APPENDIX 1

1. A short appreciation of the novel Inna/ey (Yesterday) By EVGopalan written on the life of Sardar Gopalakrishnan.

The novel Inna/ey is a work of fiction that is inspired by the life of Sardar Gopalakrishnan. The essential fact that the novel relies on is the death of its protagonist on the first republic day of India, pitted within a chronicle of the national movement beginning with the "salt satyagraha" of 1931, the days of the World War II and ending with the first Republic Day of India. A storm that literally shook the lives of the people of Nattika firka (the setting for the novel) in the year 1942 has served as another potential source for the orientation of the story.

The death of the protagonist on the first Republic Day was a heroic death; which heroism seeks to consolidate its historicality through its coincidence with the first republic day of India thus transforming it into a martyrdom. Apart from these facts that from the part of the meta narrative, that unfolds at the level termed the national or the global, the novel indulges in the romantic tale of the sacrifice of the protagonist-character, Gopi. The novel in this process gives essential clues regarding the 'praxis' of heroism and sacrifice in the region called nattika firka.

The historicity of the facts dealt with give a certain amount of truthfulness to the story of the protagonist called Gopi, in the novel. Even though, the character of Gopi has been created around the real-life story of Sardar Gopalakrishnan, it is neither true that the novel is a biography of Sardar; nor does the novelist make any claims to that end. The author's dedication of his novel to the memory of Sardar Gopalakrishnan and his prefatory comment regarding the fulfilment of his ambition to write a novel regarding certain important events of his countryside that he witnessed, reveal how important a book, the novel happens to be in understanding the congenial elements of a culture that edifies Sardar's heroism.
The novel engages with the life of Gopi as a boy, when he is a student of the tenth standard in a school run by Christian missionaries in his village. Gopi is not a brilliant or outstanding student. On the contrary, he most of the time lost in his own world of imagination, addicted to playing games and snoozing off at the sight of his text books. Gopi’s liking for games include a lot of dignity, affirmation and pride apart from fun and sports. His friend gets a taste of this, while playing with him and others a freshly innovated game called, the salt and the police. The game naïvely inspired by the ‘salt satyagraha’ had the kids divided on either sides of a line, as police and the satyagrahis. The satyagrahis would grab at the salt, evading the police unless touched when they are detained and kept. When Gopi’s turn came as a satyagrahi to plunge at the heap of sand that stood for salt, the boy enacting police, in the act of touching Gopi, not just touched him, but also scratched him severely on his back. Gopi reacted sharply, worrying little of the fact that he was a satyagrahi, banging the boy who played the police right on his head.

The author’s imagination of the incident is indicative of the scant importance the ‘salt satyagraha’ had in the firka of nattika. Of greater importance is the way children are used to portray characters that symbolize definitions of power in a revolutionary process of change. The boy who attacks Gopi as police, is in reality a policeman’s son and hence is jeered by the crowd watching the game. At this point, the game takes on the nature of a theatrical play and the policeman’s son gets infuriated at the jeering and pounces on Gopi, who tries to kick him. This enrages Gopi, and for him too, the real play has begun, and he is a satyagrahi no more. This nuclear stage that evolves out of a children’s game encapsulates a political vision of nattika firka of a time contemporary to the salt satyagraha of 1931. The metaphor that structures this vision in the novel is that of play or theater.

If, theater is only incidental here, as a progressive theme, it makes a deliberate appearance at several other points in the novel. The drama staged for the festival in the temple gets its biggest applause for singing the “national”; a song that is different from the usual bhajans, kirtans or other devotional songs and contains references to
the national movement and praises of leaders like Gandhiji, Bhagat Singh etc. Singing of these songs were banned by the police and warranted arrest, if intercepted by them.

Theater every time it makes its appearance, comes as an innovative social agency. Not merely does it provide a unified vision of social conflicts, but also provides a common ground for all sections of the society to coalesce. This, latter event happens in an exemplary manner as featured in the novel when Gopi, as a volunteer of a team of scouts, in their attempt to rescue the lives of a Harijan couple that were drowning in the river bordering the temple, were carrying the couple to the steps of the temple to administer them first-aid, was stopped and forbidden to come near the temple because the drowning couple were outcastes and their admittance into the temple, would “pollute” the temple premises. This incident happens during the festival and realizing that even at the gravest hour of emergency, the doors of conservatism would not open for the lower castes, he is walking out of the scouts’ camp, though he and his team successfully retrieved the lives of the drowning couple. He has also resolved in his mind that he wants to be a scout, only once these injustices are removed. With this resolve, he is walking out of the scouts’ camp.

He is looking for his friend and soul-mate, Chandran. But, what he sees instead is the display board, for the drama that was to be staged that evening. It is a moment of illustrious contrast that the novel offers through this sequence of events. On the one hand, is the temple, that is considered sacred and but is discriminatory and conservative, at its core. On the other hand, is the play, which is open, and accessible to everybody, only at the cost of a ticket. Not just that, the entertainment that is staged inside is, in the local slang, called the “national”. For example, one of these songs begins with a verse that goes like this, “kanthi sonna manthiram.............”, that means, the ‘mantra’ (or the magic word) that Gandhi spake. Theatre here offers in an enigmatic way, the interminable confluence of the popular and the national, and becomes a chronotope\(^1\), in the way it was meant by the literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin.

\(^1\) According to Bakhtin, “A literary work’s artistic unity in relationship to an actual reality is defined by its chronotope” (Bakhtin, M., 1994, p.243). Theater as the chronotope in this novel, presents to us the authroial vision over and above the individual vision and ideology presented through the multiplicity of
Gopi’s tryst with history actually begins with that festival and the watching of the play. Even while watching the play, his mind was imagining scenes of the national movement that were unwinding within him, homologously, as did the scenes of the play ‘satyavan savitri’ on the stage. The novelist in fact, presents, this as the moment of the formation of Gopi’s political profile, when, the slogans and shouts of the freedom struggle resonate in his ears that go in succession like, “bharat matah ki jai”, “vande mathram” and “inquilab zindabad”, the last of which was completely unknown to him. The novelist has used this incident to show Gopi’s intuitive maturity nd association with the country’s most recent political trends. The matter of importance to us is that, the author chose the context of a play, and it’s make-shift auditorium in order to narrate Gopi’s moment of self-revelation.

Thenceforth, Gopi’s lifestory according to the novel runs like this. K.Kelappan, eminent Gandhian and leader of the national movement in Kerala comes to Nattika village for a toddy shop picketing, where Gopi meets him and gets recruited as a volunteer for the satyagraha, his initiation into politics. What awaits him at the school, as a consequence, is his dismissal notice. At home things were even worse. Gopi, ever since his Father died, which happened early in his childhood, was under the care of his elder brother, who was the manager of a school that ran on resources from the Government. Gopi’s brother fearing that giving protection to a congress volunteer would jeopardize the Government’s interests in his school, wanted to end all relationships with Gopi. So, dividing the family assets in a way that he reckoned to be just, he had Gopi and his mother moved to a different house, and left to fend for themselves.

his characters. Elsewhere in the main text we have already discussed how theater emerges as a dominant motif in the course of remembering the events related to Sardar’s martyrdom. Through the chronotope of theater the author is essentially maintaining a continuity with that discourse that holds the martyr as a hero and the martyrdom as a stage.
Gopi's life ahead is caught in solving the riddles of his relationships with the Nair; upper-caste family in the neighbourhood, the daughter of the family, Seema and Gopi, find a mutual liking for each other. Gopi had become a gandhian, that by then. He takes up, weaving thread on a "charka" as a trade to make his living. His mother weaves mattresses out of dry pineapple leaves to support them. It is at this point, the famous Guruvayur satyagraha is announced by K.Kelappan, for temple-entry rights for the lower castes. Gopi resolves to visit Kelappan and does so by covering all the distance from Nattika to Guruvayur, alone on foot, which in any case was not a great feat in those days, with a distance of no more than 25 kilometres.

The novelist gives credit to Gopi, for having inspired Kelappan to enter a fast unto death till the temple is opened for free for people from all castes. Once the fast is prematurely called off, heeding counsel from Gandhi, Gopi turns sceptic about the intentions of the Congress party.

These questions assume a bigger dimension for Gopi, subsequently, and infiltrates into his passion for Seema, the upper-caste girl, which drives him into extreme loneliness and insecurity. He, thus flees his village. After, a stretch of non-detailed wanderings, and voyages, his yearning for home breaks the ice, with memories of the blessings he had received as a child from Sree Narayana Guru, a spiritual reformer of Kerala in early 20th century, who while blessing Gopi, remarked about him as one capable of opening all doors. He comes back home to join the movement begun by the same Guru for social reform. But, even this engagement was not to last long. When the general elections came up, the Sree Narayan Sangham fielded their candidate, and from his observation what Gopi concluded was that, the Sangham were only interested in the rich; and not the poor.

The congress candidate from that constituency wins the elections and goes on to become th a minister in the newly formed ministry. When he comes to visit his village after his election, Gopi organizes a group of protesters to file a petition against the local sub-inspector of police for his excesses and bribe-taking. The public witnesses and evidences, the protesters produced, had its' effect, because the government had to
force the concerned officer to undertake retirement. The episode earned for Gopi, a place in the local rowdy list (as the 13th).

In the same train of events, Gopi along with a friend, Velunni, who was also the secretary of the Congress in his village decided to organize a meeting of the farmers in their area. Originally, an idea mooted by Gopi, Velunni suggests that it should be coupled with a meeting of the unemployed and also of the harijans. The meeting raises the slogans of “inquilab zindabad”, following the exhortations of the incipient radical wing forming within the Congress represented in the meeting by AKGopalan.

When in the year 1939, World War II broke out, people were pushed to extremes of penury and misery. Gopi lost his mother the previous summer. On the political front, the people are worried about a Japanese take-over, replacing the British. The only lucrative livelihood option open to the people, was to join the armed forces, though it involved imminent danger and threat to life. On top of everything, came the monsoon with a storm that of the fury that the village had never witnessed in the past. It came like death itself, uprooting the trees and devastating people’s houses, shops and almost everything.

Like the theme of theater, the episode of the storm, is signified as a force that gravitates all the characters in the novel, in a unique and exemplary kinship, that catapults human relations to an altogether utopian; but, nevertheless, real level. Rising to unequalled prominence is the character of the Moslem lord of the village, Mayan, who appears at no other point in the novel. His mansion is the only shelter for the destitute villagers flocking like sheep in the face of the ghastly terror. Mayan’s wife Pathumma even assists as the mid-wife to a woman in labour, who delivers her baby in the midst of the storm.

The author tries to reflect an absolute and unswerving awe of nature, through the thoughts of one of the characters. It reads like, “yes, the death is approaching. You can hear the roaring wind, ney, it is death itself trumpeting on the eardrums. The wind is beating and rising like, monstrous waves, one upon the other. You can hear it’s growl upon growl. And the whole world is trembling with fear”.

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The storm excited the primordial fears of the characters, thus accessing the extents of a communist humanism leveling all the existing inequalities in the society. This is similar to the egalitarianism devised for theater earlier, with the difference that, if the spectacle for theater was enacted it was real for the storm.

The misery and anarchy following the storm press people into looting a shipment of grains that was being transported through the canal bordering Nattika. Though the benefactors of this act, were mainly rich black-marketeers and not the poor, and the crime, an act of vandals, the police held Gopi responsible for the act. Gopi was in the forefront of the relief activities, and this circumstances sided with Gopi’s name in the rowdy list of the police, gave the police the right opportunity to nail Gopi. The encounter with the police completes Gopi’s transformation into the revolutionary, the inner profile of which he already contained as a child.

When the ‘Quit India’ movement dawns in Nattika, it is welcomed with a huge appeal and a lot of sympathy for Gandhi. Gopi stands a lone dissenter to the campaigns of the Congress, when all his friends, including his lover extend full support to it. Gopi’s attention was still occupied by the rehabilitatory measures for the storm and in organizing anti-Japanese sentiments. The dissent, ends in a personal tragedy, that Gopi always feared in contemplation, which is the marriage of his lover, Seema to one of his political rivals and that too without her full consent, but, the realization that, the barriers of caste cannot be brought down, even if a couple of individuals decide to ignore them and cross them. Stricken with bitter grief, Gopi decides to give an entirely new twist to his life and terminate the prolonging agony. He, thus reaches the recruitment office at Coimbatore (right now, in Tamil Nadu) and joins the Indian Army.

Gopi finds what he looks for, too. The letter that he writes to his friend and soul mate, Chandran from the Army, expresses his gratification in having met different communities of people and interacted with them. He abhors the stupid inactivism of old days and resolves to be an entirely new man. He returns from the Army with a new
set of political convictions. In 1946 May, when he has returned from the service in the Army, he believes himself to be a Communist.

1947 August 15. The day of Indian Independence. It came and left. But, Gopi still could not see any discernible changes in the condition of the poor. The misery of the farmers and the workers only accentuated in his village. The evacuation of small peasants, from their possessions continued. So did the excessive extortion of labour from landless labourers by the big landlords. Gopi and many others like Gopi who had returned from a stint with the armed forces started taking a special interest in the issues of these people. The local population interpreted their activity as “communism”. The leather bags and big moustaches they sported became, common insignia for the communists. They would make frequent trips to Kozhikkode, a town in Northern Kerala, the real intentions of which were unknown to the villagers. The long conversations, they initiated with the villagers were called in the local slang, a “study class”.

In the midst of these thick happenings, came the news that shocked, the news that shook all of India; Nattika being no exception. Gandhiji was shot dead. The news arrives on the day of a festival. The festival was related to the birthday of God Sree Subrahmanyan. The festival is called the ‘pooyam’.

The central theme of theatre makes its appearance once again in the novel. There is a variety of entertainment that are waiting to be staged as a part of the festival celebrations. That evening when the news of Gandhi’s assassination came, the stage for ‘kathakali’ was being set. A huge lamp has been lit and kept in front in the middle of the stage. The percussion inaugurating the act is playing in the background. The audience is eagerly awaiting the start of the play. It is at this juncture that the news of Gandhi’s assassination breaks. The news spreads a lot of confusion and ambiguity and people are largely unwilling to believe the murder of Gandhi. The ambiguity spreads to slow chaos and disorder. Some start clamouring for the stopping of the play. Others are pressing to continue not knowing whether the news could be true or false. Amidst this din, rises the voice of Gopi from complete obscurity calling upon his countrymen
to mourn the death of the father of the Nation and requesting them to stop staging the play as a sign of respect to the departed leader. But, once the source of the voice was identified, the upper caste trustees of the temple questioned, what purport an Ezhava had in the temple, whatsoever. Upon which, Gopi affirming his basic faith in humanity retorted, neither Ezhava nor Nayar was of consequence; but, for humanity, adding that he was addressing the men who were trustees of the temple. That was enough to shut everybody’s mouth and initiate the proceedings of mourning for Gandhi.

The theater as a coherent act of social conflicts inhering a vision of the future again makes its appearance with this episode in the novel. Theatre facilitates the conveyance of a social message, that escapes the limits of everyday communicative rationality. It galvanizes different social roles to icons of performance. In the example above, Gopi’s voice, is introduced as an asareeri or disembodied voice, which is a technique used in epics to divulge divine annunciations. It is an accomplished technique of the Indian stage too. It’s conjunction with real social life is a phenomenon beyond any rational quest. It is only a method of intuitive association of facts that can identify these characteristics of the collective consciousness of any civilization. Because of its severe identification with its subject of study, in many ways it assumes features congenital to the civilization itself; but, in a manner of extrapolating the basic features of that society. It is an approach that instead of looking at a culture from outside and with detachment, submerges into it, even deeper than the utilitarian realms of everyday practicality, in a level of hyporeality, enough to make the archaic dimensions of that society or civilization a matter of perception. The true archaic elements present themselves as a disjointed array of details and it is the researcher’s function to evolve a meaning out of it, that is contemporaneous, neither with the present nor the past, but ordered within a time frame that orientates itself, as the process of definition expands.

Life gets increasingly dangerous for Gopi in the meanwhile as the police and the volunteers of a special squad formed within the Congress start searching for Gopi and his friends who had gone underground, following the banishment of the Communists by the Government. Gopi and his friends are called the ‘upsetteers’ attimarikkar in the
village, because they want to upset the government, whereas Gopi believes it is his
due right to fight for demand like rise in wages or jobs for all.

The first day of the Republic dawns on January 26, 1950. Gopi and his friends take out
a march to voice their demands in the public. The people are surprised and shocked at
the same time. They fail to understand what was happening or how overnight things
could change for the "upsetteers" of the underground. But, Gopi is confident because
he believes he has the basic freedom to express his demands and share his views with
the rest of the nation. But, before anyone gets an opportunity to speak or to interact, a
police van disrupts the procession and Gopi and his friends are taken under arrest and
carried to the police station. All that his people get to see of Gopi is his burial ground
on the shore of the Valappadu coast of the sea.
APPENDIX 2

Preface to bhauthikavaadam computer yugathilm Materialism in the Computer Age in Translation.

Brace yourself! We are going to take off into the world of letters. We hope to open a trace. A trace that leads to the caverns of the brain and washes it with cool, sweet honey. The honey that flows down to mix with the torrential stream of thought in the fertile terraces of your mind. The knowledge, thus enriched, through its crystalline, refracted brilliant rays of light, that it spreads on our trace, make the practice of a brilliant rationale smooth and easy.

All practice is motion.

Motion is omnipresent.

The movement of objects are bound and limited; therefore, they are also selfish. That is inevitable. Objects exist in their own states. In the persistence of motion, these omnipresent states are infinite (But, then what are objects?).

The motion of motion itself, that has only but one expression, that of change, change that brings neither limits; nor limitations. The states of change are objects. For the same reason, they are also unselfish. They are also inevitable.

Selfish-Unselfish is a contradiction. But, their Union also is an inevitable reality. Then, that itself is Universe. So it has been. So it shall be.

Between the points of life and death once born as matter and immersed in its states, accepting as inevitable the objectivity and unselfishness of its states, the conscience he forsakes- has become the principle that unites the elements of our cosmos- that is, love and humanity.

In the midst of pride and ornaments, a little food for thought, is certainly not harmful to health.

1 From the unpublished manuscript by Ravi
APPENDIX 3


On Woman’s Participation in the Communist Parties, the role of P.A.Prabhakaran in the Communist movement in Nattika firka etc.

Self: Can you tell me something about women’s participation in the Communist movement of those days?

Ravi: The movement had comrades like Kochupennu and Karthyani. But it was gaudy (nalla chandam aanu!). Would anyone let them even near their homes? Why should any one encourage them? Only for one’s own benefits, and nothing else. It was a period where the frame of mind was such. The Party never could have had in any way an enlightened (prabhudamaaya) frame of mind. Why speak more? The men were little different, either. If ever they had an awareness of the gravity of the politics, at least they wouldn’t have been indulgent (chaapalyangal). That is what one has to understand. Then, what to speak of women?

It is not like that today. Everything has changed today. Many big changes have come about. All the progressive changes that have come about, today, is thanks to the effects of the activities, of the Marxist-Leninist Party of the Communists.

Self: One thing that has always puzzled me is this. Prostitution is an institution that has existed in society since all times. At a time, when the ideology of Marxism and Communism was beginning to take its roots amongst the people; how did it come to terms with an institution that was already existing amongst the people?

Ravi: Today, may be we do not accept it openly. There is still a continuity in the manner of indulgences of the comrades of the two Communist Parties (the undivided CPI and the later CPI(ML)). There is no point in trying to deny that. When the Party (CPI(ML)) made for itself an active ground in politics, all these aspects found place in it. Self-Criticism and criticism as an operational mode for the Party; once took roots, included all these.
Self: Is there anyone who can tell any personal experiences of this operational mode?

Ravi: It is very limited. There were a few comrades who lived in a cell, in those days. Few are alive today. Most of them expired. No more, today. The cell that I was part of used to meet on the sixth day of every week. One had to report every minute of the twenty four hours of all days gone by. One had to do both self-criticism as well as criticism. Tutoring the comrades into such a mode was one of the major programmes of the movement when I was underground.

Self: How much could the activists cope with this mode of functioning?

Ravi: No. They could not. Because there were many who were attracted to the movement for other reasons. I shall give you an example. I was attending a conclave of the Party in Palghat, that included apart from the above two, a cultural analysis of the activities as well on its agenda. I was in hiding, at that point. A young man participating in the conclave openly said, that, he came into the Party attracted by the beauty of Ajitha (a front ranking leader of the CPI(ML) in Kerala).

Self: But, that was years later. What about the times of early Underground, 1948-49?

Ravi: Those days? Those days, nothing of this sort existed. There was no cell. All that was important was how to push the activities forward, in the underground.

Self: In that case, I have to ask you something. This is about an incident that Chandru, at whose house many a secret conclave, in those times was held, told me. I doubt if he knows what a cell is. Yet, he has mentioned how he once saw Sardar following one such conclave, sit alone and cry aloud. What could be the reason that a person feel so isolated, in such a movement? Was it that Sardar did not have a good reputation in terms of moral standards? Should one person be made a victim of such instincts to which every one was vulnerable? Was it not the lack of an openness or self-criticism from other members that made him weep so loudly as Chandru reported?

Ravi: Yes, I agree with that. It was so that, in those days, the leaders who were faced with malignant propaganda in the public were extremely, severely criticized.

Self: Which means that these cells followed the same kind of thinking that ruled the society.
Ravi: Certainly. Without a doubt. Any change did come about only years later, when the CPI(ML), with which I was also involved, took efforts to overcome these shortcomings. As I observed earlier this particular comrade, participating in the conclave openly claimed that he was attracted towards the Party because of the beauty of Ajitha. Mind you, he never talked to Ajitha neither till then; nor later. Those times the Party approximated an ideal formation, taking within cultural self-examination of every possible kind. Later, it got fragmented, anyway.

Self: There were also reports of homosexuality, amongst the leadership of the movement? Can you say something about the way Sardar was associated with that?

Ravi: I do not know of that. There were stories of his relationships with a couple of teachers from the schools in Chenthrappinny and Edathiruthy? In any case, it is pointless to rack one's brains over this. In 1948-49, no one had any time for any of these. Later, when the tension eased, may be something happened. All said and done, in this regard I should say Prabhakarji (P.A.Prabhakaran) stands as a role model. A role model for any political activist. He was a very peculiar being. I saw in his life the true imprints of a Communist. Such a breadth of mind, to adjust to anyone; anywhere, I have not seen ever since. If others raised some selfish requirement or the other, Prabahakarji was one who had none of these. Especially while staying in shelters underground, the food was basic. Many would wish, at least if there was a pickle, chammanthy, but not him. Such discipline.

Self: What happened to him, later?

Ravi: The police raided his house several times. His uncle moved to Kattur, following this. I want you to write his biography in the forthcoming souvenir on Sardar. He was so dear to Sardar himself, that probably he was his dearest. Even on the eve before the 'Rally', they met and then parted. Sardar refused his participation in the rally. He was also not such a healthy person. He was advised by Sardar to retire to hiding and carry forward the activities of the Party. He continued the effort, despite all. With the same responsibility he continued his activities from the underground. It was K.S.Nair who led him into the hands of the police.

Self: But, how?
Ravi: A shelter could not be arranged for him in Edathiruthy. He was therefore sent to the village of Pavaratty further North. I was the courier for the Party literature between the leaders. Then, it was that K.S.Nair was released on bail and resumed his role of leadership. I had the natural responsibility to get back in touch with the leadership. Once it was back in position. One day, K.S.Nair suggested to me that, Prabhakarji should be brought back to our village. I agreed with his thoughts. And so, it was decided, and I handed over the report of the decision to Prabhakarji. The report held that at Chakkumkandam ferry Prabhakarji should wait on the chosen day, at night and Ravi would go with a boat (veenchiti); pick him, and ferry back to Edathiruthy. Something like 1 ¼ rupee had to be paid as the boat fare, which it was assumed that K.S.Nair would give. So I organized the boat of a man called Kochulona and made preparations for the trip. I could not disclose the nature of the mission to him. I just mentioned that, there were some goods to be ferried. He was a regular ferry-man across the Connolly canal, and he worked by the day, and was free only in the night. The Party demanded such secrecy in functioning that nothing could be disclosed to even those who were not enemies by any reckoning. So, I asked him to arrange for a boat with a (vaduvara)- a country-boat’s hood, usually made of matted pineapple leaves panambu. Everything was arranged. But, to cut the long story short, K.S.Nair did not pay even that little sum which it was his responsibility to give. I waited along with another comrade Sekharan master. He later taught crafts in a school nearby. He knew printing work very well.

Self: I have not come across him so far.

Ravi: You must have certainly heard his name mentioned. He was an activist of the Party from the early times. Even his brothers were. Narayanan, Kochu all later became Marxist Party members, though were diffident in the beginning.

So, Sekharan and I kept waiting and waiting. We were at our wits’ end. Did not know what to do. 1 ¼ rupee was not so easy to be obtained, those days. Finally we could not go. Comrade waited at the appointed place all night long waiting for us. And at day-break, upon not seeing us, hired a boat from there itself and headed for here. By the time he reached the ferry at the Nattika village, it was already day-light. Then, he thought it was now time to leave the boat and take the road. Unfortunately enough, a
‘Vigilance Committee’ guy, who recognized him, started trailing him. When he went in for a tea at a shop, he gave the news to the police, about Prabhakarji. That was from where he was arrested. That is how this man led him into the hands of the police. He was also threatened the leadership would slip away if Prabhakran became active. If he were not to be caught in such a manner he may have had become a front ranking leader of the CPI, in a short while. At least he would have had kept his promise to Sardar to be in the responsible leadership of underground activities of the Party.

Now that I told you this much, I might as well tell you about that a short—story that I wrote that was published in the souvenir on Sardar. It was titled kathayillakatha—Story Without a Meaning. Do you know why? It was January 26th, 1951. Myself, Damodaran and another comrade Gangadharan had planted a red flag at Sardrar’s burial ground. We later reported to the leadership, which was K.S.Nair, again. His instant reaction was what a stupid thing you did? Kathayillayma—a meaningless act. It was not part of any Party decision that we did this. Those days there was not a regular centre for the Party or anything of that sort. It was something that the three of us decided. So, this was his response. What a stupid thing to do. It was a kathayillayma. Do you think the guns they have kept in the police station are for show? They would have fired you if they ever heard the slightest movement. It was a stupid thing kathayilayma those days; those who read it today, may not get the gist of the story. What K.S.Nair was rolling in his mind was probably this. He ran a company called Red Star Gold Works that sold ornaments in plated gold. It was his nephew Damodaran, who was with us for the operation who was the agent for shipping these goods from Coimbatore to Edathirutthy. If something happened to him, it would affect his business badly. That was all that K.S.Nair was bothered about, finally. Damodaran himself told me this, later.
APPENDIX 4

An Ethnography of Manappuram

Surrounded by rivers from its three sides, sandwiched between two estuaries, and hemmed by the sea on its west, lies this sea of sand called manappuram! The little mounts of sand, and the numerous isolated marshes must have made the stage for a flourishing growth of vegetation, including the shrubs and the fruit-bearing trees. And the streams, rivulets and ponds for that of the fish, frogs, snakes, cranes, water-birds, kingfishers and crocodiles. With the hillocks and the small forests for the foxes, rabbits, ant-eaters, monitor lizards, mongooses, and squirrels. Such a beautiful picture it must have been! And the paddy fields that blossomed through this landscape, with its rippling greenery that swayed to the wind! How glorious must have been a labour that built generations swaying to this motion of the top of the green paddy fields!

The strips of land that linked the manappuram with the opposite shore on its eastern side is even today treasured in memory. These strips that made way for migrations into manappuram in ancient times bear their marks as the boundaries of ancient villages through the Ayyappa temples ayyappan kaavukal (a grove where lord Ayyappa, an especially cultic deity of the Malayalis is worshipped). They must have been established not earlier than Kerala moved under some system of administration.

In a Kerala, reformed by the axe of Parasurama and the sacred thread, the only proof for the existence of aadivasis who bore the colour of the night, is that their genetically

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1 This piece of writing was a letter written to the researcher by Ravi. Its preface, though personal does not fail to add to the narrative that follows.

5.2.2000. Saturday
Cybil- has already left for Delhi.
Nawaz- is in Trichur; in his College hostel.
Sathish- is perpetuating himself in music and politics, somewhere.
I- am being drawn into a kind of vacuum in life? Is my ill-health fore-boding a prognosis, that is waiting round the corner? Anyhow, given that eternity is as meaningless as nothingness(vacuity) itself, in the course of time even that has its material existence. Then, in the reflections of my mind, there is nothing wrong in searching for its roots! The social history of manappuram shrouded though, in its unique strangeness, must be completed.

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diversified species have not been exterminated and have continued to live. The Kerala of the present that has grown through miscegenation, was opened to radical transformation with the migration of the Aryan races. Manppuram must have also transformed into a land suitable for human habit, in these very times.

The Chera-Chola-Pandya-Perumals must have also thought of manappuram as one of their main camps. Along with the rise of the port Muziris as an important centre of trade and commerce, the settlements of Thrikkanamathilakom and the feudal settlements of Uthroli and Kadlayi also developed. Any signs of human habitation prior to that, have come through menhirs that were found at many places while digging. Yet, more signs of a settlement that was exposed to pottery have not been found.

Some of the land surrounding the old port of manappuram Muziris, must have emerged from the sea. The land called Azhikkode and its neighbouring areas must have formed in such a manner. The natural disasters that led to the abandonment of the port and the settlements sprawling around it, must have affected its population badly. The current population of manappuram is one that has emerged from such an interphase in history that must have settled here over at least a thousand and five hundred years following the beginning of the Christian Era.

Manppuram is also host to the 72 families that came in the year AD345, under the leadership of Thomas of Cana. Sections of Cananite- Catholic of the Syrian Christian; the Sunni – Shia of the Muslim, Namuthiri-Nair- Ezhava- Konkani-Chettiyar and the sections of the Hindu lower castes comprise the Manappuram population largely today. Thus, manappuram forever encouraged its population as a diverse chain of different religions and castes. Still, compared to the rest of Kerala, the number of Brahmin families is far less in manappuram. There are proofs to show that during the raids of Tippu, a majority of the illams were abandoned for fear. At the same time, it can be claimed for certain that the manappuram as it stands today was devised by the people who were involved in producing goods related to trade, tappers of toddy and jaggery, weavers of mats, baskets and coir and fishing.
Even though feudalism held sway over the relations of ownership of land, as much as in the various aspects of its culture, it never was affected by any serious strife of the landlord-tenant relations. Even the later and more recent generations of the natives of this land—the harijans—were tamed to the generosity of the landowning-trading communities/castes coupled with the fatalism of religions. The class-relations of its society, therefore, grew in an ambience unique from the rest.

The two forts that stand to the north and south of manappuram built by the Dutch and the French respectively that inspired visions of voyages abroad and a prosperity that can be thus attained set firm roots in the psyche of manappuram that were as good as genetically etched. Desire to travel and the possibility of profits from trade that fastened on the minds that were used to practices such as untouchability and pollution, instilled a fear of redemption from sins. In their expectation of a bright future, such fear laid the path for a tolerance that in its turn gave way for new conventions in place of the old.

Thus the cultural backdrop of migration and trade; prepared the psyche of manappuram early enough for the growth of a middle class characteristics. A daring to migrate to anywhere in search of a livelihood, and once that question settled, the physical urge to establish one’s prowess was winning the gradual acclaim of tradition.

Land names, house names, names of fields, ponds, leased lands and compounds for cultivation; the folk songs, the kalampattu sung with ornamentation, celebrating the family deities, the nanthunipattu etc., and similar ritual performances of these genre all subtly attest to this fact.

Therefore, in the social history of manappuram, more than a class awareness and diversification, it was always a fight for the upper hand in society that held sway. The force of physical power could beat its way even through the twists and tangles of caste and religion. Yet another unique aspect of manappuram is that the force of physical power accepted the conventions of upper class hegemony. Why, because the last century that saw tumultuous changes in the history of the world, that also left its imprints in manappuram with the spread of the ideas of Communism, did not
differentiate itself from the same desire for hegemony, that had taken rocs years before. It has to be particularly noted that, the martyrdom of Sardar Gopalakrishnan happened at a time when the opportunistc proponents of this hegemony lurked beneath the working class ideology inside the Party.

Even half a century hence, it has continued to haunt the manappuram as a curse, even to this day. Can the top-rung leadership with their stylized language smacking of the Nambuthiri hegemony, approaching ordinary people be seen in any light other than of this quest for hegemony?

In such circumstances, if reflections of people like me and any search for the roots of their origin, though they be very deep, turn out to be meaningless, whom do you complain to?

(It is understood that before the Sahib(saaippu in Malayalam) Connolly, the land strip that linked Edathiruthy with Kattur also formed the trail connecting the two embankments kara.

Thus, amongst the many groups that migrated through this strip, into the manappuram the two groups that settled in Edathiruthy, Kollarayail and Kumbalaparambil must have come from the same place. Although local wisdom orally transmitted over generations, tell the two clans were friendly, there are two very thought provoking differences. When the kollarayil clan proliferated in its number of ancestral deities and places of their worship, the kumbalaparambil had little of any such installations for worshipping ancestral deities, till at least fifty years back. In olden days, the two clans never intermarried, between themselves. It has to be studied why the two clans never intermarried between them, when one of them followed almost a kind of atheism and the other most ardently followed the worship of devan and devi.)

An agricultural practice augmented by the possibilities of profit from trade and a mental state numbed by the alienation of migrations, that gave rise to different forms of selfishness in life, the same structures that built the genealogy of the settlers of manappuram continues to expand even today with extreme indifference. Such minds
who owe no commitment to the other, even when as a group forgets and indulges itself, still selfishly seeks to retain the upper hand for one's own selfish benefits. Even while preaching broad-mindedness, the ability to rationalize the diffidence to inspire with one's own mind has become astonishing. This is growing fast amongst the communities of manappuram. This is spreading not merely through the globalization efforts of the neo-Imperialism or computer feudalism, but also through the tastes of separate individuals in every day family life.

A month after the martyrdom of Sardar, in Edappilly in a Communist hunt by the police at least half a dozen people were killed and a lot many ‘disappeared’ according to the police versions. The decision of the revolutionary parties to not even sustain the memory of them; and their same resolve to commemorate Sardar's martyrdom in manappuram will make any neutral sane mind think. But, considering the psyche of manappuram there is little to be surprised about that. Because here what has always counted is to ascertain one's own position and ranking in society. Thus, one can see many a character who had no acquaintance with Sardar, pretending to be his comrade, his relative and thus covering oneself in vanity.

Here we must observe words of a respected Communist leader of Kerala who tried to boast about the doings of Sardar, that, he (Sardar) deservedly manhandled Inspector Govindan Nambiar.

This leader was not concerned about, the heightened self-dedication in leading the people, a mark of non-erasable humanity, with which Sardar fought against the riotous run of the police in this land. Then, what is surprising about martyrs losing irrelevance and disclaimed over the course of time?

Here in this manappuram there is not much history to be spoken of any encouragement, help or co-operation to gifted and special minds to evolve their talents in better arts of appreciating truth. This land has produced many such people, who have made their own imprints in the fields of art and literature over periods of time. But, all of that, they have claimed from their own independent effort. There are many such talents who never had the ability or the circumstances that and thus
gradually vanished into the shifts of time. Myself can remember many names beginning with the singer Aattakkoya, script Wrights, actors, dancers, litterateurs etc!

Then, the memories of a comrade who sacrificed his life for this land, should not meet with the fate of the comrades who were forgotten in Edappilly. But, in the growing circumstances, cannot one see the proliferation of a culture of selfishness? It has to be examined properly.

Anyhow, I end these thoughts here; keeping my ears sharpened for hearing about more experiences.
Appendix 5 The Four Phratries of the Kumbalaparambu Clan

Aleykkodans
- Raman
  - Unneerikutty
    - Chathuny
  - Unniappan
    - Velandy
  - Kalyani
    - Devaky
      - Velayudhan
        - Narayan
          - Mami
    - Raman
      - Chathuny
        - Velandy
  - Parvathy
    - Sreedharan

Vanparambans
- Velappan
  - Kunjitty
    - (Tharayil)
      - Chathunny Master
  - Narayanan Master
    - Gopalan Master
      - Balakrishnan
        - Kalyan
          - Chandal
            - Parvathy
              - Sreedharan
      - Prabhakaran
        - Gangadharan
          - Ikkaly

Kaliparamban
- Kunjitty
  - Krishnan
    - Unneerikutty
      - Velappan
        - Shankaran
  - Raman
    - Krishnan
      - Kutty
      - Velappan
    - Sankaranarayanan
      - Raman

Angitteyil
- Kochappu
  - Kittappayi
    - Raman
      - Ravindran
        - Harshan
      - Mohanan

A separate branch of aleykkodans,

Kalyan
- Babu
  - Murali
    - Jeeja
      - Usha
        - Gayathri
      - Prashobhithan
    - Nalini
      - Savithry
        - Vimala
          - Subha
            - Mangala
      - Vimala
        - Dhruvan
          - Ratna
    - Sreejith
      - Indira
        - Latha
      - Sreejith
    - Sreejith
      - Munna
        - Sreejith
      - Indira
        - Latha
    - Indira
      - Latha
  - Shero
    - Harshan
      - Munna
        - Sreejith
      - Indira
        - Latha
    - Indira
      - Latha
  - Sreejith
    - Munna
      - Sreejith
    - Indira
      - Latha
  - Indira
    - Latha
  - Sreejith
    - Munna
      - Sreejith
    - Indira
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  - Indira
    - Latha
  - Sreejith
    - Munna
      - Sreejith
    - Indira
      - Latha
  - Indira
    - Latha
  - Sreejith
    - Munna
      - Sreejith
    - Indira
      - Latha
  - Indira
    - Latha