# TABLE OF CONTENTS

i. Acknowledgements i

ii. Abstract iv

1. Introduction: A Survey of the Linguistic Terrain of Malayalam Cinema 1
   1.1. Contesting the Idea of a Singular Indian National Cinema 6
   1.2. Cinema, Creating a Democratic Public Sphere 10
   1.3. The Role of Theatre and Cinema in Consolidating a Linguistic Identity 14
   1.4. Sound and the Vernacular in Indian Films 18
   1.5. Cinemas of South India and the Case of Kerala 23
   1.6. An Overview of Film studies in Malayalam 28
   1.7. Methodology and Material 32
   1.8. Structure of Dissertation 33

2. Imaging and Imagining the “Malayali” Region in the Films of the 1950s 37
   2.1. When was Malayalam Cinema? 38
   2.2. Cinema and the Development of New Secular Spaces 45
   2.3. The Primacy of Language and Literature in Constituting a Regional Imagination 53
   2.4. Region and Realism in Early Malayalam Cinema 60
   2.5. Conclusion 74

3. New Themes and Aesthetics in Malayalam Cinema (1950s-1960s) 76
   3.1. Literary-Cinematic Collaborations in 1960s Malayalam Cinema 78
   3.2. From Realism to Melodrama 86
   3.3. Melodrama and Conflict in K.S. Sethumadhavan’s Films 90
   3.4. New Cinema Movement and the Question of Region 100
   3.5. Conclusion 108

4. Configuring the “Region” and its “Outside” in Contemporary Malayalam Cinema 110
   4.1. The Period 111
   4.2. Advent of Minimum Return Films 113
   4.3. Constituting the Tamil Outside 117
   4.4. Anxieties about Migration into the State of Kerala 119
   4.5. “New Migrants” and Malayalam Cinema 139
4.6. Conclusion

5. Conclusion: Towards New Cinematic Imaginations of the Region

6. Bibliography

7. Filmography