CONCLUSION

A more or less detailed analysis of the life and works of Paul Verlaine and Changampuzha Krishnapillai, as well as the study of their works and the literary ambience which nurtured their creativity has led to the following conclusions, providing answers to the questions posed in Chapter I.

It has been conclusively proved that Changampuzha has indeed been influenced by Verlaine. In his *Sahitya Chinthakal* Changampuzha himself has affirmed the fact that ‘The Poetic Art’, has had a great impact on him. Though his poetic outlook and perception were moulded by Verlaine to a certain extent, Changampuzha has never attempted an imitation. He evolved his own style and invented a diction to appeal to the common man. By so doing he was able to enhance the aesthetic appreciation of his compositions.

The Indian aesthetic legacy, dating from 3rd century B.C. with Bharata muni’s ‘Natya Sasthra’ and followed by Anandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, Bhamaha, Kuntaka, among others (9th and 10th centuries), as its illustrious proponents is much older and richer than that of our counterparts in the west. Though ancient Greece set the path towards aestheticism with Plato focusing on the Idea and Aristotle on the material or natural, it was only in 1750, that a treatise on aestheticism emerged in the
west, with the publication of Alexander Baumgarten’s ‘Aesthetica.’ This was followed by the observations of Immanuel Kant and others.

Changampuzha who was nurtured in the Indian aesthetic tradition was in the quest of a novel method of expression in poetry, capable of stirring the hearts of the readers to empathy. And in Verlaine’s ‘Poetic Art,’ (Art Poétique) he seems to have found his answer. Verlaine’s exhortation to infuse verses with music, choosing a light diction, abandoning rhetoric to the point of strangulation, and creating an ambiance of veiled suggestion was what fascinated Changampuzha.

Kuntaka’s ‘vakroktisiddhantha’ held that poetry is a play of the creative use of language, consisting in the delightful union of word and meaning, manipulated in such a way by the skill of the poet as to afford pleasure to the reader. Changampuzha lived at a time when Malayalam literature had reached a transition point, breaking away from classical rigour and trying to reach out to the common man. In the wake of the spread of literacy and a liberal education policy, it was urgently required to evolve a style and diction in poetry to meet the requirements of the day. Though the Malayalam poets Cherussery, Kumaran Asan and Vallathol had initiated the move to simplify the diction of poetry, apparently the consistent efforts of Changampuzha and his friend Raghava Menon (Edappally Poets) were responsible in bringing out a sea-change regarding choice of theme and language in Malayalam poetry. Towing in line with the sweeping changes in world literature, especially Romanticism and Symbolism, which these budding poets familiarized
themselves through translations, they breathed fresh life into Malayalam poetry, so to speak, and their creations took the Malayalam literary world by storm. With the untimely death of Raghavan Pillai, it seemed like it was the responsibility of Changampuzha to take the march forward.

From ancient times, India, and for that matter Kerala, followed a rich oral tradition of music. The verses or the slokas of the religious texts – the Vedas and the Upanishads were perpetrated by word of mouth long before the spread of literacy and the appearance of the printed word. This knowledge however, was largely the privilege of the upper classes, who alone had access to the knowledge of ‘divine utterances’. The general public had their vibrant forms like the ‘pulluvan pattu’ and the like, associated with folk music. This intuitive capacity of the mind to grasp and retain rhythmic verses must have prompted Changampuzha to resort to the tradition of folk music, to captivate the heart of the common man. In his search for brevity and extreme musicality, Changampuzha acknowledges in his treatise *Sahitya Chinthakal* that it was Verlaine’s ‘Poetic Art’ which served as the guiding light. In order to bring suppleness and fluidity to the metrical structure, he did away with the cumbersome Sanskrit prosody, replacing it with Dravidian metres like kakali, keka annanada, natholi, omanakuttan, maveli and the like. Thereby, he fulfilled the primary objective of poetry- that it must be sung and danced. This mellifluousness was created as a result of the blending of the rasas especially that of love and pathos in the right proportion in the background of wordplay. Among the nine rasas, these two are responsible mainly to move the heart to empathy.
All while taking into consideration that wordplay should be subjugated to the play of emotions, Changampuzha’s famous work - *Ramanan* is an impressive example of how pathos resulting from failure of love has served to enrich the beauty of the composition on the whole, extricating its aesthetic appreciativeness. To illustrate this point, the following lines from the second part of scene 5 are being quoted. The shepherd Ramanan, feeling jilted in love, reminisces his sincere sentiments which have been callously thrown aside:

“Silvery star, gazing at you longingly-
My mind brimming over
Has not harboured
Any lustful desire!

Your love sprouts, blooming
In the delightful garden of ecstasy,
Did I chase ceaselessly,
Portraying them in my songs!

With the whole world watching over,
In front of the sacred lamp,
Below the starry tent,
With the blazing sun as witness,
You placed on my neck that day
The nuptial garland”

Participating in the emotional travesties of the poet, the reader undergoes a ‘catharsis’ as envisaged by Aristotle, thereby enabling him to purge himself of negative emotions.
Of the richness of French poetry, Changampuzha has been a heavy borrower, no doubt. But it should be admitted that he has imbibed the essence of French Symbolism, and made his own adaptations of it. There have been no blind imitations, except in titles perhaps, as in his poem entitled ‘The Flowers of Sin’ from the collection - *Srithilakam*, modelling himself on Baudelaire’s *Fleurs du Mal*. He dared to translate Baudelaire’s poem ‘Correspondances’ - a poem considered a challenge for translators due to its myriad nuances and connotations. The translation entitled ‘Pratheekangalude Vanaveedhiyil’ has been done in a very innovative manner, by retaining the essence and at the same time, making the poem appreciable to the Malayali reader. Even at the young age of 23, Changampuzha had translated into Malayalam, almost 150 poems from English regarding world literature, compiled in the “Anthology of World Poetry.” This book had been loaned to him by Prof. G. Sankarakurup, then teaching at Maharajah’s College, later the winner of the ‘Gyanapith’ award. This is proof enough of the poet’s innovativeness and ingenuity.

In the work *The Singing Devil*, Changampuzha makes use of symbolic imagery to portray the horrifying picture of evil or sin, which is depicted as alluring and seductive, in the true manner of the Symbolists. The poem ‘Oru Katha.’ from the collection *Spandikunna Asthimadam* is also a symbolic representation of the poignant love-story unfolding in a beautiful garden between a parijatha and a chembaka, also between a koel and a vulture - which has a sorrowful ending, as appearances have turned deceptive. “My failure is that I preserved a sincere heart in a deceptive world” cries the poet in anguish.
The analysis of the significant works of Verlaine and Changampuzha have shown many similarities in choice of theme and treatment of subject, as well as dissimilarities. It has been found that the three theories of Sanskrit Poetics - vakrokti, riti, alankara have relevance still in the modern context, as they are pointers to the fundamental principles of poetic creation. Corresponding to Kuntaka’s vakrokti, the ‘poetic method’ has been defined as being normally indirect and suggestive. Secondly, in the west, poetry has been defined as “the art of arranging words in formal patterns as regards their sound, rhythm and meaning or any combination of the three, in order to secure within a brief compass, the utmost intensity of significance. “This is the Riti of Sanskrit Poetics. Thirdly, in the modern context, the poetic method “proceeds by means of paradoxes, qualifications and innuendos and speaks constantly through analogues, metaphors and symbols.” In other words, this is the rhetoric or alankara of Sanskrit Poetics.

Therefore the characteristics of Sanskrit Poetics, in many aspects depict traits similar to the tenets of Symbolism and Aestheticism. It is in matters regarding form that Changampuzha wrought a drastic change leading to a heightened relish in aesthetic enjoyment. By repeating words and sounds, Changampuzha successfully created an ambience for his ideas to flourish. In the poem, ‘The Throbbing Tomb’:

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“Sweet dawn, you showed me
An enchanting person
You showed me a deity in the home
An epitome of love
You showed me a moonlight
Thrilling even my soul!
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‘So sad was my heart’ from Verlaine’s collection *Songs without words* uses this technique to great advantage.

“So sad my heart, so sad it was,  
And woman, woman was the cause,”

In the ‘Autumn Song’, Verlaine has used several sound techniques, like the repetition of ‘n’ and ‘r’ sounds. In the second verse, the stop consonant and pause after the word ‘suffocant’ reflect the meaning of the word. The sound of the words, deça, dela, evoke the image of a dead leaf falling.

This onomatopoeic effect is wrought ever more impressively in Changampuzha’s poem ‘Kaavya Narthaki’ (*Poetic Dancer-Sankalpakanthi*), where the words are so arranged as to create the effect of the dance, one can hear the anklets of the dancer tinkling;

“Kanaka chillanga killungi,killungi,  
Kanchana kanchi kullungikullungi…”

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

This poetry of evocation and subtle nuances of Verlaine and his followers made a great impression on Changampuzha, who tried to transmit the trends to Malayalam poetry to the delight of the readers.
The ancient Indian sages have said:

“Music and literature
Are the twin breasts of Saraswati
Sweet to the core
Sweeter still as one ponders over it”

These verses clearly indicate that from ancient times music was considered an integral part of literature. A poet weaves the tapestry of his poem using not only sounds and tunes, but also images, emotive experiences, banal thoughts, all skillfully crafted into one great fusion.

Among the fine arts only literature has direct access to the human mind. Sculpture, painting, architecture, dance, gain entry into the human mind through the eye, and music through the ear. Poetry speaks through the ear and the eye. But the entry through one sense organ is more powerful than that of several, says the noted critic Mr. A. Balakrishnapillai. Therefore the sensuous pleasure derived from poetry is less compared to the other fine arts. It is to provide an equally powerful sensuous pleasure in poetry that Verlaine and Changampuzha have tried by virtue of their craftsmanship, and to a certain extent they have succeeded in their mission. Verlaine and Changampuzha were both path-breakers and harbingers of a new trend in the poetry of their respective literatures, so much so that one tends to echo Verlaine’s verses:
“Music first and foremost! In your verse
Choose those metres odd of syllable,;
Supple in the air, vague and flexible,
Free of pounding beat, heavy, or terse…
For Nuance, not colour absolute,
Is your goal; subtle and shaded hue!...

Take vain eloquence and wring its neck!...

May your verse be a prophecy
Cast into the morning wind
Scented with mint and thyme…
And all the rest is literature!”

The analysis thus leads to the inference that there are aesthetic universals in the two poets such as the treatment of basic emotions such as love, hatred, pity, fear, remorse, and so on. Differentials in time, and space along with the multitude of cultural parameters accompanying the latter such as geography, language, race, and morals have impacted the evolution of the muses of the two stalwarts. This statement is almost a cliché since it is something which is to be taken for granted, but sufficient significance has to be attached to this reality, since it is of almost ontological relevance to the theme of study.

It has become quite obvious that Verlaine has imitated his predecessors like Gérard De Nerval and Baudelaire and has shared the creative impulse with Mallarmé, Rimbaud, his contemporaries. Being a symbolist, his poetry abounds in utilizing the technique of ‘suggestion’ to the neglect of ‘rhetoric’ theorized first by Aristotle. His crowning glory
was the adoption of intense musicality endowing them with the highest potential for incantation. It is noteworthy that though he disregarded the basic precept of verse that it should combine sound and meaning in optimal and harmonious proportions, his predilection for the audible aspects of verse has not undermined the comprehensibility of his poems.

Having dispensed with rhetoric, he was able to achieve aesthetic heights for his verse by wooing formal laconism and simplicity in metre and adopting varying meters ranging from tetrasyllabic to hendecasyllabic lines, unusual catchy rhyming techniques. This was in abject contrast to the rigidity of the alexandrine with its twelve syllable lines and fixed stanzaic forms. The patriarchal notions and the misogyny of the staunch Parnassians were latent in the masculine rhyme typical of the alexandrine. Verlaine in fact broke this hegemony and often employed feminine rhyme ending with mute /e/. He was labeled a feminine poet but in reality his soft and sensuous prosody may also be interpreted as reflecting his predilection for women’s equality - one of the earliest attempts in the direction along with Rimbaud who also was pro-women rights. A composite of the divine and the demonic in personality, his verse touched moral lows when he sung praises to the Dionysian and hedonistic life style, having sunk to the depths of depravity as he reveled in gay and anal sex patterns. This was bohemianism in all its immoral and diabolic traits, purposely adopted by Verlaine and Rimbaud among other French avant-garde as we have come to know in order to achieve zeniths of creativity.
If they courted intense moral degradation viewed as something akin to madness by lesser mortals and achieved inimitable and eternal poetic heights, their popularity was at nadirs during their lifetime. Verlaine had intermittent psychic flashes of the saint and the sinner and he was prone to remorse as exemplified by his switching between religious conversions and criminal and tramp modes in and out of prisons and landing ultimately in the care of prostitutes. Reflecting on the oeuvre of Verlaine some dedicated to lofty notions like the beauty of nature, love of various types, platonic and non-platonic, motherly love, passion, heterosexuality, conjugal love, sorrow, pity, fear and yet others to gay and lesbian love, with celebration of the beauty of anal sex and scatological themes, one is inclined to think that aesthetics has to be redefined in a realistic manner. Aesthetics is then the study of beauty in a complex, highly relative connotation, beauty is not solely what suits the moral requirements of the senses. Even the formidable and the ugly and the repulsive can be the subject of aesthetic study of a creative imagination. It may not please the senses but it may please the soul or the spirit in that a pleasantly worded poem on any repulsive object such as a corpse can strike a chord of empathy in the preceptor. This brings one to the conclusion that beauty is both objective and subjective and it is not necessarily accompanied by ethics or morality.

Changampuzha has emulated Verlaine and through him the stalwart French symbolists such as Baudelaire and Mallarmé. Many imitations have been composed by him, but it must be said to his credit that he has rather created them in his own anvil using the cultural traits particular to his environment. The choice of words the rhymes the rhythm
and supreme musicality are so original that the so called imitations aspire to the quality of innate creations. When Aristotle expounded his materialistic theory of literary creativity in his “Poesis” and highlighted ‘mimesis’ as the soul of creation, he attributed deep significance to the process. Nature is there for the poet or dramatist to draw inspiration for his creation, as for instance to paint a picture or to create symphony, though they are not all represented as unified wholes. It is the creative vision of the artist which makes a composite whole out of the hues or the noises or phenomena of nature like sunshine, rain, thunder, and so on. Verlaine and Changampuzha have done exactly this: they created their magnificent magna opera in their own crucible of experiences to enthrall generations of perceptors. This is true alchemy where the most banal or base sensations are transformed into scintillating gems of beauty!