He is the servant of his readers and he must not give up the show easily; and I am only his servant, must continue to serve him as long as he can. 16 The pathos in the line reminds one of the autobiographical touches in Lamb's essays.

15. Sanjayan, Hasyanjali, Cover page. Translation of the Original Text at the end, No.82.

16. Sanjayan, Hasyanjali, Cover page. Translation of the Original Text at the end, No.83.
What a great tragedy it was for Malayalam poetry that this gifted satirist left us too early before he could fulfill his brilliant promise. As a satirist, P. Sreedharan Pillai (Pseudonym: Seetharaman) has an enviable place in Malayalam poetry. In the preface to the anthology Hasya Lahari, he explains his aims thus. "In English, even famous poets write parodies and humorous poems, which are often, more heartily welcomed than non-satirical verses. In our language neither humorous nor serious poetry get recognition during their author's life-time. Yet, the purpose behind the publication of this anthology is my earnest desire to popularise all literary types, now in vogue in other languages, and the example of Sir Owen Seaman, Sir J.C. Squire, E.V. Knox and G.K. Chesterton, who made English poetry both rich and delightful, has inspired me." Hasya Lahari, is a good collection of parodies, burlesques and satires. In the preface Seetharaman admits that English parodists like Sir Owen Seaman and J.C. Squire have been his models. Sanjayan writes about this influence:


*cf. the Original Text at the end, No.83.*
'If you don't know Seetharaman, it means that you are unaware of the great revival in Malayalam satirical literature.........Here is a friend who can snatch the pens of great poets away from their hands when they nap, and use them dipped in the ink of mischief. It is not my friendly love that makes me describe him as a writer next to E.V. Knox who succeeded Sir Owen Seaman as the editor of the Punch weekly. I might go a step further, and call him the 'Kerala Owen Seaman', and if you frown at it, it only betrays your ignorance of the values of satire and your indifference to your literature'. 18

A. Balakrishna Pillai, an eminent literary critic, describes Seetharaman as a great humorist and a fine ironist. Seetharaman believed that there is in human nature a vein of malice - an inclination to laugh mechanically at others. This pleasure intensified and refined by literary art, is the basis of the appeal of all his satires and parodies.

A casual survey of the poetic forms either newly introduced or revitalized by the satirists of the Age will be now useful.

---

18. Haaya Lahari, p.15 cf. the Original Text at the end, No.84.
Political Satires:

The vogue of the political satire started mainly with 'E.V' and Sanjayan. They had evidently before them the examples of Dryden, Byron and others. Sanjayan lived at a time of intense political ferment and agitation. He fought the class conflict which was being preached by the radicals. Party leaders and members had a bitter taste of Sanjayan's powerful weapon. The poems Anuvyam and metteyum kathukum are good examples. In the first, the poet attacks the leaders who are misleading their innocent followers by hocus and hypocrisy. He couldn't find a proper epithet to call these monstrous beings. The second is a satire on the so-called trade-union leaders who style themselves as Leninists and Marxists. They are, really mosquitoes that suck the blood of the toiling masses. They organise the masses into a rival faction against the bugs (privileged classes, social parasites) who grow fat on the blood of others. But the labouring classes get the shock of their life when they see the ghastly sight of their saviours sucking their blood while they wax eloquent against the same crime.

Both are excellent pieces of edged criticism. The poet attacks not by raging, but by ridiculing the persons he is exposing. The tone is calm and reasonable, the meaning plain.
and the method sharp and effective.

social satire:

In Social Satire, poets of the New Age maintain the tradition of Kunchan Nambiar. Sanjayan Sanjayan is at his best when he exposes social evils. Kallu Nambiarude Purappadu, belongs to this category. Here, the poet falls upon his victims with the full force of his stinging whip. He strongly supported the Congress policy of 'Prohibition'. But its enemies loudly opposed it. Sanjayan took his pen against these drink-addicts. The hero of the poem is a confirmed drunkard who prepares to lead a procession in protest. But before he could really do this, he is seen breathing his last under funny circumstances. The poet successfully creates in the mind of the reader a lurid picture of the evil of drinking.

Changampuzha's Kalyana Bomb is a good satire on the silly social formalities attendant on marriages in Kerala. N.V. Krishna Warrier's Koollu Thomas is also a satire with a moral purpose. It is against all 'prodigal sons'. The hero of the poem is a spendthrift. He is lured away by a
coquettish college girl for whom he spends the hard-earned money of his parents and brings ultimately disgrace to him and to his parents.

Parody: Mappilaippu is another parody, an

The credit of introducing parody in its full significance goes to Seetharaman. Parody is in fact, his forte. As the poet himself admits, in this task, he was considerably influenced by English parodists. Sanjayan did not write many parodies. Kozhikodu Municipalitiyude Vilapam is one of his fine parodies. Seetharaman's contributions on the other hand, are rich and varied. He has written a number of word parodies as well as style parodies. He has imitated the styles of almost all great poets of the Age as well as the styles of some of the ancient masters. He is in his true colours when he ridicules poets and poetic theories. Some of his best parodies stand in comparison with the best parody of M.K. Stephen - "Poetic Lament on the Insufficiency of Steam Locomotion in the Lake District". Arthur Quiller-Couch calls it 'the perfection of parody'. Stephen imitates with amazing fidelity, the style and vocabulary of Wordsworth. Arana, Ambadiyil Chenna Akrooran, and Kanya Kumariyile Suryodayam are similar fine parodies that imitate the styles
of the three great Malayalam poets Asan, Ulloor, and Vallathol respectively. They are excellent in so far as they bring out effectively both the strong and weak points in the poets imitated. Koopalam is another parody, on Ulloor's Koopalam intended to make good fun of the poet's occasional uninspiring narrative style, moralising tendency, and excessive adherence to technicalities. In all types of parody, Seetharaman is an adept.

Burlesque:

Sanjayen's Nibitham is a burlesque of Changampuzha's Mohini. Changampuzha's poem is modelled on Francesca's 'Romeo' of Shakespeare. In the English poem the lover ultimately kills his love. Sanjayen's contention is that Mohini is the result of a rather misunderstanding of its author. In the result of a rather misunderstanding of its author. To check this fashion, Seevolli Nampoothiri wrote a burlesque called 'Pathyocha Sandesam' (1876). Here an old weaver sends a message to his love through an owl. This is perhaps the first of its kind in the language. Here the poet ridicules effectively the style and manner of the 'Sandesa Kavyas' of his day.

Changampuzha ridicules the inferior poets of the 'realistic' School of his time in 'Angaleyo Angene'.
Provoked by their pretentious style, he attacks them with his shrewd and telling wit and exposes their ambitious incapacity.

In Panki Perinayam (The Marriage of Panki) K.M. Panicker ridicules the craze of old-fashioned poets of his time for verse-romances. Poets like Vallathol and Ulloor attend the marriage, and are subjected to mild criticism. Panicker also aims at social criticism in his work.

Sanjayan's Mohitan is a burlesque of Changampuzha's Mohini. Changampuzha's poem is modelled on Browning's 'Porphyria's Lover.' In the English poem, the lover ultimately kills his love. Sanjayan's contention is that Mohini is the result of a romantic misunderstanding by its author. Changampuzha very likely wrote the poem on the belief that murder is a more fitting end (or at least a more dramatic end) than a suicide for a love-tragedy. It is this misreading, that Sanjayan ridicules through his burlesque Mohitan.

As a master of the art, Seetharaman demolishes here poets of all the three schools of thought. The parody of 'Ravananayam', Geetha Prasthanam and Chile Keitha Praka Prasthanangal are good examples. The first is aimed at
Mahakavi Pallathu Raman for his 'strange views' on Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. The second was inspired by an exhortation by P. Sankaran Nenjam to write sonnets. Seetharaman seized the opportunity without any delay and composed a sonnet hoping to become the first sonneteer. The third is an attempt to show how poets of the various schools of his time - the classicists, the young romantics and the mystic poets - would have composed poems; on a common a theme like - 'The dog howled'. See how according to Seetharaman, mystic poet would have composed a poem on that theme:

Nothing stirred in space or earth,
God was in his slumbers
In that hour when the March
Of moments dragged to a stop,
Like time's dying sigh was heard
In the stillness of the night, the wail
Of a dog, was pure being
Awakening into life, or was this
The music of the spheres. 19

As a master of the art, Seetharaman demolishes here poets of all the three schools of thought. The parody

must have effectively curbed the poets from similar pursuits in future.

(1) Nature poetry

The poems briefly revived in the previous pages are good specimen of satirical poetry in the language, where are Nature descriptions in poems of every which stimulate thought as well as titilate the heart of the readers.

But the Nature epic, as it is known, is devoted to the description of successive scenes in Nature, where they have Satire continues to be a growing tradition in the language, further enriched by many talented writers;

but they are yet to attain the range of the great satirists it is genuine; not solely conventional, as in Pope's "Anacreon of the Age, Sanjayan and Seetharaman.

Forest", but real, or idealised. It is specific, rather than general; and in addition to faithful portraiture, we have also the path and elevation that come from human emotion or from the recognition of an all-pervading presence. Such is the higher type of Nature descriptive poetry. These finer descriptions of Nature can be found in all great poets, since the Romantic Age.

Nature in English Poetry:

Stopford A. Brooke writes: "Some one has said that men rove when looses contact with the native soil, when
3. DESCRIPTIVE POETRY

(1) Nature poetry

There are Nature descriptions in poems of every class, where they occupy an incidental and secondary position. But the Nature epic, as it is known, is devoted to the description of successive scenes in Nature, where they have a prominent place, and display an ever-unfolding richness. The description is sober and reflective in character. It is genuine; not coldly conventional, as in Pope's 'Windsor Forest', but real, or idealised. It is specific, rather than general; and in addition to faithful portraiture, we have also the warmth and elevation that come from human emotion or from the recognition of an all-pervading presence. Such is the higher type of descriptive poetry. These finer descriptions of Nature can be found in all great poets, since the Romantic Age.

*Nature in English Poetry:*

Stopford A. Brooke writes: "Some one has said that man rots when loses contact with the native soil, when
his feet are separated from the earth by stone pavements
and wooden floors. If Alexander Pope is the apogee of
this phase of English poetry, Wordsworth is its perigee".
The former represents the classical attitude towards Nature
and the latter the new. Pope is a poet of polished floors.
To him Nature is a 'Common sense reduced to principles', a
part of the established order of things discovered by
Reason. In his poetry Wordsworth 'communicates a new order
of experience for which Nature serves as a point of departure'.
There was no such experience in English poetry before his
time. Earlier poets saw Nature through the eyes of the
Greek and Latin poets or fitted it into an ordered Universe.

The distance in time max between Pope's last poem
and Wordsworth's first was nearly sixty years. This was in
English poetry a period of gradual growth of sensibility
towards Nature. During this time the spirit, method, manner,
metre, melody and the passion of English poetry had suffered
a complete and vital change. "It began before the death of
Pope. It was a reaction caused by a weariness of artificial
and conventional poetry, went back in order to draw new life
into poetry, to simple human nature and to Nature herself
as seen in her wild and uncultivated beauty".

The following quotation from Pope:

All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou can'st not see;
All discourse, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal Good;
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.1

and this from Wordsworth shows the marked change:

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth

A motion and a spirit, that impels
All as thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.2

M. Reynolds3 sums up the chief characteristics of the
classical way of looking at Nature as (1) a neglect of the
grand or the terrible, the mysterious and the remote in Nature
(2) an especial pleasure in Nature ordered and made symmetrical

2. Wordsworth, Tintern Abbey.
symmetrical by art as in formal gardens and parks (3) a conventional and superficial use of Nature in similitudes for human passions and actions (4) a narrow uninterested and hence inaccurate observation of natural facts and (5) an underlying conception of Nature as entirely apart from man and to be reckoned with merely as his servant, like or as his foe.

are marked by an unusual originality and imaginative power, a sense of delight in the wider, freer,
in the treatment of Nature a new conception gradually emerged into dominance. This new attitude was exemplified by the early 19th century poets is marked by (1) a rich sensual delight in form, colour, sound and motion (2) by a full and first-hand observation (3) by an imaginative especially conception of natural objects (4) by a strong preference for the freer forms of Nature's life (5) by an enthusiasm for Nature, passionate in its intensity (6) by a recognition of the divine life in Nature (7) and finally a consciousness of the interpenetration of that life and the life of Man.
By the end of the century the new feeling had found abundant, varied and original statement of which Wordsworth was the supreme expression.

The growth of this naturalistic impulse in English poetry can be traced through the various contributions of
poets like Thomson, Collins and Gray, Crabbe and Cowper, and Burns and Blake. The most influential poet of this development was James Thomson. Everyone who loves country life and the natural beauty that is unaffected by time will always find in Thomson's pictures in *Seasons*, an unfailing source of pleasure. Nature poems of Collins, like *Ode to Evening*, are marked by an unusual originality and imaginative power, a sense of delight in the wider, freer, in the more remote and mysterious aspects of Nature. In Gray's *Elegy written in a Country Church Yard*, the use of Nature is highly artistic. William Blake's mission was to reveal to closed eyes spiritual as the only real fact of existence. His treatment of Nature is characterised especially by qualities of simplicity and vision not found before Wordsworth. Burns is deeply sensitive to the charms of Nature, though his chief use of Nature is in connection with Man.

Cowper is the first poet to write of Nature without didactic tendency to observe a Flower at close range, and analyse or picturesque overtones and without being entirely flat. There is also a large amount of strong Nature description in Crabbe's poems, though subsidiary to human interest. His intimate and realistic treatment of Nature had been more forceful than Cowper's and his influence on Wordsworth had been equally profound and more immediate and contemporary.
The 18th century English poetry of Thomson, Collins, Gray, Cowper and Crabbe, Burns and Blake had been a period of preparation for the great period of Wordsworth. Shelley, Keats, Coleridge and Scott. The love of Nature was awake in their hearts. Their eyes were open to her beauty. Their ears drank in her harmonies. Their spirits were conscious of her flights. Before Wordsworth most of his characteristic thoughts on Nature had received fairly explicit statement in them.

The new attitude towards Nature found its best expression in Wordsworth's poetry. Wordsworth, more nearly than any other poet, expresses the variety and complexity of interest in the new feeling towards Nature. Full, accurate first hand knowledge of Nature is a sine qua non with him. Any interpretation must rest on it. 'His poetry reveals the tendency to observe a flower at close range, and analyse it as one of the mysteries of the Universe, instead of sitting at home, embalming it, eight unseen, in a conventional cliché. He went forth into the fields, lay there like a country boy on a sunny bank, max watching through rustling leaves, the drift of snow-piled clouds, and in rippling streams the flicker of sporting fish.' From Nature, Shelley.

another great romantic poet sucked personal sustenance
for his spirit, aiming towards the rarer heights of freedom.
In his impassioned plea to the West Wind, Shelley cried
out -

Till the publication of *Malaya Vilasam*, inaugurating
the New era in Malaysian poetry, the general feeling towards
Nature was that nature description was absent. It was there. But change
came in the attitude, which differed widely in the two periods.

Rarely do the Romantics write a lyric of nature's moods
and moments without a closing of human application.

The early poets gave nature no prominence, nor was there
any independent interest in nature in the earlier poetry;
we come across descriptions of nature, but they are often
unconvincing. Nature is used only a corollary for the
most commonplace associations with the light or radiant
emanation of ideal glory. The most perfect example of this
supernal strain is *The Solitary Reaper* - the quintessence
of English poetry. Wordsworth attained towards Nature the
same kind of mystic faith that Crashaw had attained to-
wards his God. It is the mood induced by worship, by worship
in Nature was then only a part of his worship with his life.

Wordsworth had the capacity of endowing words of the
emotions of ideal glory. The most perfect example of this
supernal strain is *The Solitary Reaper* - the quintessence
of English poetry. Wordsworth attained towards Nature the
same kind of mystic faith that Crashaw had attained to-
wards his God. It is the mood induced by worship, by worship
in Nature was then only a part of his worship with his

Nature in Modern Malayalam Poetry

The treatment of Nature in Malayalam poetry in the
New Age and in the early period may be generally compared to
the treatment given to it in the Romantic and the Pre-Romantic
periods in English poetry. They are respectively the modern and the classical ways of looking at Nature.

Till the publication of Malayalam Vileasan, inaugurating the New era in Malayalam poetry, the general feeling towards Nature was one of indifference. This does not mean that nature description was absent. It was there. But change came in the attitude, which differed widely in the two periods. The early poets gave Nature no prominence, not to speak of any independent interest. In the Mani P r a v a lam poetry we come across descriptions of Nature, but they are often unconvincing. Nature is used only as a decoration for the main theme. Ezhuthchanka was not primarily interested in Nature. But Nature figures more prominently in the Maha Kavyas of the later period. Still the whole emphasis is on Man in his higher social relations, and plays only, if anything, an incidental and subordinate part. Man's interest in Nature was then only a part of his concern with his own life. Naturally, descriptions were, therefore, of a cold

---

5. An artificial dialect formed by the combination of Malayalam and Sanskrit, seen from the 13th century onwards as a literary medium.

6. A great Malayalam poet who pioneered the change over from Mani P r a v a lam to the modern Malayalam.
conventional type. Thought of God in relation to Nature was there, but the power of Nature to soothe the mind of man and to modify his passions and its ability to communicate with human soul never received any expression in Pre-Romantic Malayalam poetry.

Nature treatment in the Malayalam poetry of the New Age indicates a clear departure from the old literary practice. As a result of English influence Nature received a new recognition and has been treated independently of man. The treatment is no longer simple, but full of complexities along with life and thought in general. The new feeling is marked by an artistic sensitiveness to beauty, a personal enthusiasm for Nature, a recognition of the effect of Nature on man and by an imaginative and spiritual conception of Nature in the Wordsworthian sense. With the three great masters of the Modern Malayalam poetry, Asan, Vallathol and Ulloor the new approach found its abundant, varied and original expression. It salient features shall be illustrated in the following pages.

(1) The Grand and Wild aspects of Nature;

Before the advent of the New Age, poets generally cared only for the milder forms of Nature. The most pronounced change in the New Age came with its love for the mighty
and subtle objects of Nature like the ocean, the Sun, the moon, the mountain and the sky. In English Romantic poetry Wordsworth also has been a poet of the mountains, lakes and streams. His poems always give the impression of vast spaces, of solitude and of great heights. His poetry is also full of the overpowering majesty of the sea. It impressed him no less than the mountains. The sea exhilarated him and cleansed his mind from mercenary thoughts.

One can see in A.R. Rajaraja Verma's Malayi Vilāsam this change. The poem is the first evidence of personal enthusiasm for Nature, particularly for a Mountain in the transitional poetry. The lingering pleasure in the description of Sahya hills is hardly equalled anywhere in early Malayalam poetry. There is a freshness of vision in the poem, and a novelty in the way in which the impressions are communicated.

The ocean had been a dreary waste to the earlier poets. It had to wait for V.C. Balakrishna Panicker for a magnificent treatment. Viswaroopam (A Vision of the Universe) is a splendid poem dealing with the glories of Nature, particularly of the ocean, the sunset, the moon and the stars. It springs forth spontaneously from the
contemplation of the immensity, the splendour and mystery of the Universe. The poet has sought here factual accuracy as well as precision of expression. No one had written of Nature at his length or with his range till his time. His mode of thinking and the way of expressing his thoughts are original.

Viswaroopa, sums up the thoughts that passed through the poet's mind while he was alone, one evening, on the Calicut beach. He had has painted in it the grim and grand aspects of Nature. The description has a Wordsworthian touch about it. If the Lake District took the pen from the poet's hand to describe graphically its colour and contour, here, Granadu, blessed by its natural beauty, has performed a similar task for V.O. Balakrishna Panicker. The treatment of Nature attempted here is a break-through from the traditional approach.

The poem is full of lovely Nature descriptions. The landscape is described in vivid terms that make one feel the beauty of Nature around. The glowing western horizon that forms a background for the setting sun is in the words of the poet;
The Sun, the famed painter, is busy with his brush
Touching the pictures, which he once made of clouds
There they spread, so well on the western wall,
A rare feast of colours, and a new life to boast of.

giving the reader the impression that,

In brief the poem is a description of the setting sun, and tells of its beauty, its silent majesty, and the beauty it bestows on the sea.

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoe.

The poem is full of similar lovely Nature descriptions. The poem also coaxes from the poet philosophical speculations.

7. Translation. cf. the Original Text at the end, No. 69.
8. Shakespeare, Richard II.
9. Walter de la Mare, 'Silver'
about life which occupy the busy diminished creatures below.
The poem is not wanting in spiritual perception. The closing lines show 'man in his puny place' in the divine scheme of life:

Below, the sounding turbulent sea;
Above, the star-strewn sky
When creation's order is seen in such symbols
Can your little ego still linger in your heart. 10

In brief the poem is a graphic representation of Nature in her solemn and wonderful phases, a combination of which in poetry tends to create that sense of mystery and awe which is the very essence of romanticism. It belongs to that school of poetry where the lyrical enjoyment of Nature in her varying moods is a study and a conscious art, which came to Malayalam poetry, chiefly through its close acquaintance with English poets like Wordsworth, Byron and Shelley.

(2) The gentle and pleasant aspects of Nature:

An intimate interest in the familiar scene, and sound of Nature as distinct from the unusual or the extra-ordinary

is another mark of this new impulse in poetry. The New
poetry reveals an unusual fulness and accuracy of
knowledge and lyrical rapture about lakes and streams,
birds and flowers against the background of the varying
seasons. No false touches, no hasty description,
no artificiality—all a result of sincere, leisurely
and sympathetic observation by the poets. Their des-
criptions are almost perfect in their kind. Murmuring
rivers and running brooks thrilled them. Rustling leaves and
'embattled ears of corn' delighted them. Flowers, whether
by way side, or in river-banks, or parks or gardens filled
them with rapture. In magical phrases they described these
scenes familiar to every eye, showing thereby that an important
part of their new poetical endowments is the quick
sensitiveness to sights, sounds and odours of the world
around them.

There can't be a better example of this new found
love for Nature in Malayalam poetry than the lines uttered

11. Translation of the Original Text at the end, No. 70
12. Translation of the Original Text at the end, No. 71.
she is bidding

by Sita, in the poem Chintavishtayya Sita. She is

bidding goodbye to all that is near and dear to her in

the world. And so she turns to Nature and addresses her

'beauteous forms':

They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude
O lovely forest, with pleasure fills,
And flowers teased by embattled beetles;
Rapt in delight,
I enjoyed you too much
Let me now bid you
An unwilling farewell:  11

Sita says that though she departs from this world,
she will still be a haunted by the lovely Nature's world.

'The meanest flower of the vale, the simplest note that
swells the gale, the common sun, the air and sky' would all
be opening a new paradise for me.' This would become possible,
because, even after her physical disappearance from this
world, she hopes, her soul will blend with the beauties of
Nature and thus be one with her:

Perhaps I don't have to bid good-bye
To this sweet Nature's world
For when I die and become a god
My mind will blend with 'beauty, untold': 12

11. Translation. cf. the Original Text at the end, No.70

12. Translation. cf. the Original Text at the end, No.71.
This power of external objects to co-operate with the mind in producing sensations of pleasure finds an example in Wordsworth’s *The Daffodils* where the remembrance of the vision of the daffodils is a definite source of pleasure:

The Mango-sprouts are shaken by the ‘Kalasa samuthi’ (the south wind which rosses leaves corresponding to the changing seasons of the year have evoked in the poets some mas of their finest thoughts. The joy of the spring season is revealed through the songs of the birds and their bright plumage and the flowers that suddenly plume again. The nabile air kisses the leaves and spreads the scent and the brook stretches its arms along the silent meadow. Aseand describes this new tide of life full of delight in *Pookkalam*.

There is joy in the Koel’s song for men That sings full-throated from its spring time nest The is scent in the wind that blows from the south The blooming fragrance it gathers on its rounds.13

Compare this with Wordsworth’s lines from *On a Spring Morning*.

---

13. Translation. of. the Original Text in the end, No.72.
The cock is crowing
The stream is flowing
The small birds twitter
The lake doth glitter.

The gentle wind that blows from the Sahya hills brings
on its balmy wings the fragrance of sandalwood and flowers.
The Mango-sprouts are shaken by the 'Malaya mamuthi'
(the South wind referred to in Malaya Vilegam) which rouses
amorous amorous love in youthful persons. Corresponding to
this there is the Zephyr in English. Shelley refers to this
in the Ode to the West Wind:

Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
and the west in the hot season, he does not show any
indifference towards its delights. The cool evenings, the
following lines of Vallathol, where the white splendour
morning breeze, the fragrant flowers, the shady trees,
of the moonlight on a spring night receives magical colour-
the bathing damsels and the retiring peasants are some of its
fying. The night is conceived as a fair damsel and
soothing sights. The tranquility of the summer evening
splendidly described in the last stanz of the poem reminds
the reader of the evening in Dothan.

From the moon plate, the Night holds in her hand,
She sprays a white paint, for all world to behold.14

Ulattile Venalkalam (A Summer in the Country Side)
gives an impressive picture of a summer day. With its
scorching heat and dry wind the season is intolerable.

14. Translation. cf. the Original Text at the end, No.73.
Famine and drought add to the misery of all living beings. In the summer months, days are long and nights, short. Under the baking sun, man sweats and pants, beasts loll their tongue in thirst, and leaves fade and droop. The poet describes the bitter disappointment of birds at the passing of the night that gave them cool protection from the hot day.

The night is past and we are lost
A poor lot! Where shall we go
So the bats think, as they cling on
To the tip of a trunk, of a bare summer tree.15

While the poet describes the sufferings of the man and the beast in the hot season, he does not show any indifference towards its delights. The cool evenings, the morning breeze, the fragrant flowers, the shady trees, the bathing damsels and the retreating peasants are some of its soothing sights. The tranquility of the summer evening splendidly described in the last stanzas of the poem reminds the reader of the famous lines of Wordsworth's sonnet written on an evening in Calais Beach:

It is a beauteous evening calm and free
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity.

15. Translation. cf. the Original Text at the end, No.74.
For the English poet, though the Summer has its 'gaudy glare', 'sullen sky' and 'dusty air', it is a delightful season. All things rejoice beneath the sun. Milton describes June, the loveliest month in the English Summer thus in L'Allegro.

Vallathol describes the Winter season in another poem ('Winter') as

> To many a youth and many a maid,
> Dancing in the chequer'd shade;
> And young and old come forth to play,
> On a sunshine holiday.

Autumn is a season of transition. It is the season of harvest. "The granaries get filled, and hay stacks swell in size"; and the rain-bearing clouds are for a poet like Vyloppillil Giridhara Menon, "young maids sowing seeds in the sky", the "farmer eagerly watching by" druel, terrible and frightening. Keats in 'Ode to Autumn' tells of the bitter chill of the season, of the sea and of the here dying through the broken grass, golden yellow in colour, and leafless. And though the autumnal wind that inspired Shelley to write the famous Ode to the West Wind. The season is associated with yellow and dead leaves. The autumn gale is a destroyer everywhere. The

trees are stripped of their leaves and they stand bare
like skeletons in the sky. It is then that the year
is nearly dead. And the world awaits expectantly for the
iron grip of the Winter.

Vallathol describes the Winter Season in another
poem ("Winter in the Country side") UI Mattile Manju Kalam
as dismal and depressing to living creatures. It is a
season with no shade and no shine. Man sits shivering inside
and covers even his wishes, as it if it were, with a blanket.
The Sun goes to sleep and man makes his own sun-shine with
fire.

In English poetry the Winter Season is presented as
cruel, terrific and frightening. Keats in "St. Agnes' Eve"
tells of the bitter chill of the season, of the owl and of
"the hare limping through the frozen grass". Swinburne
refers to the Winter's rains and ruins. Thomson describes
in detail the rain, winds and frosts of winter and the
horrors of the snow-storm. Elsewhere Winter is addressed as
the power of Desolation.

Similarly, the charm of flowers does not only lie in
their colour and smell. There are many flowers useless
(3) The Kinship of Man and Nature:

Natural scenery may be interesting to a poet because of its association with human events. Such use of nature in connection with man's joys and sorrows may be lyrical or dramatic in tone. Under the lyrical use of nature may be classed the passages in which the poet dwells upon his youth and the early joys in hills and lakes, streams and fields, the homesick longing and the marks of local fidelity to facts make this use of nature usually excellent. It takes the form of an apostrophe to a specific bird (Asan's Kuyilinode - Ode to a Koel) or to a river (Vallathol's Bharathapuzha) or to a grove or a hill.

Nature is dramatically used when it is made the appropriate background or accompaniment of the human life. That is when the facts of nature become as it were an allegory to human experience. A river however beautiful in itself, because of its ceaseless motion, its shifting, colours, its varied banks, its progress to the sea, is transformed in the poet's mind into a symbol of the vicissitudes and final goal of life.

Similarly, the charm of flowers does not only lie in their colour and smell. There are many flowers odourless
and unpleasant in the scent. Their attraction is in their
infectious joy in life. In them we see the course of our
own lives in littleness. And so Wordsworth sang in the
Immortality Ode,

'To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

Similar highly imaginative use of Nature can be
seen in Veena Poovu, in Prorodanam, and in many other
poems of the period. In the first stanza of the elegy
Prorodanam the poet makes an effective use of cloud and
darkness to create the terrible but dramatically appropriate
environment required for the tragic event. There are other
instances where night has been considered the
appropriate setting for reflection on man's mortality.
A starry night in Sankara Kurup's Ather dasam provokes
in the poet thoughts of inconceivable vastness of the
Universe and the insignificance of man's place in it. A
certain sort of scenery becomes the conventionally fit
background for the romantic aspiration and dejection as is
seen in all sentimental melancholy poets.

Personification was common in Malayalam poetry before
the New Age. Since then there is a myth-making tendency added
17. Translation: cf. the Original Text at the end, No.75.
to it. This is perhaps derived from the study of Nature poetry of English poets like Keats, Shelley and Swinburne. Keats' \textit{Ode to Autumn} is a good example. An instance of the new type of personification in Modern Malayalam poetry shall be quoted here. The dew drops that fall on a still night are to Kumaran Asan the sad tears of the stars, shed at the fall of the 'fair flower'.

\begin{quote}
O star so high, proud of your lofty state.

Her drops of dew that fall from 'blue' above
Are tears of stars that weep in sorrow deep
Sad they are, their friend is gone so soon
A flower that bloomed so fair on earth below. 17
\end{quote}

This use of the pathetic fallacy is the extension of sympathy outwards into the natural world and deeper into man's mind which brought new revelations of the complex ties between man and nature, a general enriching of the pattern in which they both figure. Personification which was dear to the early Malayalam poets is distantly related to the so-called pathetic fallacy, which we find very commonly in the English Romantic poets. The latter gives life to the inanimate or sympathy to the brute creation, the former gives breath to the abstract. The poets of the New Age made personification more dramatic by directly addressing the objects, imitating English poets in the style. For example:

\begin{quote}
\textit{[4) Nature Spiritualism]}
\end{quote}

17. Translation. cf. the Original Text at the end, No.75.
Like Shelley who apostrophizes the wind when he begins one of his great poems with the outcry:

O Wild West wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,

G. Sankara Kurup addresses the stars, when he gives expression to his conception of a happy 'Tomorrow' and asks them to turn pale, shiver and beware.

O star so high, proud of your lofty state.

Again, like William Cullen Bryant, the most important of the early American poets, who began his poem 'To the Fringed Gentian' with this direct address:

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew
And coloured with the heaven's own blue,

Kumaran Asan also begins his Veena Poovu with a direct address as though the flower could hear the poet and respond to his voice.

Ah, lovely bloom, once thou did'st shine,
High like a Queen.

(4) Nature Spiritualised:

A poet who conceives of Nature as having an independent and separate existence, goes through facts and perceives the
spirit of the scene, the essential qualities that make the
scene what it is. For such use it demands Wordsworth's wise
passiveness of mood, clarity of vision, depth of feeling and
above all power to speak the inevitable word.

Wordsworth considered Nature as inspiring to morality
and virtue. Hills and Mountains have a quality of strength
and unruffled peacefulness about them, which has helped to
soothe many a troubled mind. The power of man's natural
environ environments to restore him to mental and bodily health
is the foundation of all Wordsworth's poetry. This is that
what he indicates in the lines —

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of Man,
of moral evil and of good
Than all the sages can. 18

In Tintern Abbey he asserts that even the memory of a
beautiful scene has the power to recreate tranquillity.

Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

Here is a scene from Kumaran Asan's Nalini which is
indissolubly connected with a phase of spiritual experience.

The lines quoted speak of Nature's ability to soothe the troubled mind. The long-awaited meeting between the two lovers turned hermits, Malini and Divakaran, takes place. Though anxious, Malini is shy to break the ice. So she addresses indirectly a lotus flower in a nearby pond to give vent to her feelings.

Your lord the Sun blazes
On all that he faces
O! lotus you gaze on.
The cool wind that blows on
Shall pass on, you weep not. 19.

G. Sankara Kurup is another poet of the New Age who invests Nature with sacramental significance. This irradiates his communion with Nature and fellow beings. In his early poetry he was satisfied with mere personifications. But in later poetry he established a profound communion with Nature. He saw the true poetic quality of her creativity and his own creativity as a gift from her.

You gathered me into your immaculate soul,
Me, an emergent of this lowly earth,
And transformed me too into a poet. 20.

'G' identifies himself completely with Nature. In this respect he is different from many other contemporary poets.

19. Translation. cf. the Original Text at the end, No. 76.
It is this underlying consciousness of spiritual unity as revealed in the following lines that gives to 'G''s poetry its subtle power.

When life was a furnace to me,
The light sent out I used
To make the heaven so white and radiant.21

It is this recognition of the unity of all existence that we find in the prefatory stanza to Blake's 'Auguries of

Innocence'.

To see a world in a grain of sand
And heaven in a wild flower
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.

It is a species of descriptive poetry. It is devoted

This is a brief poetic statement of a creed afterwards elaborated by Wordsworth in his poetry. This idea has been

venously and beautifully expressed, but nowhere has it been embodied more fittingly than in his Ode on the

fittingly than in Intimations of Immortality.'

The Mālayalam poets of the New Age found in the world

shade promised regions'. As a convention pastoralism makes

around them, in flowers and birds, in sea and sky, in lakes

of the eucalyptus life an ideal existence, unfettered by the

21. Translation. cf. the Original Text at the end, No.78,

1. Ismael Blanch, Nature in English Literature, p.89.
and mountains and in the various contours of their country, an unfailing source of refreshment and delight that 'had no need of a remoter charm by thought supplied' as well as that which needed a moral and intellectual interpretation as well. This is the extent to which Malayalam poetry has been affected by its contact with English literature which gave to Nature a new life and a new significance.

The Greek poet Theocritus started the convention of pastoral poetry. It was transmitted through Italian influence to French literature and thence to English literature. One of the typical activities of the English Renaissance was the writing of pastoral poetry on classical models. The English poets borrowed from all their Continental predecessors when the tradition received from. It expressed itself in

(ii) Pastoral Poetry

It is a species of descriptive poetry. It is devoted to the portrayal of country life and manners. "There is scarcely any species of poetry", wrote Dr. Johnson in 1750, "that has allured more readers, or excited more writers, than the pastoral". He proceeds to explain that, "pastoral is a way out of cares and perturbations into Elysian regions, where we are to meet with nothing but joy, and plenty, and contentment; where every gale whispers pleasure, and every shade promises repose". ¹ As a convention pastoralism makes

tribulations of the court and city, unmarred by the pursuit of glory and temptation of vice. Implicit is the notion that civilization is a corrupting force upon man; the simple Shepherd's life is viewed as a means through which one may escape its debilitating forces and regain a state of innocence approximating that of a mythical 'golden age'.

The Greek poet Theocritus² started the convention of pastoral poetry. It was transmitted through Italian influence to French Literature and thence to English literature. One of the typical activities of the English Renaissance was the writing of pastoral poetry based on classical models. The English poets borrowed from all their continental predecessors when the tradition remained pure. It expressed itself in shepherd's singing contests, in elegies for dead friends, in praise of country lovers, country sports and country loves. They were interesting for their own sake, as well as a comment on the sophistication of society. But in the hands of London poets, the pastoral did more than sing pastoral poems of the English Renaissance. This tradition

². Theocritus (3.c; B.C.) in his first idyll, celebrated the death of the Shepherd hero Daphnis. From this idyll developed the whole elaborate convention of the pastoral elegy which reached its climax in Milton's Lycidas and Epitaphium Damonis:
of romance—whether simple or sophisticated. Because of the seeming innocence of the shepherd’s action and his boorish country thought, the form was a natural allegorical cover-up for points of view that might be dangerous to the author because of their political, theological or moral implications. Frequently the surface pastoral is a vehicle for discussion of the burning issues of the day. At the safe distance of an imaginary cope, in mythical Arcadia, they condemned the values of the court and the vices of the city. The Shepherds’ Calendar is an impressive example of this kind. It is a long poem. There are also short pastorals, which deal with universal themes. For example, Marlowe’s Passionate Shepherd to His Love and Raleigh’s Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd respectively deal with the ‘Carpe diem’ theme of the evanescence of life and the need to live fully while there is time and the inevitable response that ‘fancy’s spring’ is ‘sorrow’s fall’.

The Shepherds’ Calendar (1579) is the first great pastoral poem of the English Renaissance. This tradition

3. Carpe diem is a Latin phrase meaning ‘seize the Lady’ and thus ‘enjoy the present’. The expression gives name to a widespread literary convention prevalent in English poetry from the 14th century to the present.
was later imitated by Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Milton. The Tempest, is English pastoral at its ultimate pitch. The spell works well in many comedies (As You Like It) and tragi-comedies of the time, in The Sad Shepherd of Ben Jonson and in The Comus of Milton. The higher and deeper nourished pastoral is seen again in the Victorian period in Arnold’s Thymus and The Scholar Gipsy.

In recent times, 'the term pastoral is used loosely to refer to rural scope and setting in general. Thus Robert Frost has been called a pastoral poet.' Versed in the country things, with senses alert to the object, he builds slowly from observation to symbolic meaning. Birches, starting with a lonely boy’s diversion, tells the charm of escapism and the needed return to earth. Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, sets absorption in the dark loveliness of the woods against the promises that men must keep. The Runaway and Mowing are also good examples of lovely poems in idyllic setting.

The Pastoral Elegy:

This is a kind of elegy, which is too elaborate in structure and too reflective in treatment to be regarded as

purely lyrical. This kind of elegy, often traditional, was
modelled on the elegies of the Greek poet Theocritus. The
pastoral elegy combined pastoralism with lamentation by
depicting shepherds mourning the death of one of their fellows.

The English pastoral elegy followed the traditional
form not only in the pastoral setting, in the reference to
the shepherd's lives and loves, to their singing contests
and rivalry, but even in the pastoral, turn, a convention
whereby a mood of sadness is tempered by a strain of
consolation. Milton's Lycidas is the best example of a
pastoral elegy in English. It illustrates not only the pastoral
tradition in general, but the conventional pastoral 'elegiac
turn' in particular. Lycidas is not so much a lament for
Edward King in particular, as for ideal spiritual beauty
and nobility. It introduces such subjects as divine justice
and the corruption of contemporary clergy. In Shelley's Adonais

5. The Pastourelle is a lyric of courtly origin; in it a poet
describes how, as he was riding in the country, he met with
a shepherd-girl and made love to her, sometimes successfully
sometimes not, often bringing the whole of the girl's
family into action against him. In fact, the poem is a Knightly
'vante', a boastful account of the poet's amorous triumph,
gained sometimes by overwhelming attractiveness, sometimes
by the promise of reward, sometimes by force. Occasionally
the girl resists and overthrows her seducer. This may be a
piquant courtly variant, or more probably a survival from
an older form.
for all the 'gold' that the sophisticated men of the town
also we see the imitation of the pastoral tradition. The
offered for it. Not, she pacts with it, at least, for a more
pastoral elegiac turn begins here with the lines -
'trifle', for a shepherd who lives in the 'cool sequestered
cave'. All that she demands of him is.

He lives; he awakes - 'tis Death is dead, not he.

Tribute must be paid to Changampuzha Krishna Pillai,
A lovely little song
for introducing the pastoral tradition in Malayalam poetry.
He first attempted it in his minor poems and was later
the country lass in the poem stands for nature, and the
perfected in his pastoral Alex elegy Ramanan. Some of his
shepherd is a nature-worshipper, a poet. The poet assumes
minor poems breathe the pastoral spirit, more or less in the
here that the quiet sadness of the country is better than
same manner as it was conceived by the ancient masters for
the cultivated and complex life of the hurrying city.
For example the poem Vanabala, in the anthology Bashanjali,
natural pipe and singer is made to stand for the poet
is a good attempt at wooing nature and the spirit of country
natural men are considered to be purer and less vicious than
retreats. The country lass is attuned to the influences of
cultivated men and there exists between them and nature a
nature. The countryman poet addresses her as a 'wild flower'
special sympathy. The natural man is also wise and gifted
and sees in her;
in a different way from the cultivated man. All this is in
the true pastoral tradition.

I see blended in you
O my wild flower
The sky-like purity
And the patience of the Earth

Kurup, Vennikkal Sonala Kurup and Venkattilil Sreedharan
As Poomala, in the same collection, perpetuates the
Mes. Also deal with the pastoral or rural life in a limited
pastoral insight in a melodic way. A little country lass
and goes about with a garland in her hand and does not part with it

7. Translation of the Original Text at the end, No. 85.

6. Translation of the Original Text at the end, No. 85.
for all the 'gold' that the sophisticated men of the town
offered for it. But, she parts with it, at last, for a mere
'trifle', for a shepherd who lives in the 'cool sequestered
vale'. All that she demands of him is:

A lovely little song
Flowing from your flute. 7

The country lass in the poem stands for nature, and the
shepherd is a nature-worshipper, a poet. The poet assumes
here that the quiet wildness of the country is better than
the cultivated and complex life of the hurrying city. A
natural piper and singer is made to stand for the poet.
Natural men are considered to be purer and less vicious than
cultivated men and there exists between them and Nature a
special sympathy. The natural man is also wise and gifted
in a different way from the cultivated man. All this is in
the true pastoral tradition.

Some of the poems of Kuttippurath Kesavan Nair, G. Sankara
Kurup, Vennikkulam Gopala Kurup and Vyloppillil Sreedhara
Menon also deal with the pastoral or rural life in a limited
way. Their method is generally to exalt the naturalness and

7. Translation. cf. the Original Text at the end, No.86.
virtue of the simple man, whether he be a shepherd or a farmer
or a labourer at the expense of the sophisticated person.
Grameena Kanyaka (1921) by Kuttipurath Kesavan Nair, in his
collection Kavyopakaram may be considered to be one of the
earliest attempts of this kind. The am poet shows a
nostalgic pleasure in contemplating the simple ways and lazy
pace of the farmers' life in the country side. He also
contrasts the purity and richness of the rustic life with
the artificiality and poverty of the urban way,

Rural life, is rich in virtue,
Urban way, is poor and showy.
'Gems' are seen, in caves of ocean,
Or in woods, men seldom tread on. 8

The essence of 'G'. Sankara Kurup's poems like
Keliippattu (The Farmer's Song) and Oru Pazhayya kedu
(An Old Chapter) in the anthology 'Nevathidi' is the
simplicity of the rustic thought and action. As the poet
'saunters in the fields' in the morning, he hears the young
farmer singing, as he ploughs his plot. The song reveals
the cordiality and the happy partnership between the farmer
and the dumb animal.

8. Translation, cf. the Original Text at the end, No.87.
A really faithful picture of idyllic rural life, quite unlike the clamour and dust in the city side.

Malayalam poets have not used the pastoral form as a safe mask for criticism of any kind, imitating the English poets. But 'Grame Vrukshathile Kuvil' may be loosely described as a pastoral allegory, though not a pure example of the type. When the poet was the secretary of the S.N.D.P., his enemies spread many scandals about him. Offended by their attack, he sought to answer them through this poem. He hated any direct confrontation, and so used the allegorical method in poetry. The village, the hermit and the saintly associations, the angel(Deva) who comes with words of consolation, are all convenient background materials for the poet to set his virtues and achievements against the vices and the malicious intentions of his critics.

A dramatic Pastoral Elegy:

The first perfect pastoral elegy in Malayalam is Ramanan. The theme of the poem is the death of a contemporary poet, Idappalli Raghavan Pillai. It is said that this budding poet of unusual talent promised committed suicide at the age of 27, due to disappointment in love.

Milton refers to the death of Edward King in *Lycidas* as: 'For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime, young Lycidas'. This is the keynote of all pastoral elegies. Dead, ere his prime, young Bion (Bion's epitaph), young Philip Sidney (Astrophel), young Edward King (*Lycidas*) young Keats (*Adonais*), young Raghavan Pillai (*Ramanan*); poets all and every one of them, dead ere their prime. Without this motif for writing, there is no pastoral elegy. Changampuzha writes about his feelings just before the composition of *Ramanan*. "I was thinking of writing a Malayalam poem imitating an English form which I had seen recently. It was then that Raghavan Pillai committed suicide. Immediately I composed *Ramanan*.

The poet has styled *Ramanan*, a dramatic pastoral elegy. It is in the form of a dialogue between two shepherds. As in conventional pastorals here also the theme is love. A
shepherd lamenting to his friend his disention by his
mistress finds a place in sicilian poetry. Here
similarly, it is Ramanan, the Shepherd, lamenting to his
friend his rejection by a rich girl he loved.

The Story of Ramanan:

Ramanan is a young shepherd born and bred up in a
thoroughly rustic surrounding. He comes into casual
acquaintance with an urban girl, Chandrika, born with a
silver spoon in her mouth. Their friendship gradually grows
into a drama of love. The innocent shepherd youth
is conscious of his social inferiority. He is therefore
pessimistic, though Chandrika appears enthusiastic and
generous in her love making. At every stage, therefore, he
dissuades Chandrika. Ramanan and Bhanumathi are their
sympathetic counsellors. Between them they fan the flames
of love in the lovers and prepare them for all sorts of
hardships. One day their mutual attraction breaks the physical
barrier separating them and they meet at an appointed
place. There, under the moon-light, Chandrika gralands
Ramanan and accepts him as her life's companion.

Days pass on. The news of Chandrika's attachment
to Ramanan reaches the ears of her wealthy parents. They
soon begin to take action against Ramanan. She is persuaded
in the words of Medaan to accept her rustic lover and one of equal status.
She resists at the beginning, but yields subsequently to
mounting pressure from the parents. Without any remorse,
spurns the shepherd-lover and accepts another, socially
superior and economically well-placed.

The conclusion of Ramanan again reminds us of the
Shepherd Calendar with its similar note of sad farewell.

This betrayal in love comes as a fatal blow to
Ramanan. He loses all hope of life. The consoling words
of Medaan fail to pull up his sinking spirit. And in
the end the rejected swain commits suicide, ominously on the
same day his 'beloved' is married to a rich bridegroom.

One condition of the pastoral poetry is that it should
depict the sharp differences between the rustic and the
urban ways of life. This is well achieved in Ramanan. The
hero leads a deliciously idle life. He is contemplative and
unlike the townswan, lives in perfect sympathy with Nature.
The quiet atmosphere of the country life is presented in a
better light while the cultivated complex life of the
hurrying city engrossed in its wine and wealth is denounced.

See the following lines in Ramanan:

O, the pomp of power, and the glory of wealth,
Revel to your heart's fill in a deer drunken spree.
The conventional pastoral elegiac turn could be traced in the words of Madanan at the new of Ramanan's supreme sacrifice. He consoles himself saying that 'though dead in this world, in the immortal realm of poetry, you will shine like an angelic minstrel'.

The conclusion of Ramanan again reminds us of the Shepherds Calendar with its similar note of sad farewell. The poet urges upon all kind-hearted men to pass by his tombstone gently and shed a drop of sincere tear for the deserted lover. It is the inexorable defeat of the ideal by the bitter and stern realities of life that the poet ultimately projects through the tragedy of the rustic lover - Ramanan.

The poems (sections) are peopled by shepherds who represent Spencer and his friends. Spencer appears as Colin Clout, whose love affair and rejection by Rosalind, (an unknown lady in the hills of the North with whom he had an unhappy love-affair) occupies the centre of the poem artistically.

In Ramanan Changampuzha has adopted more or less the structure of Spencer's pastoral The Shepherds Calendar, though the influence of Lycidas and Adonis could also be seen.

It may be a soliloquy in the first person, or poetic dialogue.
Spenser's pastoral is dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, a contemporary poet who died of a fatal wound, in the early age of 32. It was published anonymously. The poem consists of twelve sections (elegories) one for each month of the year, modelled on the Elegories of Theocritus and Virgil. They take the form of dialogues among shepherds except the first and the last which are complaints of 'Colin Cloute', the author himself. Four of the sections deal with love, one is in praise of Queen Elizabeth, one a lament for a maiden, four deal allegorically with matters of religion or conduct, one describes a singing match and one section laments the contempt in which poetry is held.

The poems (sections) are peopled by shepherds who represent Spenser and his friends. Spenser appears as Colin Cloute, whose love affair and rejection by Rosalind, (an unknown lady in the hills of the North with whom he had an unhappy love-affair) occupies the centre of the poem artistically.

---

12. Greek term (means collection), originally applied to almost any moderately short poem or to a passage from a longer one. Since its application to Virgil's Bucolica, the term has come to mean a pastoral poem in which shepherds are speakers. The elegy may be a song of courtship, a lament about disappointment in love, a dirge for the death of a fellow shepherd. It may be a monologue in the first person, or poetic dialogue, or a sing contest; and it may conceal an allegory of political artistic or religious ideas and developments.
In their ideas about love, poetry and religious feelings, these poems draw unabashedly on classical eclogues and the long succession of pastoral allegories.

In December, Colin has grown old. No longer does he seek to please Rosalind. It is enough if he could please God. At last it is Hobbincoll the rejected one of January. Friendship and other are designated as Moral. The four plaintive eclogues are January, June, November and December. In November the theme is not love but death. The rest form a group and mark a progression from youth to old age of Colin Cloute with particular reference to his love for Rosalind and his friendship for Hobbincoll. In January the shepherd's boy is shown as enamoured of a country lass called Rosalind. In Winter season he complains of his unfortunate love. Set humourously against Colin's unsuccessful wooing of Rosalind is Hobbincoll's daily suit of the shepherd-poet. Coln passeson to Rosalind the clowish gifts of his friend. In June, the lover Colin Cloute attains middle age. The drama of friendship and love is complicated by the entrance of the rival Menalces, and Hobbincoll has developed from the hopeless suitor into the sympathetic counselor actively interested in his friend's poetry. Hobbincoll laments Colin's disappointment in love and blames Rosalind as faithless and void of grace. Hobbincoll is more than a friend and guide. He is presented as a philosopher.
in the Moral eclogues.

In December, Colin has grown old. No longer does he seek to please Rosalind. It is enough if he could please God. At last it is Hobbinol the rejected one of January who is preferred. This love story is Ramanan's model in a general way.

Spenser's poem concludes with a melancholy farewell to his sheep, to his Hobbinol, his Rosalind and indeed to all his delights.