CHAPTER 2

The Textual Field of Pictures: 'A literate – Media space'

Mapping the entanglement of images and texts in periodical-media, attempted here is to delineate the typologies of communication in the 'literate-media space' of Malayalam periodicals. As John Hartley observes, the Platonic opposition between image and reality never unduly troubled the popular media\(^1\). Periodical is a physical space in which public could imaginatively congregate, vindicate, portray oneself, gaze or glance upon or sometimes even derive voyeuristic pleasures and gratify its collective self. The affairs, whatever in the public domain is thought to be real and actual through a sensorium of sight. In the earliest instances of periodical production, metaphors of light and sight had suffused its political rhetoric of sensory perception, acting as guarantors of its representation.

Vignettes and frontice pieces were used as props in cultural tableau of publishing and reading. Political landscapes of nationalism interfaced with the advertisement visuals of publishing companies or book distribution firms or even with that of biscuit brands and other commercial products. Most often they visualized it in the allegorical format of a female within the map of the country. Calendar iconography spilled over into the advertisement visuals for soap or hair oil. Humor
drawings evolved as a genre by itself. Sometimes they acted as annotated cartoons of political events or sentimental lampoons over newly emerged bourgeois class with urban habits and pastoral tastes.

Photography right from the beginning gave great momentum to textual featuring and informative journalist pedagogy of information through pictures. Each of these textual fields generated a schema and taste of its own, shaping the sustainable typologies of periodical communication through out the century. These textual fields also produced an ambiguous plane of artistic expression within the framework of modern selective traditions in which ‘literature-oriented illustrations’ formed an important part.

2.1 Graphic Diagrams – gateway to the subject of the magazine

There are instances of diagrammatic presentation of visuals that establish a signatory relation with the verbal content within the periodical. Magazines like Dhanwantari and Aryasidhanta chandika used sketches aligned emblematically on the cover of the magazine. (App.b.8) Their emblematic treatment of visuals did not obviously proceed further into changes at the level of visuals in relation to any concurrent textuality but they represented the overall idea regarding the ‘special focus’ of the magazine. The pictures got repeated issue after issue. ‘Dhanwantari’ presented a sculptural figure of Dhanwantari, the traditional God of medicine while ‘Aryasidhanta chandrika’ repeated a tantrik ‘Srichakra’, an instrumental geometric form used in the ritualistic practice. It signaled a sacred practice.
‘Kerala Kesari’ asserted the value of unity through a picture of roaring lion and flag on which is declared that ‘Unity is our sole wealth’. (App.e.6) These were exactly reproducible pictorial statements characterizing the very intention of publishing each magazine rather than the actual depiction of the animal called lion being observed out there or the ritualistic purpose of ‘shrichakram’. Even a visual interest in its geometric form seems to be a lesser concern. ‘Dhanwantari’ figure is also a pictorial statement validating the publishing subjects rather than a pictorial interest in the reproduction of the lord of the clan as an observed image from tradition. These were examples of diagrammatic thinking but not necessarily a visual thinking as a dramatic imagining of reality. The late 19th century magazines ‘Satyanadakahalam’, ‘Vidyavilasini’ and ‘Vidyavinodini’ used some emblems to characterize the periodical, signaling loudly either the missionary or modern / epochal zeal for new knowledge reason truth and entertainment. All these ideals are legibly grafted verbally within their names and on their emblems.

The intended communication was of course a symbolic assertion of new age ideals in a language as simple and basic as mother’s milk.1 These carriers of truth (‘satyapathram’/ ‘paropakara dharmapatram’) intended for the service of the people are declared to use simple language because the people / readers are imagined like children who will be nurtured only by mother’s milk and not by all tasty varieties of drinks. Just like youngsters demand for things other than mother’s milk, those who acquired more education will then find this simplicity unnecessary. Interestingly, it is assumed by this editorial that the mass of populace is like children in knowledge. So the verbal text and the picture also intended to address the simplest possible
denominator of communication. Picture was used as an element of the general ideologue.

The visual illustrated nothing particular in the immediate text. But there is an iconic and symbolic attitude that is apparently exhibited as if on a stage. They were pointers of the very attractive and significant act of publishing.

2.2 The Vignette

Magazines like *Keralachintamani, Sharada, Mangalodayam* and later *Deepam Illustrated Journal, Sanjayan, Viswaroopam, Anandadeepika* etc. started using relatively elaborate vignettes and cover pictures since early decades of 20th century. That was an initiation to the image-text model of communication in a significant scale in periodicals from this time. It is interesting to think what necessitated the use of pictures at that stage. Visuals were generally used next to the verbal text. But they were used irrespective of the content or nature of the verbal text and even irrespective of the periodicals. This shows these were basically treated as stock motifs for design purpose rather than visuals or pictures denoting something real or symbolic or emblematic. Taken here is the vignette in the beginning of ‘editorial notes’ in *Keralachinthamani*. Same picture appears with an article on ‘our social conditions’ in the same magazine. Another vignette published upside down, possibly a landscape in a frame on which creepers run, is published with the article ‘destiny of the Hindus’. Almost the same visual as above appears in Mangalodayam with an essay on ‘Malayala brahmanar’ (Karkkidakam, 1084). As a reduced picture the same sort of a landscape is used with an essay ‘sri shankaracharya kshetram’ (temple of Sri
Shankara) (makaram, 1084) Similar landscape is given with a story ‘bhuthayar’
(Mangalodayam). Picture of a ship in the sea is given with an article on
‘prakritivilasam’ (interestingly, this essay talks not about ‘nature’ but about the
abstract concept of ‘elements’), or ‘Charitram’ or ‘varthamana patrangal’ (App.e.4 &
App.e.5) Same picture is given with an essay on ‘bharathadharma mahamandalam’
(Medam, 1084) talking about Indian tradition and ethics (Mangalodayam).

Picture of a lotus, hills and the Sun rising behind is shown along with an
article on ‘morality’ in Mangalodayam. Flower vase, a much repeated motif treats the
printed page as a congenial interior space. Cherub is another motif taken perhaps from
European prints. ‘Vanitha Ratnam’ edited by K.M.Mathen Tharakan Puthenkavu,
‘Maryrani’ edited by V.K.Joseph Mappila and ‘Mahila’ edited by B.Bhagirathy Amma
from Chengannur used ‘flower vase’ motif for the content page. (Fig. 2.1)

There is a lack of prudence in the use of pictures. At this stage visuals had
only a dormant connection with the text. The visual was more a theatrical prop. It
was also simultaneously recognized as a matter of lay-out with its own importance.
The visual is not a denotation of any external reality or a fictional reality or any sort
of a prosaic match with the verbal text. It is one among the many props used in the
dramatic changes in sensibility conveyed through the verbose texts of essays
editorials and verses. Picture signaled the new material world of ‘modern culture’.

Ship alluded the transcontinental trader / ‘colonizer’ and / or symbolically
envisioned the periodical as a symbolic vessel that has started a new voyage and that
needs to be preserved from turbulence of any sort as Kandathil Varghese Mappila
presents Bhashaposhini in front of the readers (1072 Kann).
Flower vase signaled tasteful décor of interior. Posing a relation between typefaces and image can only be seen in the midst of an emerging new sphere of verbal debates on numerous topics. Such a sphere of public discourses and dialogues can be seen as an experience of the ‘colonial’ since this is a historical moment when this society starts a whole new practice of book and journal publication tapping the latent political condition suitable to develop a commercially viable mass ‘literate-media’ culture.

At this stage, picture is often presented in an absurdly insignificant manner or sometimes in handy terms of emblems and symbols at the top or sides of the page. In the European context, changes produced in graphic style by variations in taste from one period to another into 19th century European history, like medieval manuscript, humanist calligraphy, pre-industrial type facing traditions have been historically evolved by a peculiar premise of ‘aesthetic’ orientations in the practice of printed book. The great tradition of oil painting, the ‘Art’ of the Masters in Europe have influenced the print media contemporaneous to each period. Letter and image together comprised the ‘harmony’ of the Renaissance book. In the Baroque period, this ‘vital connection’ is said to lose. Rather there was a prevailing tendency towards the use of imagery leading towards inclusion of decorative and fantastic elements even in the drawings of purely explanatory nature. In 18th century there is a classical equilibrium, renewal of clarity and elegance. In 20th century, type designers were aesthetically sensitized. ‘original’ /practicing artists were involved in print media production.
So it is commonly observed that the relation of the text, its typographical presentation, and its organization in book form is seen as implying a study of the psychology of the reader, together with the understanding of aesthetic concepts of the graphic arts. The web based projects and exhibitions maintained by University of North Texas library give some details regarding Thomas Bewick, an 18th century illustrator who produced designs that were derivative of earlier artists. There were those of birds and other natural subjects as drawn from life. Vignettes were for the European engravers, a place for experimentation often valued as creative and insightful search into human foibles. In the context of Malayalam periodicals, one can not perceive such an ‘artistic’ interest. They were stock motifs. A consistent care is lacking for any innovative shape and size of the letters or a proportional relationship as existing between the printed area of visuals, text and margins that supposedly demands the attention of the reader. Still it is important that flowers in vases, creepers, landscapes and boats are repeatedly seen in various weeklies of the earliest two decades of the 20th century. Here there is no particular factual realism or artistic inventions intended in the visual other than giving a gentle cordial ‘feel’ of a vase placed on the margin or a sacred image placed at the outset in the order of reading a printed text. It is a ‘stock-motif’ repeated in a similar or different context. This makes it an ordinary visual, not merited by any rarified status. The spirit of the text is presented as visually immaterial but it fixes ‘visuals’ in the everyday realm of cordiality and a bourgeoisie (public) sphere of hospitality and courtesy.

2.2.1 Stage, Interior and Landscape:

Periodical as such was an object of ‘modern’ desire for education and intellectual or cultural uplifting. It is important that book or a sheet of paper was
envisaged as a special object of design / desire that imagined the whole space of periodical page as a theatre. Vignette visuals are generally used as a sort of theatrical props suitable for interior/ stage decoration or so as to enhance the everyday theatricality of the very activity of reading. Flowers indicate the presence of nature but often shown in a vase that in effect indicates the presence of culture. Also sketches of paper as a sheet folded towards the end, acts as an oft-repeated motif while the leaves and foliages along with the printed verbal text creep in and get inserted into the body of the 'sheet of paper' image. Sometimes the sheet of paper motif is designed as a royal architectural shape like a façade. The hanging garland motif itself is used as if in a stage decoration.

Same motifs were placed in different contexts within the same publication. A piece of paper in an extended hand, the paper being drawn in a decorated manner inserted with a matter informs that the publisher of the magazine is Pallath Krishnan, owner of Kerala chintamani. (App.e.7) The same hand-out paper motif is used for giving information on the books by Kerala chintamani press. In the second decade of 20th century we find the content or cover page of Athmaposhini (Ed. Vallathol Narayana Menon) as an interesting one. (Fig. 2.2) The content table is designed as put inside 'a raja shasanam'- royal decree. Two feudal dignitaries (as can be recognized by their costumes) are shown in smaller size than the decree standing nearby while one talks to other.

There is a particular pictorial treatment that suggests the page as a stage or a landscape. The flanking cherubs in the top portion of the page suggest that the page is conceived as a space with heavenly importance, heaven as introduced by
missionary presentations is represented by the cherubs. The higher status of the periodical is implied through the visual. The design of contents operates like a museum object because of the sketch of two people as onlookers who take pleasure on seeing the magazine's 'contents' - regarded as knowledge treasuries and royal decrees. Motifs of two winged angels bring us the 'vol.no' and 'issue no'. The visuals of heavenly creatures and earthly dignitaries are used in the exhortation to read the magazine. 'The reader' can easily identify his subject position with the curious and reverent officials inquisitively trying to trace the contents'.

2.2.2 'Nature' in the Language of 'Culture'

Nature motifs are also ultimately used as props in a cultural tableau of publishing and reading of Malayalam periodicals. Importance is given to the way plants, leaves, flowers and creepers can be extended into the periodical space as if they are bouquets or flower arrangements. Landscape and nature in Europe were at first a fund of the 'artistic genre' but later have spilled over that potential into illustrated journals and other popular spheres. Representations of nature had occurred across a range of texts in early 19th century Europe as a specific organization of visual field. In the case of Europe, particularly in the context of France, the hierarchy of genres which was integral to art criticism and institutional training systems allotted a particular space and status to landscape. By the 1820s they promoted an increasingly differentiated form of training and 'creative' lifestyle and taste for 'the picturesque' and 'the sublime'. This resulted in an increase in the number of practitioners and the rise in aesthetic importance of the genre within Art. At the same time the visual codes identified with the landscape genre were employed
in a wide and expanding range of practices, which crossed or lay beyond the
parameters of art: the illustrations and vignettes adorning novels and artistic
magazines such as L’Artiste; the extensive picturesque literature on regional customs
and places; tourist guides and news and information images in periodicals and popular
journals, including ‘L’Illustration’ and ‘Le Magasin Pittoresque’. A similar situation
is created in Malayalam in 1920s in terms of textual codes trying to identify with
genres like ‘landscape’ and ‘still life’, though this interest in ‘nature’, ‘landscape’ and
‘female figures’ could not operate within any immediate context of ‘Art’ or
recognizably developed discourse, practice or institutional fold of ‘Art’ here. The
literate ‘media-users’ of these pictures could have been only roughly communicating
their own rhetorical attitudes towards the epochal changes. These ‘stock motifs’ could
have been indiscriminately and repeatedly getting used in effect canceling scope for
any ‘special’ and ‘serious’ artistic attention. But these pictures effectively signified
the entrepreneurial and intellectual subjectivity of the new ‘public domain’.

This indiscriminate and rhetorical use of pictures points that they remained
within the ambit of clarifying the editorial exhortations that declare birth of a new age
and sensibility. But it also invariably hints at the dramatic cordial gentlemanly and
elite nature of the emerging cultural public space. Certain subjectivity formations as
in the extended hand image suggest the editorial identity that courteously ‘informs
you’ the up-to-date ideas and details of a public sphere formed by an emerging
reading class people.

There is an urgency that is not lost in spite of many repetitions and the ‘stock’
character. Some illustrative meanings can be sorted out of these functional fixities
but the pertinent designing intentions act as an agent of control on the activation of meanings.

2.2.3 The Feminizing ‘Stock Pictures’:

The soft and hospitable subject matter of these vignettes is to be closely considered. A significant amount of natural and feminine world is expressed in these stock motifs. These were congenial images but placed in contestable areas of cultural frictions. The images of flowers, creepers and cherubs were not even at a minimum level suitable to the radically reformatory thoughts conveyed through the articles on various topics getting contested in public space through a newly emerged flexibility and dynamism in Malayalam prose. This can be understood as a rather unconsciously worked out incompetence expressed in visual medium in relation to the dynamically modern form of verbal medium in conveying the new age ideas. This perhaps happened because of a lack of availability of mechanically reproducible pictures conceived by ordinary artists and printers in the local markets or presses. It seems that Malayalam periodicals used whatever small number of images or motifs that could be available and could be stocked by them. They repeated their stock pictures with dynamically conceived ideas of social life in the verbal medium. But the very rarity in the available means of mechanical reproduction must have given these pictures a special significance and interest among editors and readers. The use of pictures shall be understood intentional to some amount; otherwise all these essays in the periodicals mentioned above could have appeared without pictures because even the given pictures did not establish much of a concrete relation with the verbal content to necessitate their presence. So those pictures in periodicals till 1920s carry some other significance than aesthetic, functional or even pictorial presence. The repeated stock-pictures might be used as editorial intonations that reduced the heat of staunchly
destabilizing political ideas formed through the verbal medium that must have been
maddening for the desperate lot of illiterate, semi literate and English educated
readers of these periodicals. The cordiality and hospitality conveyed through these
images cut across the trajectory taken by a newly emerging public sphere in which
women categorically en-gendered their life through the ‘womanly’ world of domestic
and interior spaces and men engaged in the manly world of speeches struggles reason
outside the feminine ‘interior’. Even when women engaged in the subject positions
like publishing periodicals, forming collective groups (sthree samajams), educating
themselves, involving in ‘creative’ literary tasks were deemed ‘manly’. It may be
observed that a strong debating sphere of feminine subjectivity is already formed in
late 19th century. Emergence of magazines for women also pre-supposed
‘strissmajams’. Among the ‘natural givens’, the contenders of social status, the caste
and inherited status gave way to the supremacy of ‘sexual identity’. ‘women’s
magazines and associations addressed a population that was supposed to already
posses a specific set of ‘capacities’ deemed ‘womanly’

There is an emerging new sense, particularly in the magazines for women like
‘Mahila’ and ‘Sharada’ that picture and type are closely related, both functionally and
consciously devised design elements in the layout. In 1920s, it may not be particularly
‘aesthetic’ sensitization but a new ideological realm of ‘femininity’ tied to
‘decorativeness’ ‘cordiality’ and ‘nature’ that was developing visually. (Fig 2.3)

Picture is placed in the margins. Like a banner or signboard the visuals point
at the more important verbal content. Like a flower vase, creeper or mirror the visual
is hinting at the cordiality and femininity of the situation to which the reader is
initiated. Visual when placed in the page, is often treated as a prop that hints points or elegantly scrolling down as a curvilinear paper at the major event of the prose, the verbal, the literal, and the political. Title of the magazine like *Mahila* edited by B.Bhagirathy Amma under a patronage of sethu parvathibai maharani, is written within a motif of flanking paper folds. The title decoration changes in a succeeding *Mahila* issue. Change in title motif showed that the reader's attitude to the magazine as supposedly envisaged by the editors was not a passive one in terms of visuals. There was considerable interest in visual decoration designed as a 'feminine space' as 'appealing to the reader'. *Mahila* was a magazine for women (for the newly educated and aspiring section of the readers) and while speaking about women in terms of 'modernization' and civilization, the traditional slavish existence and representation of women had to be taken into consideration and had to be eventually replaced by something powerful and new. The logical outcome of the discourses could have been of this sort. But the new visual space provided as constituted of women (also 'by the women') in these discourses of 'modern' was of transcribing the traditional sculptural motifs of women flanking on a plant or tree, women with a basket of flowers etc that are easily adapted into the 'modern' privacy and domesticity of a reader. Motifs like mirror, coconut tree leaves, heavenly angels, baby with book, creepers are 'feminine' 'conventional' 'imaginay' and 'natural' in theme.

Special slots for women, like 'Strisamajams' seemed to indicate that the public sphere was already a structured space that promotes 'gendering'. In this public sphere man's authority is supposed to derive from political influence, economic strength, and intellectual prowess, while women's seemed to be derived entirely her attributed power over emotion and sentiment – a non-coercive power that works through
compassionate deeds, tears prayer and gentle advice, as J Devika explains. Presence of pictures and 'illustrations' in periodicals as going to be discussed in this thesis legibly operates in the discursive frameworks of beauty, sentiments and accompaniment with the more important and original verbal text.

These pictures in effect inactivated the radical possibilities, if ever, of verbally expressed ideas towards modernization, reformation and political activism because these pictures were very much more activating some formal values of hospitable etiquettes 'domesticating' the political potentials of the emerging public space. While a feminization of pictorial possibility involved a symptomatic indirectness by an intervening presence of nature that denotes culture. Visual conceit is a sustained aspect of the kind of artistic practices emerged here. Even when it sought allegiances from art practices outside, the pictorial sensibilities that circumscribed emotional, gendered and textualised frameworks were adapted. 'Sexuality, the natural given' started denoting 'genders', the socializing conventions of sexualized bodies and objects also start right from this stage. Sexualizing the figures later constitutes an important aspect of the 'illustrated' material.

2.3 The 'Domestic' / 'Personal' / 'Political' Spheres in Commercial Terms

The potential of a visual when placed in various contexts for different functions was already perceived by the earliest generation of editors and publishers. Illustrative or imaging potential of pictures was also latently observed and practiced by the end of 1920s. More than direct editorial initiations it worked effectively in the emerging genre of commercials in periodicals.
Concepts and public claims like a ‘typical swadeshi stock’ (‘thani swadeshi samanam’), ‘purified and untouched by hand (in food products), ‘trustworthy’, ‘marital (sexual) pleasure (jeevithanandam)’, ‘entertainment’ etc were propagated through this commercial space. Pictorial props in advertisement narratives in 1930s and 1940s though operated in strict boundaries of commercials, they are seen effectively propagating a set of rhetoric on social commitments like ‘swadeshi’, modern lifestyle, personal hygiene etc. There was a large fund of essays on these subjects (like health, hygiene, patriotism and ‘parishkaram’) in the major periodical body in turn consolidating the cultural and commercial interests.

There appeared a full page sketch of a gentleman alternately posited as a salesman, exhibiting a board asking the readers to give orders for printing works in Royal press, Vadagara to get the work done neatly and beautifully. No detail is available regarding who took the block for printing this image or who designed this imaginative figure of a person who carries details of the service for sale. The period signals that self-reliance is important wherein image of Goddess Lakshmi (in Lakshmivilasam) conveys the new interest in wheal and business. Proverbs in English and Sanskrit verses are seen sometimes in the cover page of some of these periodicals. The verse says that God helps those who help themselves. This is a periodical for land lords and agriculturists who are informed of the coming of a new value system of commerce instead of their feudal indolence.

Editorial and entrepreneurial imaginations on the idea called public play a more complex role in the politics of the press. These periodicals and the contemporaneous newspapers envisaged the existence of public as a category taken
for granted and they spoke in terms of social reformation, renaissance, civilization tradition and modernity. More than newspapers that supposedly had a pure journalistic commitment to the reporting of ‘truth’, periodicals talked with a personal tongue too, that could be easily domesticated, especially when they spoke in commercial terms. Images and texts of commercial manipulation of the everyday consumable objects functioned within the periodical space utilizing its political potential. The commercials were speaking into the individuality, convenience and well being of each reader permeating their individual-ness with a feel for a textual domain called public. Such a category of public who reads thinks and writes in individual convenience also existed in an editorial common sense, irresistibly political, patriotic and modern that could not be interrogated, inspected, but can be observed directly within the periodical. This public was categorically communicated in terms of political and cultural events and represented through the personal and everyday.

In the national context of a ‘swadeshi’ surge, the objects of daily life like textiles, blade, Areca lamp, wrist watch, medicines, snaw got a new symbolic significance through the press media advertisement. The words and pictures manipulated political ideas through these advertisements in 1930s. A ‘quality conscious public’ is envisaged through punch lines like ‘A typical swadeshi stock’. An ‘areca lamp’ is said to be ‘swadeshi’ that is identifiable from the steel body to the whole parts of the product. (App.d.1 & App.d.2) ‘Body of the product’ is shown in a hard shaded sketch with an iconic presence. The Advertisements used various narrative devises of strip story boards, sketches of expressive faces that are further explained by way of textual fabrications. (App.d.3 App.d. 4). Picture is often used as
a graphic representation of the product. We see that body lotions, snow bottles, soap bars and torch lights were drawn. Interestingly in the Mathrubhumi weekly of 1933, we find the map of India, now recognized as ‘before partition’ and then possibly identified as Mathrubhumi, ‘the mother land’, ‘the body of the mother nation’. Graphically mapped body of the country was also associated with sari clad woman and the subject-heads of books published by then emerged book depots. Association of bath soap and hair oils with sketches of female heads, mirrors, and ponds is by then an established pictorial feature. These pictures and words speaking about domestic intimacy and well being, constituted the public domain. The public was constituted by both figures and figures of speech in which every reader / spectator spends quite a bit of time.

2.3.1 Imagining a ‘Female’ Within the ‘Nation’:

Two advertisements used to appear in mathubhumi issues of 1932. One is of Bharatavilasam Press –Thriissur. A copy writing done inside a map of India composed of woman standing with her left hand extended horizontally. Visual language is close to calendar pictures. This image must have left a graphic impression of the idea of a unified nation state called ‘India’. The nation and the land are picturised and metaphorically represented as ‘female’ or an entity containing the female within. Ultimately all these text visual combinations projected the message that the reader is requested to demand for the published book list of ‘Bharathavilasam press’. Another advertisement by BAJPEI& Co. Calcutta, showed a swadeshi shawl held by a woman dressed in sari in Bengali style. The caption is an exhortation to assimilate Mahatma Gandhi’s advice to buy only Indian goods. The commercial uses of nationalist politics found the periodical space as potentially viable to find a market.
The targeted audience can be read through the lines as those desired to consume the goods identifiable as ‘modern’ in life, like a time-piece, torch, Fountain Pen, beautiful / rare textile delicacies, Handkerchief, Slippers etc because these are the gifts offered for a bulk order of the ‘swadeshi’ snaw. This was not simply a commercial narrative but gradually these objects were seen to be subjects for the photo/news feature.

The journalistic categories also created some narratives characterizing the modern experience of civic life diffused through the periodical space. The idea of personal hygiene and health was an emerging area of concern that was getting commercially much viable. Institutional surveillance becomes an important instrument of social control and the emerging periodical culture is very well used to propagate related ideas.

2.3.2 Images and Texts of Personal Hygiene and Health:

Formation of an individual conscious of health and hygiene envisaged an upper caste aristocratic woman as its potential buyer. Interestingly the essayists on female freedom and education often focused on the ‘feminine nature’ to keep a clean and tidy home by way of heightened consciousness of hygiene. The image and iconography of such a woman is already given by Ravi Varma. Periodicals shared the popular commercial world of calendars and they appropriated the aesthetic aspects of image making through floury subtitles and texts. The curly hair, fleshy body, props of privacy like the edge of a wooden table, flanking tapestries etc. were all identifying the image with the basic symbols of well being. The idea of a brand of hair oil that claims to lead to this state of well being is propagated using such an image. The text of the advertisement further clarifies the legitimacy of the image / the product (oil) for
its associations with the educated enlightened class of consumers/ readers. ‘All doctors and urbanized public’ were reported to give testimonials to the quality of this brand. Entertainment becomes an important category of ‘modern’ life and woman in the interiors was an emerging motif (among other such defined images that are discussed elsewhere in this study) that secured a place for its values of entertainment, desire and health through advertisements and vignettes.

2.3.3 Images and Texts of Public Welfare and Surveillance:

There appeared during the time of Second World War in 1945, some interesting public instruction advertisements. Here is an example. Text: ‘somebody talk carelessly. Enemy intelligently assembles all these tit bits of information. ....In the next week or the next month careless words will cause loss of life and valuables of the people worth thousands of rupees’. Visual image and verbal consequences of getting traced by enemy is formed here. Facial features of ‘enemy’ image are thick lips, eyes hidden inside the eyebrow line, flat nose, exaggerated size of fingers. He is wearing coat – A normative mix of European and Asian features. The image is predominantly European in his attire but the significantly thick lips stand out as an anomaly and add to the strangeness. Down the lines, there is a woman with a hushing finger on her mouth both representing and advising at a time those who ‘talk carelessly’. The text with the picture speaks about the duties of a responsible citizen. The whole text is authored by ‘AAA 1342 NL’- possibly the advertisement / news agency. The lay out of pictures containing ‘incidents’ (like ‘somebody speaking carelessly) exemplifying the ‘instances of reality’ appeared to be the most effective site of communication.
2.3.4 Images and Texts of ‘Jeevithanandam’ – ‘Pleasure of Life’

Sexual pleasure is also translated into some imagined territories of symbolic expression through these advertisement spaces. It includes medicines for sexual diseases as well as improving (male) sexual compatibility. ‘Horse’ was used as a symbol of (male sexual) power and also of the rhetorical ‘journey of life’. Speaking in silhouettes and profiles most of these visuals for sexual issues directly transcribed the emotional content inherent in the subject matter. Situational narratives also appear in some of the advertisements. New definitive sexual roles coined in gendered social order were best communicated through such situational narratives. (App.d.6) It is proved in such advertisement narratives that such drawings showing man and woman within a suggested casual domesticity have easily transcribed themselves into ‘man-woman (sexual) relations’. Picture is situated in a middle class domestic setting of a drawing room wherein a man and woman are keeping the modest and cordial distance but communicate the idea (of ‘dampathyasukham’ or marital bliss) through glances and gestures. There are flower vase and corner table as props to the theatricality that was already communicated through vignettes. The elaboration of this convention devising domestic setting for male and female figures simultaneously cut across many other commercial contexts and filtered significantly into an exclusive fictional space derived by periodicals when they serialized literature with pictures of ‘situational narratives’. Illustrations later depended very much on this clichéd composition of man-woman relation that could automatically signal a ‘story of marital relation’.
2.4 The Evolving ‘Pictorial’

Concern of periodical media in the span of 1920-1950 by and large dealt with the varied area of civil life in which picture was a powerful indexing and imagining of the metaphorical public-sphere of the periodical. An interest for printing a picture, in effect gave way to speaking something textual through the pictorial content. This 'textual-pictorial' interest is basically a literal one since it gives maximum priority to convey an idea of the incident. This pictorial interest, inculcated by way of sketches and graphic illustrations, functioned very much within the notions of 'modi' (splendor) and 'ramaneevam' or 'sundaram' (loosely translated as illusion of beauty and cadence tangible on surface). It was also the filmic photogenic quality inherent in the illusion it creates of the 'live' presence of the beautiful body of the character in a story. Elaborate vignettes in earliest magazines like Athnaposhini, Keralachinthamani, Mangalodayam, Sharada, Meryrani etc. strongly communicated their zeal for the clearly graspable visual quality of the periodical, a sign of modern life and modern desire. But drawings/sketches in vignettes were used as theatrical props or stock motifs of an envisaged drama of attitude. These vignettes were only pointing at 'surface quality' on the periodical. But the narrative drawings that started to appear in advertisements and public interest releases did not simply or directly function as graphic motives on the surface. Textualised moments and instances with possibilities of pictorial contents found elsewhere imagined some simulated visual idea derived from the real in life that can be actually captured outside.

All throughout these instances from the textual sphere of pictures, they generally appeared as a natural given - out there. The periodical page is positing as an authoritative index of 'real'. This is an attitude different from explicitly graphic...
diagrammatic projection of the periodical subjectivity where the political interest of
the periodical in the public domain was clear. It is interesting that except for the
context in which M.R.Nair initiated a ‘competition space’ for pictorial interpretation
in 1937, there is no significant ‘editorial’ interest, as visible in inviting reader/viewer
participation into pictures, shown by the editors of even those magazines entered with
political and patriotic charisma like Mathrubhumi weekly, Malayala Manorama
conducted photography competitions. It was an enquiry into the possibility of the
reader/viewer ship that can be created by photographs, only to conceitfully textualise
it. Literature being a very effective form of textualisation of life, emerged as a
dynamic field for attracting reader participation. Serious debates on literary creativity
started appearing in periodicals especially in the event of making writer’s forums of
many sorts parallel to this metaphorical public domain of periodicals.

‘SamasthaKerala Sahitya Parishath’ formed in 1927, aimed at a coherent
language, polity and dream for the Malayali society and hence based on the overall
development of the language. A homogenous Malayali identity was clearly formed in
literary field much before it formed as a political contention in post independent
times. But frictions of retroactive and progressive ideals were blazing in this forum
through out 1930s. In 1937, there formed ‘Jeevatshitya prasthanam’ (who
propounded ‘literature for life’). Progressive writer’s forum was formed in 1944.
Both these literary forums consolidated the activities of writers and readers of
literature that virtually concretized the significance of these activities in the ‘public
domain’. Debates on the significance of writer (synonymously regarded as artist) and
‘art’ (used interchangeably for ‘literature’) in society were getting essayed. In most
of the essays, ‘artistic imagination’ was synonymously treated as ‘literary
imagination'. But there are some marginal instances of looking at pictures suit to
its modern entertaining illustrative and illusive formats. Some important attempts in
this direction are Dr. A.R. Poduval’s article on ‘comic pictures’. Though marginalized
efforts, the attempt to think of the act of drawing pictures as a practice of ‘art’ that
demands a unique historicity, skill and training of its own had influenced the way
M.Bhaskaran and later M.V.Devan had given drawings for printing in periodicals.
These discursive attempts shall be discussed at a later point in this study.

As proved by the growing scale and quality of space haunted by pictures in
periodicals and the dominant literary interest for ‘pictorial contents’ expressed
through a textualising sphere of pictures as discussed above, pictures were regarded
important and effective means of communication by early 1940s. But it was not
explicitly regarded as ‘creative’ or ‘political’ as a short story or novel. As John Harty
observes in his attempt to characterize the politics of pictures, cultural sphere in which
collective social action, individual identity and symbolic imagination meet, is the last
place the rational and elite notions will look for politics. Their very pervasiveness
and commonplace components will apparently cancel any centralized agglomeration
of power. So pictures remained at this stage as pervasive commonplace components
with no cumulative acclaim to attain a powerful status of a cultural activity.

Pictures clearly presented periodical’s status of a metaphoric domain at the
very outset of their coming into existence in this society as discussed in chapter-1.
But pictures, especially photographs, carried the illusion of ‘truthful record of life’
(photographs and drawings with codes of the ‘photogenic’ were extensively used in
various textualising purposes of features, news, informative categories,
advertisements and illustration of fiction) that could effectively deviate the reader from the political subjectivity of the periodical, that ‘metaphor of public sphere’ that he/she ambitiously or gleefully handled in individuated privacies.

2.5 ‘Like That is Shown in The Picture’- Uses of Photography

Periodicals (Matrubhumi, November 1933) requested their readers to send ‘small articles, letters and pictures (photos) regarding the worlds of ‘women’, ‘students’ and ‘malayalis residing in other countries’. Special editorial interest in particular ‘public’ is figured here and the new categories like ‘kathukal’ (letters from readers), ‘vanithalokam’ (world of women), ‘balapangkthi’ (page for children), ‘marunadan malayalikal’ (malayali community located outside) emerged. The changes in life of people and varieties that are newly brought into their lifestyle in lieu of ‘modernization’ is communicated in the periodical space through some journalistically oriented (hence some level of authority also going with it) categories in this public space. The interest in women’s education, modern family, education for all, possessing and using modern equipments, retaining of cultural purity, having healthy body and gaining political freedom, all appeared as mutually reinforcing categories of verbal and visual expression in short stories, essays, photo features, cover pictures, box stripes of information, commercials etc. These text-visual instances covered the editorial subjectivity in a cordiality, immanence and pervasiveness in effect drawing specific lines of limit to the ‘imaginable’ public and subjects of concern. Images of women as achievers in competition, images of peasants as laborers, images of children with chubby innocence, images of political leaders as charismatic individuals were found to be curiously important matter to ‘look upon’.

Photos of the newly married couples were displayed issue after issue in periodicals.
The repetitious head and shoulder convention of these photos captured the private and the commonplace instances of life. Each of those photos by itself projected the distinctiveness of moments and persons involved but it is simultaneously inserted into many authoritative and tasteful conventions of photography.

The rhetoric of ‘swadeshi snow’ basically activates as commercial but that offers an envisaged ‘truth’ of an object’s/product’s ‘inherent’ material value and quality that it is ‘essentially swadeshi’. A poem ‘Bharathambayodu’ (Anandadeepika, April 1939) appears with a sketch that shows a woman praying to the picture of a goddess inscribed in the ‘mapped body of the country’ communicating the political or public space tinge of devotion in the modern context of calendar iconography. Most of these categories, though operated separately, integrated political, institutional and rhetorical conventions very much through an ‘actuality’ possible by a picture.

It is not perceptual curiosity on the magical effect of ‘artistic illusion’ that gave dry and casual drawings of soap bar, medicine bottle etc in these commercials. In the picture they could give only a graphical idea of the similar objects (brand / product) offered by them. To speak an idea about something ‘like that is shown in the picture’ is the aim of the commercials and the photo feature genres with good amount of sketches and photos. The advertisements even presented their genuineness of services with validity derived from photograph. For example, the advertisement by Thiruvithamkur rubber industrial company, into resoling of tires showed three tyres representing the three stages of repair in a photograph of their advertisement.(Fig.2.4) One completely smoothened and useless, the other under repair half way, the third one the completely repaired and changed look of the tire that is put into use.
Photography is used here as a validation of the quality of service. The textual title of this photograph says 'like that is shown in this photograph'.

There is an apparent importance and enthusiasm transcribed into the use of photographs if taken a copy of in Malayala Manorama weekly in 1938. They generally used photos in the cover pages. In modern societies formed in Europe, it is observed that the organization of visual representations of sexuality and sexual differences has extensive continuities into political present of 20th century- not only in medical textbooks on school biology, but also in forms of reportage of popular journalism. It is interesting here to enquire what a photograph meant for the modern Malayali public. It meant one of the most modern and 'western' techniques that opened their eyes to 'proof of the genuineness and correctness' of information verbally conveyed and to the practices of modern privacies like family portraits etc. It also meant an artistic hobby of elite life to show talent and worthy interests through objects of aristocratic taste in the background of a self portrait. Photograph through its rhetoric of optical transparency reduced the reader's distance from political spectacles, casual, artistic or even philosophical engagements with life and the straight documentation of peoples and places. 'Seeing' could easily bring 'believing' into effect. Photography represented truth of the world but it re-presented the truth as a specialized knowledge and visual sense of a 'literate-media sensibility'.

It is at this stage the editorial and entrepreneurial engagements with the 'public sphere' turns gradually into personal and practical so as to make the 'literate-media-sensibility' more directly participatory. Picture is not a separate prop here. It is not a
differentiated visual object for the text and page at this stage. The text refers picture and picture refers the text within a personalized-commercial context.

Politics, regarded as a very rational domain of social action is presented together with the domain of fiction that is generally referred as ‘irrational’ and ‘emotional’ and this presentation is mediated by the practical needs of periodical design and a liberal accommodativeness of this genre. A drawn picture is used as a metaphor of adoration on witnessing the great events, like a legislative assembly or a political visit of leaders that are photographed. (App.c.5) Pictures could both operate as true and imagined.

2.6 Pictures ‘True’ and ‘Imagined’

By the end of 1930s the interest in ‘picturing’ turns both an issue of technical reproduction of ‘eventful reality’ and also fictionalizing the reality. Photograph was used both as accurate news photos of politically relevant national events and as sublimated but common place ‘moments from life’ that are made relevant through imaginative or ‘fictional’ titling. ‘Navayugam thirunal pathippu’ (1937) published photographs of ‘High court building complex’ and ‘beautiful scenes’ of the Kovalam seashore in the same page. Many weeklies started publishing ‘beautiful sceneries of nature’. Nature emerges both as a real site for ‘news feature’ and as an imagined metaphorical presence suggesting the absolute ‘beauty’. There used to appear invitation in bold letters and in boxes for photographs that depict ‘lifestyle and scenic beauty’ of Kerala. There is a cover photo – an almost drying out canal with bushes flanking on both sides- and it is described inside that it is ‘Poolakkadavu - the wells
are dug here for the irrigation project in Kozhikode’. Codes of modernization are conveyed through photos of nature. But next issue gives a group of half naked men and description is ‘fishermen’. Codes of a liberal spectator who tolerates, accommodates and who is even curious about, the visibility and details of labor class or the underprivileged classes of the society, is conveyed through their physiognomy made ‘photogenic’ in such pictures. Then in the next issue cover page has photo of ‘a day in the market in Alappuzha’. Codes of ‘the everyday’ are conveyed effectively. Next to that issue shows the broad sea-phase with close shot of ripples and wavelet. Textual detail tells nothing clear about that sea-phase but ‘Aazhipparappil’. These were simultaneously true and imagined pictures. They were capable of textualising ‘life at large’ with the codes of emotional or real or everyday or modern content in them.

There is a significantly new attempt to transgress the load of the rhetoric of epochal changes brought into life in the first three decades of 20th century. Malayala Manorama weekly demonstrated clear taste towards ‘photos’. A photography competition was declared in 1938. Photos presenting ‘picturesque sceneries’ and landscapes, historically famous spots and beautiful buildings were deemed as worthy to be ‘seen’ (‘darshaneyam’). Interestingly in 1938 Mithunam issue of this weekly it is said that they have not yet got enough photos of merit, the last date of accepting photos is extended to give one more chance to those interested in photography. Names of photographers of cover photos were sometimes given. There are photos by people like A.K.John Pathanamthitta, P.R.J, K.P.Kuryan, Behnan, T.Bhaskaran Nair etc. A taste for photography with acknowledgeable authorship and assumable narrative contexts was getting created. (App.b.9 & App.b.10). Photographs were very
much tested in commercial visuals. Sketches and drawings with a punch of caricature and cartoon were used in explicit political lampooning especially in Sanjayan and Viswaroopam.

There is a perceivable difference in the intention and meaning conceived in the uses of photos and sketches. Sketches started appearing for something that is specially designed or imaginatively posited. Photos were used mainly to convey truth while fictionalizing photos in turn was the task of imaginative textual subtitling.

In the new genre of cover pictures (with a note inside describing the picture given outside) and the photo features (with some notes immediately down the picture), sentimental textual contexts were displayed as emanating from the photos and drawings. Pictures emerged as objects of great 'scenic' quality. In the casual essays on 'sukumakalakal' (fine art), sculptures and painted images were supposed to be 'captures of moments' containing 'essential emotions' from actual life. Sculpture of a child covering his eyes and drooping his face down while another figure of a woman pointing at a broken earthen pot and looking at him sharply were supposed to be an instance of mother scolding the child for his mischief.

In the early 1930s, there is a shift in the focus on intonated quality of surface design of the periodical page to an imaginative realm of the visual that could be easily paraphrased and textualised in verbal terms. Pictures were made more significant and rarified by devising fictional content within its textual frame. 'literature-oriented illustrations' got its functional characteristics especially in Mathrubhumi weekly of
early 1930s within such a parameter of ‘the pictorial’ that co-exists with the (fictional) text.

2.7 Humour Drawings and Dialogues in ‘Sanjayan’ and ‘Viswaroopam’

‘Drawings’ were given categorical importance in the magazines Sanjayan and Viswaroopam (1936 – 1941) edited and published by M.R.Nair. A dialogic interest in pictures was brought in by him. Picture was included as an equally important and dynamic pointer to periodical communication in these magazines. Towards the end of 1930s the pictorial interests exhibited by periodicals generally consolidated into a sort of interest for specialized picture (‘chitram’ as included in ‘Sanjayan’ table of contents) authored by an artist’s signature, photograph authored by the studio name. The cover picture of Sanjayan continued repeating till the end of publication of this magazine in 1941.

Humor sketches and drawings were supposed to have the political potential to transform ‘foolish politicians ministers and countries’ that are getting trapped in problems. Humor drawings portrayed the ‘reality’ and importance of situation through aligning with contemporary newsy events but unlike photographs, they were more legibly posited as ‘imagination’ than ‘truth’. They were political pictures in imaginative entertainment format. Closely associated with the languages of cartoons and caricatures these are generally understood as catering to a tone of ‘light reading’. Political issues were capsulated in entertainment modes but with pungent criticism. Interestingly, these magazines also self-reflexively provided allegorical portrayals of the newly figured categories of the writer, the artist, the reader, ‘Sakhavu’ (popularly used to refer to a ‘Marxist’), ‘Bhashabhimani’ and the sort.
Picture operated as an effective medium that instilled a categorically different sensibility of ‘humor drawings’. These pictures however could not simply function as entertainment category in their peculiar context because they actually addressed a relaxed reading class not settled in their identities or trained to operate rhetorically in a public space. Moreover, the unfinished, made-up, light-weight pictorial attitude possible in humor drawings is very much influential for the best ‘illustrative attitudes’ later. M.Bhaskaran evolved in this mould. M.V.Devan could make use of this abruptness and light-weight flexibility of a ‘graphic attitude’ in his ‘illustrations’ in early 1950s. It was also a way out of ‘Art’ of canvas painting and illusionist naturalism.

A.R.Poduval B.A, B.L writes on the ‘rare but effective instances of humor’ drawing by ‘two Malayalis’ (their names are not given in this article, assumably M.Bhaskaran and Achuth who made pictures in Sanjayam and Viswaroopam) of the time. (‘Hasyachitrangal’ Mangalodayam, 1118 page-427). This article gives good idea of the ambitious understanding by the day’s readers / viewers / thinkers regarding the medium of political communication. Poduval writes that humor drawings remind us that art is not simply for art sake and hence hopes for humour pictures ‘to enter into our midst and have good future here as other art forms’. Also he charts out the instances of humorous word-picturing done by writers like Chandumenon (vethippattar portrayed in ‘sharada’) Kesari (portraying a ‘nattezhuthachan’ a local teacher of writing skills for children), Ramavarma Appan Thampuran (describing the ‘head to foot’ details of ‘Kandunni Nair Inspector’) and Narayana Poduval (describing the horse ride of ‘Kaymal’). It is said that these are highly picturesque depictions that by chance did not get expressed in lines or colours but became ‘word-
pictures’ of writers. Recognized as British origin, this genre of humor drawings and their conventions are also described by A.R.Poduval. He quotes from Bergson on the role of the artist of humor drawings, Len.A.Doust on cartoons, almost like an authorized guiding text for the interested reader. Books like ‘Political Parade’ by Low and ‘Absurdities’ by Heath Robinson are suggested as giving knowledge regarding the ideational importance in humor drawings. This essayist also talks about the importance of the drawing skills necessary for a person who does humor drawings just like acrobats need to practice his skills.

Humor drawings evolved as a semi-artistic act that could better ‘portray’ a character than a photograph or a naturalistic painting. The imaginative flexibility of drawing is traced at this stage and best used by Bhaskaran and M.V.Devan. Even Namboodiri and AS cashed on this semi-artistic potential of drawing. They were rhetorically understood as ‘giving life to characters’, the representational aim of naturalism. But they were rather designing types of characters in a cartoonish distorting of the common sense imagination of human form. The illustrator’s distinct graphic mould was already formed in Sanjayan and Viswaroopam.

In the cover picture of ‘Sanjayan’ we see the compositional tactfulness of M.Bhaskaran that makes the earlier sketch done by M.R.Nair (P.Sanjayan) more compact. The editor relied on the academic drawing skills of artists like M.Bhaskaran, Achuth, and Shankar throughout the publication of these magazines. But we do not get any clue of any of these artists operating independent of the ‘content’ provided by the editor or at least drawing political lampoons without editorial interventions. We also do not have clear evidence of total editorial control
either. What can be understood from these two magazines that ultimately mocked the coherent authorship of an expressive task in a thoroughly modernist fashion is that the artist and the editor worked with the same spirit and contention. Interestingly, these magazines used some satirical devices of European origin to make fun of many ambitious political and cultural projects emerged here during this time. Many lampoons projected free and educated women as a threat to morality and life of men at large. Vallathol's effort to revive Mohiniyattam, a traditional female dance form originated here, was criticized through cartoons confining to the 'conservative' view that it is a dance of lose morals. (Fig. 2.5) Vallathol's attempts to revamp 'dasiyattam' into respectable fold of an art form of 'Mohiniyattom' as it is known today, was criticized by 'Sanjayan'. The picture graphically presented the event communicating the 'vulgarity' of the situation. New cultural forms of entertainment like popular cinema were also pictorially condemned as creating moral chaos here. The anti modernist undercurrents in the reading class as reflected in a number of contributions from casual 'idiosyncratic' formulations of essayists of the time were getting clearly represented through a quite modernist language and medium like satire and humor drawings in periodicals. They did not demand pictorial simulation as in the case of photo-features. They communicated 'imagined' situations from the 'here and now'.

But both these magazines had open structures that literally and graphically demonstrated the rhetorical nature of the editorial subjectivity behind it and dialogically intervened into the 'public sphere'. Sanjayan and viswaraopam openly acknowledged its commercial status. It portrayed readers in various trivial expressions. Even while portraying the various expressions of 'readers' of magazines, it was part of a trivialization of loudly 'sacred' act of publishing and reading at the
time. (Fig.2.6) The repeated title vignette of ‘roses with thorns’ in the readers’ letters section of ‘Sanjayan’ was a visual rhetoric encapsulating the editorial intentions in a philosophical manner.

‘Sanjayan’ also had doubted the level of public efficacy of the pictures he published. Sometimes the picture’s text is separately written inviting the reader’s attention to it and guiding him through the picture explicating the ‘political importance’ or ‘meaning of the drawing’ at a minimum level. This ‘chitrapatam’ (text from the visual) shows that the editor had doubts regarding the communicative potential of cartoons or humor drawings as a genre in this society though he ambitiously uses its potentials. (Fig.2.7)

It was not yet regarded mandatory for artists to sign these pictures. Sometimes we come across unsigned / un-authored drawings too. Editor used them for his purpose of explicating his ideas. Major poet’s ‘poetic imaginations’ were sometimes very well taken up by the editor to demonstrate through ‘humorous pictures’. An excerpt from poet Vallathol’s ‘Kattil paranna kavitha’ is taken for illustrative depiction ‘in the eyes of our artist who is less informed of metaphors’. (App.c.7)

New forms of popular entertainment like cinema that started addressing and presenting modern lifestyles in a shocking manner, especially man-woman relationships in a provocative clarity and intimacy, must have both entertained and irritated the new ‘reading / viewing class’. Bhaskaran has painted in ink the ‘degeneration’ caused by such intimate portrayals of man-woman relationships in films. The viewers of the film are shown as replicating the embracing scenes in the
film. The dangers of identification caused by visual pleasures are portrayed literally and graphically. That was also a representation of the fears in ‘common man’ who is grappling with the political and literary idealisms of the time. Common place Congress followers of Gandhiji who could not grasp the real significance of the forms of political resistance devised by him were lampooned in the magazine. ‘Sanjayan’ and ‘Viswaroopam’ generally carried prevailing cultural anxieties caused by the society’s encounter with ‘modernity’ that tired to adapt traditional forms into a modern institutional space. Graphic language that never settles the issues of art and politics best suited for this often submerged anxieties and desires.

2.8 Between art and politics

Humor drawings and texts in ‘Sanjayan’ and ‘Viswaroopam’ were not necessarily regarded as ‘art’. But they were not fully treated as ‘political’ too except for the explicit references to political events. Between ‘art’ and ‘politics’ they opened themselves to readers. They gave forth an altogether new iconography of abbreviated human physiognomy, especially idiosyncratic common place figures of vices and foibles. The texts did not project a coherent politics of coinage like ‘swadeshi’ or ‘patriotic’ or ‘reformatory’. They rather presented the contradiction between ideologically envisaged homogeneity and the experienced commonsensical reality of ordinary people. Even the rhetorical identity of the periodical and the act of reading became visible graphics through these magazines while most of the other magazines with purer cultural pedigree simply sacralised themselves and the idea of ‘knowledge’.
Though not taken up for creative pursuits, humor drawings were understood as a balanced expertise of formal exaggeration that could bring an essence of ‘Hasya rasa’ into the mind of the onlooker. A physiognomic exaggeration that diminutively treats the figure and thus reveals his ‘identity’ is understood as ‘caricature’ in A.R.Poduval’s article. Cartoon was understood as abbreviated in some portion but dealt extensively in totality. It was supposed to illustrate some ideas affecting the public politically economically or socially. That which is ‘Cartoonish’ in a picture is recognized in allegorical terms. A.R.Poduval gives an interesting account of the skills an artist of humor drawings should have. ‘He could be able to draw human forms, animals, cities, lakes and all sorts of things in a limited time. He should have a general knowledge of dressing styles of almost all cultures of the world. More than anything else, he should have full fledged power of imagination and taste for the ‘humorous’.

Success of an artist of humor drawings lies in the ability to involve important people and their public actions in a hearty manner with propriety. For that he should have skills in portrait drawing too. It is important to note further in next chapters of this study that these ‘qualities’ generally made ‘illustrators’ amicable to the readers of literary texts in the years that followed.

Sanjayan did not write about ‘humor drawings’ as such but wrote humorous texts on the act of picture making and reading. It is not known whether a rare and passing article like that written by A.R.Poduval got any significant attention from those who were engaged in public domain. Anyway, a dialogic curiosity to ‘readers’ and daringly contradictory sensibility towards his own editorial subjectivity was practiced by M.R.Nair in ‘Sanjayan’. It had come to an end in those magazines themselves. But the vistas of ‘the commonsensical appeal’ opened by these magazines
in the 'artistic' understandings of the time have to be taken note of. 'Sanjayan'
demonstrated 'swabhava chitrangal' the 'character sketches' of popular personalities
like politicians, writers, singers of film songs etc. (App.c.10).

2.9 From illustration of 'reality' to that of 'imagination'

The illustrative quality of humor drawings and the scope for an artist's
naturalistic representative efforts veered in the way M.Bhaskaran adapted to activate
his 'artistic' interests later. In 1940s, Bhaskaran developed on this illustrative
observation and dexterous detailing in his cover pictures for Mathrubhumi weekly.
The dynamism of allegorical drafting of ideas he practiced with the editor of
'Sanjayan' gave way to independent visual demonstrations of sentimentality for the
pastoral landscapes. M.Bhaskaran adapted to his 'imaginative' fold, the narrative and
sentimental potential of drawing 'moments of life' that was already in vogue through
photos.(Fig.2.8) Towards the latter issues of 'Viswaroopam' in 1941, we find a
'pictorial' flux towards a trivialization of various sorts involving a 'popular
sentimentality' through pictures. In pictures such sentimentality is already effectively
coded in 'photogenic' presentations of the characteristic physiognomy of people and a
romantic chiaroscuro. A sketch involving sentimental men and women in a domestic
interior textually presents those within the triviality of comic situations of life which
are otherwise fictionally validated 'eventful stories of life'. (Fig.2.9). The shading and
hatching of lines steals attention to an 'illustrative' attempt selectively oriented on the
plasticity of figures. That is different from the pervading transparency of a
photograph, or a painting that tries to mimic the photographic naturalism. There is no
scope for opacity in photo or illusionistic painting, but opacity and blank spaces can
be created by untreated blankness with a selective treatment in a drawing. One can
bring in the sentimental contents into this opacity created by a selective treatment and focus of the sketch on the physiognomic details and chiaroscuro. Trivialization could work well in this fold. ‘Progressive’ Marxist politics of the time is caricatured as simply a ‘struggle of a maddening hatred’. The mould of the ‘sentimental’ is seen in Bhaskaran’s drawing of ‘Gandhi waiting for light’. (Fig.2.10) He conveys it through a graphic attention on the rhetorical effect of light and a human body in a specific posture.

Bhaskaran’s drawings were also used in some commercials in ‘Viswaroopam’.

Bhaskaran illustrated situations in his humorous sketchy manner for products like ‘Cobra boot polish’. (App.d.7). In advertisements, drawing operates as a creation of the ‘virtual real’ instances made from imagination. The picture was sub-titled with a dialogue just in the similar manner as all allegorical cartoons of ‘Sanjayan’
functioned. The pervasive use of pictorial skill outside the realm of editorial intentions is quite pertinent here. That posits the identity of an ‘illustrator’ visibly outside the realm of politics and hence out of a quite significant order of the public domain.

Since it comes out of ‘imagination’, picture was regarded something to be ‘interpreted’ not simply described as in the case of photos and diagrams that portrayed only ‘reality’ or fact.

2.10 A cover picture and a competition of ‘interpretation’ for the gift of a fountain pen

Except ‘Sanjayan’, and ‘Deepam’ magazine that conducted a picture puzzle competition, none of the other concurrent magazines seem to have had an interest in
the reader’s opinion regarding the ‘pictures’ presented by them. Rather an interest in
drawing informative, journalistic and hence authoritative guideline for viewing the
picture was getting dominant through conducting competitions with already stipulated
guidelines and subtitling the photographs with narrative texts possibly written by
editorial staff.

There was an interesting invitation to the readers to participate in a
competition that wanted them to write down their interpretations of the cover picture
discussed in chapter-1. The editor of the magazine declared the winner of this
competition in a succeeded issue. It says: ‘Sanjayan attempts to connect the reality of
this hypocritical and not so beautiful world with the art muse, the goddess of words,
through his imaginative and playful creations’. Sanjayan awards a fountain pen, the
declared gift to the winner, to Mr.O.Kumaran from Kannur. Fountain pen is
generally regarded as a cherishable gift item. (Deepam magazine also offers a
fountain pen for a competition.) But he finds out that this winner too has failed to
recognize that Sanjayan places the spiritual expression of the truth even above artistic
expression. Sanjayan derives an assumption that most of those readers who sent their
‘interpretations’, have not taken the pains to see the picture on time of every
publication and even if noticed they haven’t kept it in mind. Even the winner, as
complained by Sanjayan, did not note the pictorial ideas that are devised by Sanjayan
for achieving his editorial aim.

The ideal of his editorial subjectivity as put in words by M.R.Nair is like this,
“growing upwards through the criticism of daily instances in life, and illustrations of
the environment, reach at the artistic realization and if possible, actualize the highest
spiritual truth called ‘pranava’.” This single aim of all opinions and ideals as it is
pictured as converging to the topmost point is claimed to have been depicted in this
picture.

It is interesting that this fusion of all his efforts in ‘highest spiritual truth called
‘pranava’ was in effect grasped as a sentimental pang as it is depicted by
M.Bhaskaran in Mathrubhumi weekly, October 24, 1943 on the demise of his
endeared partner.(App.A.c.8). The picture showed M.R.Nair in the clouded abode of a
woman who must have allegorically represented the idea of ‘Pranava’. Down in the
dark recesses Bhaskaran depicts perhaps himself, though not clearly portrayed,
doomed to dejection in front of a piece of paper and holding a pen. By the other side
in this darkness two white doves are shown, a popular code of love and solidarity in
romance writings.

2.11 Towards ‘The Artistic’

In ‘Udayaragam’ a collection of reflective writings on poetic subjects, poet
P.Kunjiraman Nair wrote:

‘Two great artists came together one day. One was the guest of the
other. A red chilly from those spread in the yard for drying in the Sun, was
snatched by a crow. Guest waved his hands against the crow. The host smiled.
It was a picture of red chillies placed outside for drying! The host went for
bathing. While getting into the dining room, the guest holding the blue curtain
on the door smiled towards the host. That was a picture of a blue curtain
painted by the guest. Both embraced each other.”
Interestingly the story of art as ‘essential copy of nature’ is provided in the Classical Greek narratives of Pliny. That is the genealogy of art as identified perfectly in European context. P.Kunjiraman Nair was adapting the story of Greek gods named Xeuxius and Parrhassius into the fictional contexts of Malayali experiences. Then he goes on to philosophize the pictorial practice thus:

‘picture is a poem written by paint. Poem is a picture written by voices.

Whichever language can read the poetry of a picture’! Human being runs ahead to see some sort of ‘a picture of beauty’ (saundarya chitram’). The spirit captures its own face in the clear mirror and there arises a lovely smile and that smile is the ‘picture’. The robust plumpness of one’s consciousness of spiritual beauty is the colour in a picture’.

2.12 ‘Emotionally Charged Pictorial Heart of Poets’

Essays on ‘artistic skills’ presented ‘intellectual refinement as the basic aim of it. A division of these skills into ‘fine’ and ‘functional’ art also figures in. ‘Fine Art’ is supposed to emanate from heart and expected to make allusions to ‘nature’ in its ability to lead human mind to ‘beauty’. Female characters in literature are generally discussed as beautiful sacred objects that can be included as ‘fine art forms’. Artistic skill is regarded as miraculous skills in creating ‘immortal qualities’.

Discourses of ‘beauty’ (‘ramaneeyam’, sundaram) and ‘picturesque visions’ (sundara druasyangal) were getting constantly communicated through photographs, sketches of idyllic landscapes or dressed up aristocratic women in the post independent decades. How strongly these pictures functioned as the symbolic representations of ‘beauty’ ‘spiritual self realization’ and such higher principles of
aesthetic consciousness are imparted by many writers at various contexts giving vivid ‘picture-like’ descriptions as above. Balamani Amma, expresses her ‘aesthetic consciousness of beauty’ in very picturesque terms.

"...That great aesthetic consciousness of beauty flanked as background to all joys and sorrows of my emotionally charged heart. My heart identified with all emotions of nature. The wavy paddy fields in the sun shine, that old banyan tree with shivering leaves that stands near the fringes of the deserted filed, that atmosphere filled with the noise of conches near the moonlit temple compound—what all things raised me into the dreamy terrains!"

It is such dreamy terrains that M.Bhaskaran had already portrayed in dexterous details of pen and ink in many cover pictures of Mathrubhumi illustrated weekly in 1939 to 1944. They were not accompanied by distinctive fictions. Though operated independent as cover pictures, they already anticipated an ‘assimilation of pictures into literary fold’ as reflected in such musings of major poets of the time.

Changampuzha wrote poems with pastoral landscapes and romantic pangs. (App.a.7) Lot of lesser noticed poems / verses in 1930s addresses the ‘art muse’ as such! Interestingly, the ‘Art’ professed by ‘British Royal Academy’ had beauty for its object. (Joshwa Raynolds, ninth ‘Discourse’, 1780). It was regarded an artist’s ‘academic’ activity to observe, discover and express, but the beauty of which the ‘academy’ was in quest of was general and intellectual, an idea subsisting only in the mind (or ‘spirit’ as poet P. Kunjiraman nair wrote). ‘beauty’ is the sight never beheld,
nor has the hand expressed it, it is an idea residing in the breast of an artist, which he is always laboring to impart, and which he dies at last imparting.\textsuperscript{111} Consciousness and its ideal negation together form the idea of ‘fine art’ in European ‘academic’.

An observation of ‘art’, typically part of the institutional behavior of 19\textsuperscript{th} century academy, was newly getting understood as a ‘presentation of the original plastic forms and critical structures by which ‘fine arts’ distinguish themselves from other systems of visualization’ (Raynolds, 1780). In European academic context, this is a shift from art as an obsession with passion for Aristotlean unities and structures to a visuality of corporeal intensity wherein artist becomes an archetypal (academic and systematic) synthesizer. In Malayalam periodicals one can trace a shift of pictures from the arbitrary inanimate existence of the vignettes towards a rich variety of attitudes in verbal / poetic / ideational mediation.

M.P. Paul’s ‘Saundarya nireekshanam’ gets published in the year 1947. It was drawing clear functional demarcations for verbal and visual expressions as understood by a reading class from their knowledge of philosophy of art through available books of the time. Some casual but authoritarian musings on the essence of ‘art’ and ‘beauty’ were also getting formed as part of the general critical ambience already existing much stronger for ‘literature’ and ‘culture’ if not specifically for ‘art’. Number of articles on ‘beauty’ and ‘art’ will be very less compared to the number of articles got published for literary and cultural thought.

These reflective ideas on art have shaped an instructional framework for ‘pictures’ to function here. If style is the record of confrontation with ‘tradition’,
pictorial styles at this stage came to be an important aspect of communication with journalistic messages in periodicals. We do not get to see ‘reflective musings on art’ taking them seriously as ‘pictorial issues’. These editorial devises in designing picture for publication did not go without notice. Poet Kunji raman Nair wrote about such sub-titling matter that it was helpful for them to imagine a picture of a horse as it was and not as a picture of a donkey. Likewise, in the article about humor drawings by A.R.Poduval depicts a cartoon that shows an artist drawing out-door looking directly from a goat and the title of this picture of artist is that ‘...to make a dog out of a goat’. (‘Hasyachitrangal’). Making exact copy / illusion of natural objects was regarded as the greatest artistic challenge. But narrative sub-titling or fictional description as a first hand referent of the picture simultaneously operated just as similarly ‘literary’ and ‘poetic’ as a discursive premise validating and elucidating the ‘artistic’ / transcendental quality of it. While the verbal devises like ‘title-ing’, textualising (as in photo features) and orienting to fiction operated as ‘informal’ ‘casual’ or ‘natural’ hence definitive guidelines to the way ‘pictures’ were supposed to be seen. Though there formed a separate verbal method of calibrating ‘aesthetic value’ through journalistic sub-titles headings and captions for pictures, they were also examples perhaps devised often by the editorial authors of general ‘reflective musings’, the poetically distinguished ways devised here for dealing with the status of ‘nature’ and its ‘artistic’ representations. Those titles gave potentially privileging and distinguishing resonance to the ways in which ‘picture’ operated in this society.

The cover pages of Mathrubhumi struck a quite different chord in 1940s. There were photographs depicting modern and idylic spectacles of everyday life. (App.b.9 & App.b.10) M.Bhaskaran sketched idyllic landscapes, plants and animals
(mostly domesticating animals) in a detailing mode of minute sketchy perception.
(App.b.11& App.b.12) Those sketches communicated 'a detailing' that in the case of
a photograph is invariably lost in the printing process when a block was taken from a
photograph. This 'detailing' is but not a replacing or appropriating technique on
illusionist naturalism as practiced in mainstream Art of canvas painting. It is rather a
selective interest accumulating on human figures plants animals and anything that is
'idyllic' carrying the grand text of 'beauty'. It worked on the surface of the page. It
worked on the minimum means of black and white expressed by way of pen and ink.
This graphic sensibility is not an exclusive terrain of 'the visual'. It simply organized
the reader's eye around some concepts of forms of nature and human physique.

2.13 Meanings of 'the graphic' and the 'Photo-graphic'
Photography had entered as a European idiom both in its technology and
perceptual intentions. Its logical lineage as 'fine art' of both truthful record of nature
and of 'illusionistic naturalism' glamorized the uses of photographic image that was
further used to reinforce the viewer's identity as a consumer, a task made easier by the
medium's transparency. Though it is not simply the values of the commercial age
that brought in and sustained the photographic language in Malayalam periodicals, the
seemingly natural / neutral / truthful/ journalistic representations of the subjects of
the new public sphere reinforced the values of the modern culture here. This
invariably influenced the 'real fantasies' of art shared by a group of 'serious writers
and poets' who simultaneously infiltrated into the less noticed writers of not-serious
creations as 'real fantasies' of 'sentimental depictions'.
The graphic fold of drawings and sketches achieved such a logical lineage only from humorous pictures that could work only in an ambiguous space between art and politics. They are not glamorous. They existed as abrupt abbreviated denotations of human and natural forms of a lesser order that could be perceived by a middle class subjectivity that thinks sees and writes textualises the labor-class within this emerging sense of ‘artistic visions’. That ‘looking subject’ could photo-feature agricultural labor in the pastoral contexts as a ‘grand dramatic vision’ that never satiates its ‘pleasure of looking’\textsuperscript{13}. G. Shankara Kurup wrote poem on a female reaper (“Koythukari”, 1952 July). The poet who remains ‘in the temple premises of life’, presents her as a rhetorical ‘reaper of future’. M.V. Devan provided a sketch for this poem showing floating peasants over the village. These were ‘real fantasies of art’ that oriented on photographic and illusionistic order but could very well be absorbed into graphic imaginative flexibility of literally unrealistic contexts so that drawings as ‘illustration’ of literary texts in early 1950s could accumulate some sort of ‘artistic’ status.

2.14 The orders of reading

‘Artistic taste’ was also operating through circumscribing ‘lesser social orders’ of various sorts. The ‘pastoral other’ could be grafted on to the emerged philosophical musings on poetic and artistic sentimentality. ‘The progressive savior of humanity’ could be embedded in the reading experience by bringing in the ‘defective scenes of untidy ordinary and tragic human life’. But the change over into the ordinary ambitions of reading was a different case. The ‘reader / viewer subject’ with lesser textual conceit could not be accommodated directly in an ‘artistic’ fold. The way in which literary ambitions deflected into lower orders of seriousness and significance,
also reflect in the way they were used for ‘illustration’. Lesser serious practices of fiction used photographs in the same textualised formats of sub-titling used in photo features and cover photos ‘described inside’ the magazine thereby extending the codes of the popular commonplace interest and curiosity to be guided towards the literary realm (App.b.13 & App.b.14).

More serious and philosophically ambitious literary efforts were entertained with ‘pictures from imagination’ done by ‘artists’. Graphic idiom of drawing they used was less glamorous in visual effects but it could transgress the ubiquity of photographic idiom and its directly journalistic textualisation.

Here one needs to further see the clearly marginalizing attitude of even these culturally ambitious magazines in Malayalam. What they understood as ‘artistic’ was functioning far away from the aesthetic main streams of ‘Indian Art’ that had brought in revivallist arguments discarding Ravi Varma. The political choices and ideas behind an art practice was not filtered here even when literary people formed dominant political arguments on their potential.

2.15 Away From the (Aesthetic) Mainstream of ‘Indian Art’:

In most regional cultures of early 20th century India, periodical entrepreneurs anticipated the emerging new reading-class society through a remarkable flair for blending the ‘literary/ verbal’ with the ‘illustrative/visual’ journalism. Some of them proudly declared that theirs is an ‘illustrated journal’. Vidyavindini is regarded as the first published illustrated periodical in Malayalam14. It also declared in both English and Malayalam that ‘it is a monthly journal that is published with pictures’.
‘An illustrated Malayalam journal’ is the caption in English. ‘Illustrated’ at that time meant ‘publishing with pictures’, not necessarily demonstrating / illustrating fiction. But pictures were only ambiguously used as ‘art works’. Though nationalism was a strong driving force behind the journalistic entrepreneurial efforts in Malayalam, Art was apparently a lesser inspiration here in the early 20th century as compared to the upsurge of litho print-visuals of ‘Art’ in Bengali periodicals18. There is an apparent absence of any immediate critical break or continuity in the pan-Indian scale from what Ravi Varma left in this region. There is a sheer lack of commercial and intellectual space for ‘Fine Art’ as separate discourses at this point. Such spaces were formed in Calcutta, Bombay and their suburbs. There was no editorial entrepreneur in Malayalam like Ramananda Chatterji (of ‘Modern Review’ and ‘Prabasi’) who could move painlessly from Ravi Varma to Abanindranath Tagore as naturalism gave way to ‘Swadeshi orientalism’ creating an informed environment for Art in which half-tone plates and illustrations in periodicals played an indispensable part. It is observed by Partha Mittar that Ramananda Chatterji’s art plates provided model for magazine publishing in the rest of India.

However, at the turn of the century, the focus of ‘Art’ in an elite articulate commercial and aesthetic sense of the term was shifted to Bengal and various Art schools located at urban and semi-urban areas like Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow and Madras. This more or less alienated the newly emerging ‘culture-conscious’ and nationalist middleclass of the feudal states in Keralam from the aesthetic mainstream of ‘Indian Art’.
Popular Bengali monthlies took note of Ramananda Chatterji’s inspired the guess that illustrations enhanced sales. Literary figures started monthlies rich with illustration. Half tone colour plates pioneered by Upendra Kishore Ray were the main selling point until the advent of offset litho process in 1930.

Instead of reinforcing a public taste for academic ‘fine art’ like in the case of Bengali magazines, the verbal-visual interface in periodical journalism and cultural pedagogy as shaped in Keralam devised a different set of parameters and pictorial attitudes. This is to be treated as a particular case because as attempted to prove in the thesis hereafter, the idea of ‘the literature oriented illustration’ is popularly understood in a synonymous sense as ‘the art of line drawings’.

Operating in local intellectual ambitions and evolving into such a selective cultural practice by late 1940s and sustaining as a ‘media habit’ to the present, ‘literature oriented illustration’ has been instrumental in filling the gaps between ‘Art’ as a ‘pan-Indian’ / ‘metropolitan’ / ‘European’ / ‘universal’ discourse and ‘art’ as people’s popular / ‘everyday world’. It did not distinguish between various mediums of picture making like pen, pencil, paint, canvas, paper, camera and graphic printing.

The irregularities within these mediums and their pictorial ambitions or effect were not addressed. Everything seen was translated as pictorial and scenic. Evasion of frictions and irregularities in terms of the grand narrative of ‘the artistic’ was further promised by a curious transcription of modernist and European aesthetic ideas through an intelligentsia formed through the space of literary works, philosophical musings of both writers and literary critics and attempts developed parallel to all this
to trace the genealogy of 'Art' from 'cave man' to 'modern artist'. Genealogical ideas of art were more or less paraphrased through art writings of K.P. Padmanabhan Thampy, E.M.J. Venniyoor, Vakkam Abdul Khadar, P.T. Cheriyan, K.M. Daniel and through the influential ideas of aesthetics presented by Kesari A. Balakrishna Pillai and M.P. Paul. Some technical guide books for art also got published.

Ideas on the artistic or the imaginative were getting prevalent through evolving literary criticism and the practice of popular essaying on various topics. Academic Art education as conceived by the Art School trained people and drawing masters holding Government Certificate (in Technical Examinations) produced a sort of pedagogic textuality for visualization. A space of culture consciousness was devised in manifold ways like debates, news reports and features in the same periodical pages by 1950s. It is the verbose journalistic phrasing of 'presenting artists' through articles and photo features that introduced modern art as practiced in India and Europe to the 'literate-media' readership in Kerala. Article-writers wrote about individual artists as 'new movement in art' or as 'a compassionate heart struggling to lead human kind into 'progress' inculcating 'modern values'. Artist is often projected as having 'infallible allegiance to humanity', an exemplary in his passion for humanity, an unattainable status for ordinary beings.

Instead of operating in a 'bazaar' of garishly colored picture prints and calendars, the technology and sensibility of 'illustrated magazine' was getting floated here in an entrepreneurial cultural field with a routinized textuality. This clearly mediated the demands and needs for the visual with an 'aesthetic' aura that is not
readily available in a 'micro-politan' culture\textsuperscript{20} that lacked buzzing urban centers to produce auralic art objects.

Further here is an attempt to map these verbal-visual spaces in periodicals of early 1930s to 1970s as the research traces it as a particular premise of 'the pictorial' and 'the artistic' distinct from mainstream of Art practices. 'Illustration' though associated with the dominant activity of literary engagement, remained as a terrain of silent responses, routinised habits and abrupt sketchiness that are generally regarded less ambitious and derivative in order, in terms of mainstream visual practices. A gradual assimilation of drawings and sketches into the exclusive field of literary activity also fixed the meaning of this act as only determined by the available literary pedigree. Only great writers and celebrated incidents of serialization fetched a share of acclaim to the 'illustrator'. 'Illustration' was not understood or acclaimed in terms of its functional reality irrespective of the merit of the literary text it existed with. The transformations on the visual idioms brought in by an 'illustration' with its graphic design and communication potentials are systematically overlooked in the media texts so as to derive and sustain its canonical use for the culture industry.

In the next three chapters, this research attempts to understand the artistic, popular and canonical codes of the graphic visual language brought in by 'illustrators' for literary texts.

Chapter-3 closely looks at pictures used as 'illustration' and the kind of 'artistic' capital it accumulates.
Notes:


2. Satyanadakahalam, 1876 (1052 ‘kanni’) issue.1. It declared that ‘the Truth will save you’. The symbols of truth are communicated through a vignette showing the crown of ecclesiastical church mounted by cross. The ‘Truth’ intended in this magazine is further exemplified in its editorial written by Fr. Candidus. Interestingly, various everyday incidents (‘nityasambhavam’) occurring at different parts of the world is referred as ‘truth’.

3. [http://www.library.georgetown.edu guides/19thcentury/](http://www.library.georgetown.edu guides/19thcentury/)

4. J.Devika, ‘imagining women’s social space in early modern Keralam’, center for development studies, Thiruvananthapuram, working paper 329. April 2002. The appearance of special slots for women, as in ‘strisamajams’ seems to indicate that the public sphere was already a structured space that promoted ‘gendering’. According to that man’s authority derived from political influence, economic strength, and intellectual prowess, while women’s seemed to be derived entirely her attributed power over emotion and sentiment – a non-coercive power that works through compassionate deeds, tears prayer and gentle advise. The modern home was to be supervised and preceded over by the woman while the established mores of domestic life women had little space.

6. P.N. Shankaran Nambar, in ‘kavyamodam’, (Athmaposhini monthly-1094 medam) essays some thoughts on art. This is one of the earliest attempts to ‘think on art’ as part of so many topics of ‘modern’ interest in Malayalam. Certain ‘pictorialism’ is ideated through such essays that differentiate inherent ‘spaces’ and essential ‘potentials’ of each art form like painting, sculpture, architecture and music. Newly formed ideas transcribed from European enlightenment ideas on art like ‘sukumarakalakal’ (fine art) and ‘pryojanakalakal’ (functional art).

8. P. Kunjiraman Nair on ‘Chitram’ in ‘Udayaram’, P.K.Brothers, Kozhikkodu, 1933. p-16


10. ‘Ente kavitha’, an article the poet wrote on her own poetic consciousness in Mathrubhumi weekly. 1953 February 22.
11. P. Kunjiraman Nair also writes that ‘poet is who says that which is not said. Artist is he who paints that which is not painted’, ‘Udayaram’, p-16

15. Bengal was a distinct case to create a special reading class and taste for image-text communication model. Art and nationalism were the two interests that dominated early practitioners in Bengal like Ramananda Chatterji (‘Modern Review’). Partha mittar, Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1994.

16. Soman kadalur’s thesis, ‘Malayalaprasidheekaranangalle rekhachitranaathe adishanamakki oru patanam’ A study based on the line drawings in Malayalam publications; PhD thesis, SriShankara university, Kalady 1999, shares this attitude. This has to logically exclude wash drawings, photographs and paintings that are also used as ‘illustrations’ for fiction in the history of this practice since 1930s.

17. ‘Drawing book’ by K.Chindan Nair (1912) was one of the earliest guide books for picture making. Later S.L.Larius and K.P.Padmanabhan Thampy published books on both the technique and philosophy of art.

18. Vidwan V.R.Parameswaran Pillai on Kodungallur Madhava Menon, Mathrubhumi weekly, 16 May 1943.


Fig. 2.1
Cover picture 'Maryam', Kanni1088, (1913)

Fig. 2.1
Cover picture 'Vanitharatnam', February, 1928
Fig.2.2 Cover picture 'Atmaposhini' edited by Vallathol Narayana Menon,
Vol.10: No.12, Kumbham 1094 (1919)

Fig.2.3
Cover picture 'Sharada', March 1908
Fig. 2.5
Sketch M. Bhaskaran, 'Viswroopam' December 1940

Fig. 2.6
Sketch of reader's expressions, M. Bhaskaran, 'Sanjayam', 15 June 1937
Fig. 2.7
Drawing and its explanatory text given in the next page, 'Sanjayan'.
Sketch Achuth, 15 June 1937.
Fig. 2.8
Cover drawing M. Bhaskaran, *Mathrubumi Illustrated Weekly*, 1942
Fig. 2.9
Sketch M. Bhaskaran, 'Viswaroopam', May 1941

Fig. 2.10
Sketch M. Bhaskaran, 'Gandhi waiting for light', 'Viswaroopam', October 1940