CHAPTER - VI

Aesthetics – Poetic Styles, Themes

“Poetry is established on the word; on the tension organized between words, that’s the ‘song’; on the mystery of the association of ideas and colourations, between memories, emotions and desires provoked by the words; and finally I would dare to say, on the occult power of the word to create the thing. So much so that, there is no poetry if there is no absolute creation, and that, all around this creation, like a permanent halo, mystery should hover around. Creation and mystery form the treasure of poetry”

Pierre –Jean Jouve

Language is the material of the poet. None other than he/she, is sensitive to its possibilities and modifications. Like the Greek divinity Sisyphus, he/she obstinately pushes the rock of language to produce the desired effect.

6:1 The themes of melancholy, death, love, sensuality and morbidity, have been the subjects of poems since the rise of Romanticism in Europe. But the manner in which they have been treated have varied along the ages. The ongoing chapter deals with the unique way in which Verlaine and Changampuzha have used the themes in their poems, stirring the reader to empathy.
Melancholy and morbidity were characteristic features of the fin-de-siècle writers, and Verlaine was no exception. Right from his first collection Saturnien Poems, the melancholic streak was evident (as in ‘Autumn Song’), continuing through Gallant Celebrations (‘Moonlight’), reaching Songs without Words. The refrain in the eighth poem of the ‘Forgotten Tunes’ (Ariettes Oubliées) strongly reflects this sentiment:-

“In the interminable
Boredom of the plains,
The snow hesitatingly
Glistens like sand”

And again in the ninth ‘arietta’

“The shadow of the trees in the misty river
Fades away like smoke,
While in the air, among the real branches,
Murmur the turtle doves.

How much, Oh traveller, this bleak landscape
Rendered your own reflection pale,
And wept sadly among the high arbours,
Over your drowned hopes.”

The note of melancholy is unmistakable in the ‘Autumn Song’ (Saturnien Poems) also. Changampuzha, smitten by melancholy cries out in the poem ‘Superman’ (Throbbing Tomb)

“Having left the other day,
Without uttering a word,
Have you come back, O melancholy,
To embrace me again?”
Trying to grasp the meaning of life, he says gloomily;

‘Dream’ *(Tearful Homage)*

“What is life after all? A vague
Tinkling of bangles.
Full of music, Glowing momentarily
After that? – void, total void!”

At times when the melancholic mood dulls his creativity, the poet cries out helplessly;

‘Morning Dew’ *(Tearful Homage)*

“Oh muse, have you also
Forsaken me, the stricken one?”

In ‘The bosom of melancholy’ (“Diadem”) speaks of his state of mind;

“No matter where my glances fell, I could only see
Disappointment and gloom, instead of light and peace;
Is this life? Leave me alone-my thoughts
Leave me, it’s scorching, let me depart!”

6:1:2 The theme of **death** was quite alluring to both Verlaine and Changampuzha, though their treatment of the subject varied in intensity. Death is not presented as something to be feared, but rather as a smooth transition from a coloured to a colourless screen, and as an escape from the heartless world.
‘Lover’s chat’ (Gallant Celebrations)

“In the deserted park, silent and vast,
Erewhile two shadowy, glimmering figures passed.
Their lips were colourless and dead their eyes,
Their words were scarce more audible than sighs….
Thus walked they ‘mid the frozen weeds, these
dead ones,
And night alone o’er heard the things they said!”

In the fifth poem of Wisdom (Sagesse), Verlaine, overcome with a morbid feeling on being sentenced to imprisonment in the Rimbaud episode, prepares himself for the worst, even death—which he would face with equanimity.

“Sleep, darksome, deep
Doth on me fall:
Vain hopes all, sleep
Sleep, yearnings all
Lo, I grow blind
Lo, right and wrong
Fade to my mind…..
Oh, sorry song!
A cradle, I
Rocked in a grave;
Speak low, pass by
Silence, I crave!”

Changampuzha treats death as a passionate lover, as illustrated in the poem ‘A pleasant Chat’ (Tearful Homage) –

“In sweet tones my lover asks me;
Drunken revelries have you not got tired of them?
If you have, don’t you need to rest your tired head?...
Come to my bosom, my dearest, come
I shall wipe away those tears! do not be ashamed”
He continues in ‘Visitor’ of the same collection-

Without my knowledge,  
Who has been inundating me with kisses  
With a charming demeanour,  
If it were not you- death, my host?

Again in the poem ‘Not anymore’ of the same collection, he says-

“Longing for a long night without dawn  
And deep slumber with no waking,  
With no disturbance whatsoever  
To break an eternal rest -That’s my wish.”

Then again in the poem ‘Formerly and Presently’

“Prepare my funeral pyre  
In an emerald green forest,  
After bidding goodbye to earth, I shall  
Come just now-kindly do wait!”

6:1:3 The theme of love is treated comprehensively in all its diverse forms by Verlaine. In Songs without Words he speaks of the love between a man and a woman-

“Oh sad, so sad was my heart  
Because, because of a woman  
My heart flew from her side- but oh,  
I knew no solace for my woe…..”
In the poem ‘Green’ (Songs without Words) the poet is seen longing to offer himself to his beloved:-

“Here, take these boughs, leaves, fruits, and flowers. And Take this heart that beats for you alone…..

To you I come, still cloaked with morning dew Breeze-frozen on my brow. Ah, let me please, Lie at your feet, dream of the times we knew: Precious those times, peaceful their memories”

The inexpressible anguish of a lover is expressed in the poem- “Like city’s rain…..” from the collection “Songs without Words”

After a long period of waywardness and wantonness, in the forced solitude of imprisonment, Verlaine undergoes a conversion to the Catholic faith, owing to the efforts of the prison chaplain. He returns to the faith of his childhood, and all too aware of his unworthiness, yearns to make amends, and get reconciled with God as made explicit in Sagesse (1881). He cries out in all sincerity expressing his desire for divine love;

“Oh, my God, you have wounded me with love. And the wound is still fresh, Oh, my God you have wounded me with love…

You know all that, all that, And that I am more needy than anyone else You know all that, all that, But all that I have, my God, I give to you.”
After being released from prison Verlaine takes up teaching posts in England and France. While working at a school he is taken up a boy-Lucien Letinois, whom he called his ‘adopted son’. He was happy in his company and settled on a farmhouse in England with the boy’s parents, during which period he wrote Sagesse. But Lucien’s sudden death in 1883 left Verlaine devastated. The work Amour (1888) expresses his affection for Lucien.

‘Your voice deep and low…’

“…..That voice, that laughter, come
Back to my memory, where
I see you – living, dead-
And, hear the trumpeted
Sounds, like the glorious blare
Of some soul’s martyrdom.

In Verlaine’s latter productions there is the work Dedications (1890) in which he describes what each person in his life meant for him, Rimbaud being one of them.

For Arthur Rimbaud

“A human, an angel, And a demon-or,
In other words, Rimbaud! Here are you placed
In honour, though twits fancied you a whore
Smooth-faced, a budding fiend; drunk pup, disgraced.
In his work *Divyageetham*, Changampuzha speaks of the exquisite quality of love:

> “Everything is ephemeral, inconstant
The only thing that is everlasting is Love”

He further explains in the poem ‘*The deity of the house*’ from the collection *Onapookal* (1940) concerning his ladylove-

> “If I had not met you on earth
I would not have known life’s beauty!
It was you who taught me, an insignificant being
How to appreciate selfless, exquisite, immortal love
in this world…”

He describes with enthusiasm the day he met his beloved:

> “*The Throbbing Tomb*”

> “...Sweet Dawn, you showed me-
That day a goddess-
An epitome of love
Auspicious deity of the household.
Thrilling even the soul-
You showed me a moonlight
I realized then that
I was all its own on earth!”

Changampuzha, besides extolling the virtues of conjugal love, was also aware of the value of maternal love. In the collection – *Goddess* (1943),
he says while observing the travails of a mother, who, lays aside her own difficulties to take care of her child:

“What else is there on earth, more valuable than motherhood?”

He has also expressed filial love, as in the poem ‘The Visitor’ (Onapookal)

“This Onam will find
A cherished visitor in my home.....
Blessed are my eyes, both of them,
Drowned in tears of joy!”

Verlaine and Changampuzha were poets of sensuality par excellence, as demonstrated through their poems.

In the poem bearing an English title ‘A Poor Young Shepherd’ of the same collection-

I’m afraid of a kiss
Like a bee.
I suffer and I keep watch
Without respite.
I’m afraid of a kiss!

The section ‘Whims’ of Saturnien Poems has this poem-

‘Initium’

The violins blended their laughter with the song of the flutes
And the ball was in full swing when I saw her passing by

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With her blond hair playing on the spirals of her ear
Where my desire like a kiss sprung forward
And wanted to speak to her, not daring to…

Changampuzha had the unique skill of making the reader participate in his own experience-

‘Promise’ (Tearful Homage)

“Love-lorn, beloved, I shall
Come tonight beside you….
Without at all moving my lips
I shall wake you up
Without your being aware of it,
After embracing you, I shall leave at once!...”

The poem ‘Manaswini’ from “Swararagasudha” is another example of the expression of the sensual.

“Like the yellow chrysanthus cluster
That blooms radiantly at dawn,
You stood before me
Like a golden wave of ecstasy….­
I reached a wonderland where bloomed
The asparagus of sweet dreams,
Where through the amalgam of vibrant emotions
I attained an ecstatic realm!”

6:2 Versification Techniques

In order to capture the attention of the reader and raise his emotional experience to dizzy heights, Verlaine and Changampuzha resorted to the usage of several poetic techniques regarding the form and content of poetry, thereby enhancing the aesthetic appreciativeness of the
verses. Verlaine mainly used the verse form – alexandrine, consisting of lines of twelve syllables each, with major stresses on the sixth syllable preceding the medial caesura or pause, and on the last syllable, and one secondary accent in each half line the alexandrine is the kind of line the French used in their poetry for hundreds of years. Because six syllables is a normal breath group and the secondary stresses can be on any other syllable in the line, the alexandrine is a flexible form, adaptable to a wide range of subjects. Its structural metrical principle is stress according to sense: the form thus lends itself to the expression of simple or complex emotions, narrative description, or grandiose patriotic sentiment.

The ‘Autumn Song’ of Verlaine belonging to his first collection *Saturnien Poems*, is a typical example of his versatility. The exquisitely crafted verse affirms that Verlaine is a poet of strong emotions and appetites, with an unrivalled gift for the sheer music of poetry and an inventive approach.

The poem uses several stylistic devices and is in many ways typical of Verlaine, in that it employs sound techniques such as consonance (the repetition of ‘n’ and ‘r’ sounds that also create an onomaetopic effect, sounding both monotonous and like a violin. In the second verse, the stop consonant and pause after the word ‘choking’ reflect the meaning of the word. The sound of the words deça and dela(here and there) evoke the image of a dead leaf falling. The symbol of the autumn season is used by the poet to describe a sad view of growing old.
Verlaine’s is a distillation of everyday language. Its instantaneous music is in the repeated, closed ‘o’ sounds that then shift slightly to the open ‘o’s of monotone - like a distant echo to which the mute e adds its dying fill.

The poem ‘Moonlight’, composed of 12 ten-syllable lines, divided into 3 stanzas, each of which possesses its own regularly alternating rhyme scheme (abab, cdcd, efef) The title of the collection in which the poem originally appeared – “Gallant Celebrations” bears considerable importance on a visual level to the interpretation of this piece. Antoine Watteau was renowned as the painter of Fêtes Galantes. His jewel-like renderings of men and women dressed in satins, lounging gracefully in nature’s lushness, enhanced the charm of the work.

‘Moonlight’

Your soul is like a landscape fantasy,
Peopled with maskers delicate and dim,
Who play on lutes and dance….
And makes the marbled fountains, gushing, streaming-
Slender jet-fountains - sob their ecstasies.

Two devices seem to be Verlaine’s own contribution to decadent prosody: ‘vers impairs’ (odd verses), and the short, simple, song-like stanzas of “Chansons d’Automne” or those of “Il pleure dans mon coeur.” Although Baudelaire had used ‘vers impairs’ in “Fleurs du Mal,” this style had not been used by minor poets until 1884, while brief stanzas of short
lines are common in the verse of Banville and Gautier (and sometimes in Hugo’s) and Baudelaire used them as the refrain of “The Invitation to the Voyage”. Verlaine seems to have originated using them with repetitious assonances in a song-like manner—like the poem “Oh sad, so sad was my heart, / Because, because of a woman.”

Unidentified references, unanswered questions, and the rich, yet disconnected imagery evoke the obscurity of some of the ‘lunes’ (moon) poems. Ex. “La lune blanche” (The White Moon):

“Among the trees
The moon gleams white,
Hushed repartees
Rustle tonight
From leaf and vine…
O mistress mine…”

The succession of noun phrases, free of grammatical links is typical of Verlaine, as in “Walcourt”:

“Biricks, tiles….how sweet
Such cozy cover,
Charming retreat
For man and lover!...

One of the most purely lyrical of French poets and initiator of modern word-music, Verlaine showed words could be used merely for their sound to make a subtler music, an incantory spell more potent than their everyday meaning. Explicit intellectual or philosophical content was
absent in his verses, which was a continual quest leading to the discovery of the intimate musicality of the French language, striving to ‘reform’ his nation’s poetic expression.

Like Verlaine, Changampuzha published his first work “Tearful Homage” at 22 years of age. The manner in which he arranged the contents of this first publication is significant. He classified the poems in this collection according to the name of the metre used in each of them like ‘omanakuttan’, ‘maveli’, ‘thiruvathira’ ‘kurathi’, ‘gunamerum’, ‘kalyanikalavani’, ‘upasarpini’, ‘mathuramozhi’, ‘makandamanjari’ ‘kakali’, ‘pana’, ‘malarmathinkanthan’, ‘tharattu’, ‘keka’, ‘kalyanarupi’ and ‘annanada’. We find that in the choice of theme as well as structure, he has given importance to simplicity and brevity in these poems. Like Verlaine, he has laid focus on the intensity of the emotion experienced, choosing a metrical structure most suited to convey the idea to the reader.

For a better appreciation of the metrical pattern of Verlaine’s verses a phonemic transcription of ‘Autumn Song’ (Chanson d’Automne) and the third arietta from RSP (Songs Without Words) is given below:

Phonetic Transcription (IPA phonetic alphabet):

‘Chanson d’Automne’

le sǎglo lũ
de vjolũ
də lotɔn
bleo mɔ kœr
Il pleure dans mon coeur

Il plør dã mĩ koer
kɔm il plø syr la vil.
kɛl e set lãgœr
ki penɛ:tre mĩ koer

O brũi du dɔ la plũi
par tɛr e syr le twa !
pur æ koer ki sãŋũi,
o lɔ fã dɔ la plũi !
il plør sã rezũ
da sə koer ki koer.
A phonetic transcription of Changampuzha’s poems will reflect the exquisiteness of his rhyming patterns.

‘Kavya Narthaki’ (Sankalpanthi)

First syllable rhyming is evident here –

“kanaka chillanga kilungi, kilungi, kanchana kanchi kulungikulungi /kanaka chilanga kiluŋ:i, ka:ncana ka:nci kuluŋ:ikuŋ:i.../

(Golden anklets tinkling, tinkling,
Golden girdles shaking, shaking)

Here apart from the rhyming in first syllable of the two lines of the distich, the onomatopoeic phonemes/ l/ and /ŋ:/ of the words kiluŋ:i and
kuluŋ:i in repetition impart a magical lustre to the verse. One can almost hear the tingling of the anklets and girdles of a dancer in the words kanaka chilanga - with nasals galore. Malayalam is rich in nasal phonemes with its stock six nasals: /m n η η η and η/ and this is rare occurrence and there is predilection for musicality since nasals are sonorous and impart a dynamic rhythm and flow to poetry.

Ramanan

Malaranikkatukal thingi vingi
Marataka kandiyil Mungi Mungi
Karalum Mizhiyum Kavaru Minni
Karayattoralasal Gramabhangi
/malaraŋːikaːtukal tĩːniːviːiŋːi
marataːkaː muːniː muːniː
karalum miːliːyuː kavːarːuːmuːniː
karayaːːroːːlasal gramabhaŋːi/
In this quatrain the rhyming pattern is very spectacular. The first four syllables rhyme perfectly ie: /ma/ and /ka/ and moreover the last syllable in each line is made up of geminate nasal-vowel combination ie: in first second and fourth line we find /ŋ:i/ and in the third line there appears the closely rhyming /n:i/.

**Spandikkunna asthimadam**

/ta:rakaːŋːale: kaːŋːmito: nĩːŋːal/
/tə:leyuːlːori: peːtakutːirːəmʔ/  
hantaiːnːcitːarehasya  
mentenːariːnː u haː duːrastar nĩːŋːalʔ/  
Paːla puːtːa parimaːlametːi  
pːaːtirayeːpːunarmːolkumpoːl  
mənːanːiːnː u madaːlasayaːyi  
manju  candaːrika nriːːnːamaːtumpoːl  
mandamandrəm poːtːipːaːyːkːeːlkːaːm  
spandaːnːaːlikːːallarakːuːlːil/
This very touching stanza which incidentally forms the epitaph on Changampuzha’s tomb, is rich in imagery as well as phonetic composition of varying meters of deca and hendecasyllabic lines and 12 syllable lines with caesura at sound-sense junctures. The long lines are due to the polysyllabic lexical structure with potential to form compound words. Besides the phonetic pattern with long vowels and consonants, and consonant clusters necessitate the formation of long lines for sound-sense coordination.

6:3 “Creative Madness” (creative exhilaration) at work in the poets in question

During inspired moments of creativity, geniuses are said to gain access to a supernatural domain beyond that of the normal world view and capture visions and associations, quite beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. Since such a perspective is incomprehensible to the natural world, those holding such views are considered ‘mad,’ In need of medical treatment, and a potential threat to the general wellbeing of society—therefore raising the need of being separated or alienated from it.

Greek thought at the time of Hippocrates, conceived of madness “as a break with the social world and the community, whose world view we share through language – or what the Greeks called ‘Logos’¹. Indeed, literature, specifically poetry has often celebrated irrationality or madness as a state of revelation. Plato firmly believed that it was in a state of

¹ (Thiher 2000:13)
inspiration that poets uttered their beautiful melodies, possessed by a spirit not their own. That was exactly why he banished them from his ‘Republic,’ as he feared that their ‘irrational behaviour’ would pose a threat to the harmonious co-existence of individuals in society. The Romanticists believed that “madness offered poets a royal way to truth, beyond rational empiricism.” This was echoed by poetic modernists – Nerval, for example, who defended his madness as a revelation of knowledge, believing that the poetic use of analogy and metaphor to find meaning in, and relationships between all things, meant that a poetic knowledge of the universe was superior to that offered by scientists.

Other poets from Baudelaire to modern times - actively sought the experience of madness through the use of drugs, so that they could discern “correlations unfettered by empirical limits.” Madness and literature spring from the same imaginative capacity to entertain present worlds that do not (really) exist.” (162). One way of viewing this relationship is the Freudian analysis offered by Feder and Thiher (which emphasizes the role of the unconscious. This approach might be summarized as: in madness the unconscious, - which contains feelings and memories we have to repress in order to live in within a given social structure - is no longer successfully repressed. In poetry, many poetic techniques depend on accessing the unconscious. The unconscious may be accessed in order to recreate reality – either in poetry or in madness, when for compelling reasons, reality becomes intolerable.

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2 (Thiher, 2000:169)  
3 (Thiher 2000:211)  
4 1980  
5 2000
The highly influential twentieth-century Surrealist movement aimed to unify conscious and unconscious states, in order to produce an unmediated representation of life. Surrealist poetry is characterized by “the creation of images that unite diverse and even contradictory levels of experience…. Images are connected not by conventional, emotional and intellectual associations, but by the process of generation itself.” Thus, surrealist poets were engaged in “continually rediscovering and recreating the world” by “opening themselves to the revelations of the unconscious, in merging with the non-human natural world, and even in rejecting the so-called rationality, which they regarded as mere rigidity.”

Very often, down the centuries, artists seemed to rely on inebriants like liquor, drugs etc. to get an enhanced experience of ‘the other world.’ Charles Baudelaire was among the avant-garde artists who believed that the right temperament for creativity could be attained by a complete ‘derangement’ of the senses. The means for achieving this derangement differed from person to person. For Baudelaire, it was opium and sometimes hashish and absinthe, in the vapours of which he had psychedelic visions of the associations between the physical and spiritual worlds, the hidden connections and meanings thereof. His poem “Correspondences,” basing itself on the Swedenborgian concept, nevertheless, weaves an elaborate tapestry of interconnections.

Verlaine, following in the footsteps of his idol, took recourse to absinthe and alcohol to enhance his creativity. His frequentation of the

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6 Feder 1980:256
‘Quartier Latin’ and associations with bohemian artists only served to strengthen his erring habits. For Changampuzha, the spurt in creativity seemed due to the intake of alcohol and ‘ganja’. In this heightened state of creativity, the poets’ sensibilities seemed to be acutely fine-tuned to capture the slightest nuance in the canvas of life and beyond it – to be etched on to the afore-mentioned tapestry. Verlaine speaks about his obsession-

“For me, my glory is a
Humble, ephemeral, Absinthe
Drunk on the sly, with fear of treason-
And if I drink it no longer,
It is for a good reason.”

Changampuzha also speaks of his weaknesses in no uncertain terms. As he expresses himself in the poem ‘On the wings of ganja’ (The Sinners):

“A race – life in this universe
Is a race…….. Tired am I, exhausted, a failure!
A victim of drugs, I avidly nibble away
My life with ganja and liquor…….”

Though the effect of inebriants have not been scientifically proven, the prolific output of the poets under these circumstances, is indeed amazing! In the surrealist poem ‘Progess, Progress!’ (Immortal Vibes) Changampuzha says regarding the creative spirit, which he yearns to embrace;
“I ‘see’ you in the sounds of birds,
I ‘hear’ you in the constellations,
I ‘touch’ you in the scents hovering around”…

The association between the senses is quite remarkably expressed. However, the artist has to pay a heavy price for his ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking. Society, not comprehending the ‘queer’ working of the creative mind, considers the artist as mad. And Changampuzha denounces the practice of labelling the creative genius as ‘insane,’ and putting him on the same footing as the lunatic, who is a product of the anomalies of the cultural milieu, and meting out the same treatment to both. In his poem ‘The lute of intoxication’ ("Blood Stained Flowers"), who refusing to make compromises with the ways of the world, is sidelined and deemed to be mad, and put behind bars in an asylum. He is forced to gulp down medicines of all hues, the refusal of which would lead to physical torture.

Changampuzha shifts the onus of the problem from the artist to the society for nurturing such perspectives. Society, considering such ‘waywardness as dangerous, as dangerous, forces the artists in question into prisons or asylums, seemingly to safeguard the interests of the larger public. But in the process, creativity gets destroyed. The question arises therefore as to who is indeed mad, the individual or the society?- 

“You consider me mad, but you are all-
Actually madmen-a pity you do not know it!”
It is when one thinks differently from the conventional pattern that society frowns upon you and treats you as ‘bizarre.’ He says bluntly in the poem ‘Madirolsavam’ (Drunken bout):

“I’ve discovered in the silver wine goblets,
A bliss, unfathomed in the sanctity of temples”

He has never tried to conform to the conventions of society, either regarding his works or personal life, thus inviting scathing criticism from all quarters.

It is this ill-comprehension of the creative genius and his alienation from society that Verlaine has successfully portrayed in his “Poètes Maudits” (Accursed poets) His rejecting of the conventional prosody, inventing a new manner of versification, already stunned the French literary circles, added to which was his scandalous mode of life with Rimbaud, his ‘époux infernal’ (hellish spouse).

Speaking of the ‘superb’ and ‘sovereign’ inspiration triggering the imagination of poets, (“Saturnien Poems”) Verlaine says that what is needed is willingness to work for a goal, and steadfastness of purpose. Art is not for display,

“Therefore, let’s sculpt with the chisel of our thoughts
The virgin block of Beauty, immaculate Paris,
And let us bring forth through our zealous hands
Some beautiful statue in starry radiance,
So that one day, striking with gray and pink rays
The serene masterpiece, like a new Memnon,
The dawn of prosperity, daughter of morose times
May be made to resound your name in the future!!”

In Greek mythology the Muses/oracle at Delphi, - acting as Appollo’s mouthpiece, utters prophesies. Under intoxicating vapours emitted from a fissure in the rock on which the temple is located, poets may be subject to a kind of derangement labelled furor poeticus which help them to achieve extraordinary talent in composition under the influence of the so - called green fairy or absinthe- the peridot green alcoholic potion with hallucinogenic effects. Absinthe (Artemis absinthium) is the extract of worm wood and the chemical compound it contains is thujone’. Shift in sensory perception, vast improvement in cognitive power, clarity of thought  and creativity are supposed to be the effects of thujone which is distilled from wormwood a wild plant.

It was a favourite with artists, writers and so on during the 19th c. For Changampuzha toddy and arrack were the intoxicants. These are two creative artists who were addicted the one to absinthe and the other to arrack or other forms of alcohol in order to plunge to the depths of depravity to gain superior creativity. They succumbed to the ill-effects of these intoxicants and met with accursed, pathetic ends. At this juncture we can think of Rimbaud the prince of degradation who adopted this way of life as an artistic device to achieve superhuman creative powers and who however did not succumb to these evils. He gave up absinthe unlike Verlaine after experimenting with it and achieving supreme creative
faculties and even deserted the muses for another goddess - the wanderlust. While it is presumptive to claim that in moments of extreme inspiration poets especially achieve divine creative powers, they do not act as mere mouthpieces of an external power. They do not act like Pythia at Delphi and deliver prophesies or act involuntarily, unaware and unconscious of their actions as in a trance. Rather the so-called heightening of creative abilities is more like a revelation where the whole process is interactive with the proper understanding of the internal or external source and they augment their existing faculties as a result of the metaphysical communion with their so-called muses.