ASPECTS OF
INDIVIDUALISATION
Introduction: *The Order of Gender*

"You are an interesting fellow! What is your caste?"

"Man!"

"Idiot! I am asking what caste you belong to!"

"I know only of two castes—Men and Women. Of these, I belong to the first".

*Sukumari* (1897)

The above quote from an early novel in Malayalam presents a brief but pointed representation of the political confrontation between the established social order(s) and the forces that emerged out of their contact with colonialism in late nineteenth century Keralam.

To the established social order, represented as one which orders people in terms of *Jati* (usually referred to as 'caste' in English), a new one that would recognise gender as the valid principle of social delineation puts up a challenge. In the former representation an 'order of *Jati* is implicit; in the latter, an 'order of gender' is proposed. In the former, people are identified and placed in relation to each other through an abstract order based upon difference in birth, while in the latter, it is the difference in the sexual endowment of the

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2. Here 'order' refers to social order alone—social order as the manner of arranging people in relation to one another.
body, something that seems more apparent and concrete, which is accorded prominence as the key principle of social ordering.

Sukumar (which incidently, has the self-claim of being both a story and history3), published in 1897, narrates the story of the victory of the order of gender in its confrontation with the order of Jati. Along with, as part of, or often as implicit in the textual staging of the confrontation between the Evil and Good, Primitive and Civilised, Wasteful and Useful, False and Truthful, the antagonistic encounter between the order of Jati and the order of gender is found dramatised in more and more variegated social situations.

The first section of this chapter is devoted to the examination of the new notion of Self that was gaining considerable prominence in these times, appearing with increased frequency in writing and speech. The articulation of the notion of an internally directed consciousness was a necessary condition for the imagining of the order of gender. It defined an important difference between the two orders-- the individual in the order of Jati was seen to be determined by circumstances external to her/him, but in the order of gender, she/he was to be shaped entirely by her/his internal qualities, qualities of the mind. This seemed to mark out a level of equality between human beings: at birth, all human beings seemed endowed with more or less the same possibilities of Self-development. Whatever inequality

that persists would be the result of difference in the natural endowment of individuals or in their development. The full development of such a Self would mean the full-fledged emergence of the Individual who would be free and possessing the power to manage and contribute to the development of material and human resources. However, what was given before Self-development as its 'raw material' seemed importantly determined by the sexual endowment of the body, assumed to be unambiguously given at birth, as male or female. Self-development was to be a set of operations upon oneself by which the capacities ostensibly given to men and women at birth—internal qualities given by virtue of their sex—were developed, sharpened, extended to transform them into (gendered) Individuals. The third section of this chapter briefly considers the forms of training through which such Individuals were to be fashioned. As we shall see, sexual specificity being identified as an important determinant of 'given capacities', different sorts of training and curriculae were deemed necessary for men and women.

The representation of this internally-focused consciousness as the true essence of human beings was accompanied by criticism of the older order(s), the charge that these obscured, suppressed or misdirected inherent human capacities. All sorts of reformism of twentieth century Keralam would make this their hinge-point. Thus the theme of 'liberating' the Individual from his/her subjection to the established order(s) would be inextricably entwined with that of fashioning (gendered) Individuals through the development of their inherent capacities. This also installed reformism as the truly legitimate sort of political
struggle, sidelining struggle on behalf of the group or faction for political advantage, economic privilege etc. In fact, subscribing to a liberatory politics aimed at transforming people into (gendered) individuals, described as the bringing of people into their true Selves, came to be perceived of as an important condition for any group to make factional claims on its behalf. The political aim of reformism was identified as the creation of an ideal social order in which gender alone would figure as the unsurpassable social division, other than inborn differences in capacities. New institutions that would be in tune with the Individual were imagined, especially within reformism. The second section of this chapter focuses on these projections.

The fourth section attends to the specific strategies of legitimation that were put into play when the older order(s) were 'written off' and the new order 'written in' in the struggle for hegemony so evident in these writings. The uncompromising rejection of the established order as immoral, unjust and wasteful and the projection of the new one as the sole alternative was not the only means by which these writings make the new order acceptable. Other strategies, more subtle, perhaps more penetrating, were also to be found. Some of these are considered in some detail here. There is no claim, however, that this is a complete and exhaustive list of the textual strategies put into operation in the struggle for hegemony in late nineteenth century Keralam. By detailing a few of these one merely aims at demonstrating the importance of subtle forms of confrontation in assuring the triumph of modernity. This would, perhaps, help to qualify the popular image of a newly-emergent
modernity invigorated by its supposed moral superiority, making a direct assault upon an 'effete and immoral' tradition and securing victory on the strength of this, so very familiar in great many accounts of the history of modern Keralam produced in both non-academic and academic contexts.

1. Internalities: Hollowing them out

The early Malayalam novels published in the late nineteenth century were strongly committed to the project of salvaging the Individual from the oppression of the established social order(s). In being so they sought to establish human Self-development as the true goal towards which individuals must strive, to prescribe the internally-focused consciousness as the means towards this end and to uphold a vision of ideal society in which human beings would be valued for their 'essential', 'internal' qualities. The seat of these internal qualities is referred to variously by various texts—'mind', 'conscience', 'soul', 'heart' and so on—all of which more or less refer to a space which is within the individual, invisible, perceived only through internal qualities which are considered to ensue from it. These texts are linked by a common concern about the development of these qualities, and by the belief that this may be achieved through directing consciousness inwardly. Consciousness is made to seek out

4. It may be important, for instance, to enquire how and why a particular quality gets identified with the 'mind' or the 'heart', what differences are perceived between the 'heart', 'mind', or 'soul' etc. Here, however, one need not now enter into a discussion of these questions but limit focus to the commonality attributed to them.
its origin which is also taken to be the seat and source of these internal qualities. Hereafter we will use the term 'internality' to refer to both this supposed inner space and the very preoccupation with this space. The qualities that are supposed to issue forth from this internality like kindness, patience, intelligence etc. are what we call 'internal' as opposed to birth, inherited title, status, inherited wealth and others which are 'external', the determination of which lies largely beyond individuals.

The identification of this new goal for human life, the means prescribed for its attainment and the vision of ideal social order that accompanied it operated within these texts setting the standards by which the established social order(s) were assessed: the construction of the prevailing order(s) that is to be found within these texts is crucially dependent upon this ideal vision, whose very opposite they were at times made out to be. These novels are thickly populated with characters who display the hollowness of inherited wealth or title, and those who testify to the genuineness of the Self based upon a well-developed internality, who are contrasted to each other. The well-known contrast between the aristocrat Soory Nambutiripad and the less blue-blooded Madhavan in Indulekha\(^5\) sufficiently illustrates this point. But Potheri Kunhambu's novel Saraswativijayam, which is relatively less-known, displays the working of such contrast in establishing the truth and the

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superiority of the new Self in bolder relief.

In this novel, the contrast is between the haughty Brahmin Kuberan Nambutiripad and the young Pulayan who is the victim of his oppression. It reveals high birth to be ephemeral and low birth to be surpassable; inherited wealth, transitory, inherited poverty, surmountable. All that endures is the internality which one possesses, developed or not. In 'modern' times—time is marked 'modern'in this novel by the presence of colonial authority as rival to, and check upon, the power of Brahmins—only those with strong internality will attain true success and stable state of well-being. These are states that are to be attained, may be attained, are not given by one's inherited wealth or status. How one tides over a crisis is determined by the condition of one's internality. Subhadra, the chaste and good-hearted Antharjanam who loses her aristocratic status, falsely accused and unfairly tried, survives this calamity with the help of missionaries who recognise her internal qualities to be valuable; her internal qualities make possible smooth adjustment to a new, secure, enlightened life among missionaries. The young Pulayan overcomes his low birth, poverty and ignorance, rising to become a Sessions Judge in the colonial judiciary, acquiring modern education with the help of missionaries.

Here we have Individuals who by virtue of their well-developed internal qualities—

either undervalued by the older order(s) (as in the case of Subhadra in Saraswativijayam) or suppressed and underdeveloped by it (as in the young Pulayan's case, in the same text)---rise above their external circumstances to attain stable states of well-being. Saraswativijayam opens with the projection of a social order based upon Jati (in which the high-born exercise unlimited authority) crumbling in modern times (characterised, as mentioned above, by the presence of Western power) which is revealed to be frail. It ends with the prospect of the establishment of a social order in which birth, high or low, is insignificant, and in which internal qualities alone determine hierarchy. The displacements that constitute the story (from high to low, low to high) are fuelled by the internalities of the characters.

In these novels as well as in many other sorts of writing that gained greater currency in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Keralam, the privileging of such an internality is presented as a 'liberation'---the freeing of the Individual from the bondage of existent institutions. However, a new form of regulation was found to be necessary as a condition for such liberation. This was self-regulation, which called for the nurturing of a core of control within the individual that would constantly monitor and regulate thoughts, actions, feelings and sensations. The human body was itself conceived to be a combination of a controlling core and a controlled periphery, the controlling core being the human mind. Jnananikshepa answered the question 'What is Man' thus:
"...the hand, the eye, the tongue and body are all subject to the mind. A man may move his and and finger as he pleases but that part will know nothing of his intention. The mind rules the object. That which is invisible is prior to that which is visible."

To develop the mind into an efficient controlling core was to ensure greater mastery over the body and its pulls. Without a training that develops it, it was argued, the mind could prove positively harmful to the survival of the individual. A text-book meant for the instruction of young girls reminded:

"The mind is always moving; it will not stay at rest even for a single moment. Whether we stay immobile or asleep, the restlessness of the mind does not cease: such a mind, if not wedded to education.... will trap us in a forest of evil inclinations and doubtless throw us into the depths of hell".

And once the mind was well-developed its regulation was felt to be far more effective than that secured by the imposition of external restrictions. It, then, was perceived to be less cumbersome and more effective in minimising malingering or rebellion. The same text-book asked its readers:


"Will ignorant women who believe that god exists only in temples, and that there is no god beyond those idols, have fear of committing sinful acts in homes where there are no such idols?"

A God who is finite, whose vigilance does not extend beyond its immediate premises is inadequate to the task of exercising constant vigilance over people. For this, god has to be a presence that reaches everywhere, whose vigilance extends into every detail of thought, deed and feeling of people. For the ignorant women in the above quote, the authors say, external restraint is necessary—such women, they claim, may be made to stay faithful only if the husband "teaches with a stick". In contrast, women whose minds are developed, control themselves:

"If women were educated, then beyond any doubt, knowledge would itself act as the guardian of chastity and violation of chastity would not occur."

Recalcitrance is an ever-present possibility in the former case; one may only guard against it. In the latter case, recalcitrance would be disarmed by penetrating deeper into the mind, making external sorts of constraint redundant. If suitably trained, further, the mind, it was claimed, could become a tremendous source of power. The ultimate source of all

9. ibid., p.6.
11. ibid.
authority—whether it be over materials or over people—was found to be in the mind and its powers. Therefore Self-development meant not only preventing the mind from doing mischief and making it into a core of regulation but also channelising the mind into productive purposes.\footnote{12}{It is worth noting here that these texts exude confidence in the feasibility of the project of transforming the mind, taking it to be a sort of raw material that may be suitably moulded, even when they accept that the mind is, to a greater or lesser degree, already worked upon by established modes. As we may see later, such confidence was important in reformism’s scrutiny of existing sorts of training in local society, selecting the ‘better’ ones from the ‘worse’ while staying distinct from them.}

To explicate this further, we may turn to a text written in 1901, a preface written by Malayalam’s well-known reformer-poet Kumaran Asan to his translation of a book of techniques of self-mastery titled ‘As a Man Thinketh’.\footnote{13}{N. Kumaran Asan, Preface, \textit{Manassakthi} (1901) (Mental Power), Tennakal: Sarada Book Depot, 1945, p.i. \textit{Manassakthi} was a High School text-book in Tiruvanamkook in the 1910’s. See, G. Sankara Kurup, \textit{Ormaynde Olongalil} (On the Ripples of Memory), Kottayam: Sahitya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham (Literary Worker’s Co-operative Society, henceforth, SPSS), 1978, p.64. ‘As a Man Thinketh’ was an English work written by James Allen.}

"... All the different goals of human life are achieved through knowing the manifold powers of the mind, controlling and channelising them towards the achievement of appropriate ends. Therefore there is no task more important to us than the study of the powers of the mind and the ways in which they may be productively used. Our knowledge of external matters however wide it may be..... without spiritual knowledge, it will be neither complete nor useful.

In particular, the mind and its powers form an asset obtained at birth, common to all human beings, irrespective of caste and creed, an inexhaustible fount that grows as it is utilised. The responsibility for the management of this imperishable treasury lies equally upon all members of the human race, irrespective of religion, caste or sex-difference. But it is doubtful whether one in a thousand of our women or men are suitably conscious of"
In this passage, a certain relation between the internality and externality of human beings is being announced. Exercising one's internality is not necessarily the renunciation of the external world, as in asceticism. Here, the emphasis on internality is recommended in order to enable the reverse, that is, to plunge ever-more ardently into worldly-life. 'Spiritual Knowledge' serves to make worldly knowledge complete. The passage underlines a possibility, a responsibility and a lack. Developing one's internality is presented as a possibility open to all those who possess human bodies, that which breaks down external sorts of differentiation, equalising human beings. It promises an "inexhaustible fount" of power, less susceptible to decay or overthrow, unlike blood or inherited wealth by themselves. And to realise this possibility is no less than a duty that falls upon all human beings. The identification of such duty immediately brings into visibility the lack of consciousness of such duty in Malayalee society.

Indeed it is found that the differences in the development of internality provide a plausible explanation for both the superiority human beings are found to enjoy over the rest of creation and the inferiority and superiority between human beings:

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"We are superior beings in comparison to other creatures. That is due to the extraordinary powers of our minds. Among ourselves we find that some are civilised, some superior, some inferior. That too, in actuality, is due to the difference in powers of the mind. The mind is indeed a wonderful thing, the seat of immeasurable power.... Knowledge, desire, action: without the powers of the mind thus summarised in three segments, would not this world itself seem empty and useless?"\(^{15}\)

Following this is a text borrowed from the West for the use of natives. The techniques of acquiring material and moral authority must be borrowed from the West. As Parangodiramarayam, another Malayalam novel written in the late nineteenth century, claimed, acquiring a new Self was not merely imitating the West in dress, manners, behaviour or even acquiring their knowledge. It was, rather, the adoption of what seemed fundamental to the dominance and authority of the West, the means of training through which the self-regulating Individual with productive capacities may be produced.

The authority that such Individuals possess, according to Manassaku, is this:

"The self-possessed man will be able to behave well with others precisely because he knows perfectly well how he must behave. People will have respect and adoration for his substantiality and discipline. They will believe that there is much to be learned from him, and will automatically feel that he is worthy of their trust... The more calm and self-possessed a man becomes, the greater will be his ability to achieve popularity and capability to do good to others."\(^{16}\)

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15. ibid., p.i.

This alone is identified as authority that endures. Inherited wealth, title or status, in order to be stable and productive, must ultimately lean upon this authority without which, it was felt, they would certainly disintegrate. The first step prescribed towards acquiring this is gaining knowledge of the powers given to human-beings.

"As long as man believes that he is the slave of external forces such as time and space, he will remain in bondage to them. But when he realises through his own experience that he is in himself a force that creates everything, that the origin of various changing conditions lies within himself, that he himself is the master of his conditions and capabilities, then he will become the true master of his life."17

The text advises its reader to keep his thoughts under control, observe how thoughts have power over one's life and the lives of others, to analyse even the most trivial-seeming experience, in order to develop the mind into a core that generates power,18 reaching out to other human beings and to the world in general.

But all this emphasis on internality and its development, however, did not entirely banish the body: the body reappeared in the considerations of Self-development in subtle ways. The Individual was to possess a certain set of physical signs indicative of membership in a certain sex-group; she/he was to possess certain capacities, dispositions, tendencies etc expected to accompany a particular set of physical indicators. But the Individual was not

17. ibid., p.8.
18. ibid., pp.3-21.
reducible to the sexed identity given by these combinations -- she/he had to possess 'gender', which was considered to be the result of the development of sexed identity, visible in her/ his ability to conform to an ideal subjectivity. This perception of difference underlay the argument in favour of different systems of education for men and women.

"It seems that giving the same sort of education to men and women is inappropriate. That Nature has not ordained Man and Woman for the same tasks is amply revealed by the difference in their bodies, dispositions and mental ability. In some sorts of affairs, men may have superior strength. But in other sorts of affairs, Man is quite unable to display the kind of stamina Woman is capable of.... Examining Woman's physique and disposition, one may be sure that she has been created for activity that requires greater endurance but less physical strength. Normally Woman's mental make-up is gentle, maturing faster, imaginative, easily stirred by emotions, attentive of detail and easily irritated. Man can never come close to Woman in such qualities as compassion, love and patience..... even if women do not enter public life, if they raise able children, is that not itself adding to the prosperity of the world? Therefore the aim of their education is to increase such qualities as compassion, sympathy, love, maternal affection and patience, and not to make them into second-rate men.... Woman's duty lies in being Man's helpmate in the struggle of life, in easing his toil by her Womanliness. She must achieve victory through compassionate words and deeds. Not through competition".19

When the public domain was delineated as Man's, and the domestic domain as Woman's, the claim was grounded in the faith in the determining influence of sexed identity upon human capacities, as in the above quote.

These capacities were to be developed through the acquiring of strong internalities, as mentioned before. The interconnection between this and success in worldly life in the

19. Thachattu Devaki Amma, 'Streevidyabhysathinte Uddesham' (The Purpose of Female Education), Speech made at Chittoor Balika Sahitya Samajam (Girls' Literary Association), Published in LakshmiBhayi Vol 20 (1), 1913-14, pp. 36-38.
textual representation of the ideal Individual may be made evident by moving on to the characterisation of ideal Man in *Parangodiparinayam*, one of the many to be found in the early Malayalam novels. The character Pangasha Menon introduced in the tenth chapter represents the ideal, the desirable model of Manhood in the novel. He is, first of all, presented as a man of sufficient education (that this education is clearly specified as not an English one is significant, but this will be discussed later) and skill in agricultural activity. He is well-aware of the need for a training that provides not just the external trappings of westernisation but one that develops internality and makes possible the development of given capacities as is made evident in his long exposition on this subject. He is also presented as a man whose mind has been tempered by the education he has received.

"... amply endowed with maturity of mind, respect and obedience towards teachers, sympathy in the needs of others, diligence in maintaining a blemishless name and indifference towards the wealth of others."

The judgements which Pangasha Menon makes about specific matters, for example, English education, are not those which may emerge from a position within the established social order—he does not agree with the opinion that the trouble with English education is

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21. ibid.
22. ibid., pp. 246-54.
23. ibid., p.243.
that it would "turn everything upside down." His own criticism of English education emerges not from fear of the social subversiveness attributed to English but from an assessment of the relative advantages and disadvantages of the existent sorts of English education. Further he is presented as possessing several well-developed abilities — the ability to produce, conserve and further wealth, to govern a family firmly, efficiently and affectionately, to engage in gainful agricultural activity. These are prior to the achievements of the Individual, here, Pangasha Menon. He does not turn arrogant or pompous despite such a remarkable record of achievement at an early age.

"He has accumulated property worth around twenty-thousand rupees by his own effort as Janmom. And also around a lakh of rupees in other concerns...... But even his worst enemies would not accuse him of sporting fancy airs or displaying arrogance.... He not only avoids dressing up and parading around like a dandy, but also harbours a certain contempt for such show."25

The ideal Man, it is hinted, does not allow his success to eclipse his internality. Success will not prompt him to deck up and display his body.

Such effort as the above, that is, the privileging of internal qualities above external ones, and of mental qualities over physical ones, as the criterion by which one was to be

24. ibid., p.247.
25. ibid., pp.243-44.
26. ibid., above.
assessed, was evident in the construction of the ideal Woman in much of the late nineteenth century writings inspired by the new ideas filtering in from the West. One finds that qualities such as beauty are considered less valuable in a woman; rather those who display "a sense of discretion and discipline" which enable them to conform to an ideal subjectivity centred upon the home are now considered truly Women. The heroines of the late nineteenth century novels in Malayalam are all characterised by their strong internalities, developed through suitable training. Many of these describe the advantages to be reaped from educating women and set up models of Womanhood. The heroine of *Meenakshi*, for example, is a young girl carefully raised by her relatives and appropriately educated:

"Her parents and uncle being extremely diligent and experienced in raising children, especially young girls, have brought her up with a great deal of affection, not permitting the unnecessary recreations and socialising allowed to some girls, and have provided her with suitable education..."28

Such education develops in her the ability to govern herself and widens other

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27. "Several foolish men are still under the belief that beauty alone is the true quality of Woman.... Beauty is no doubt valuable. But the beauty of women devoid of developed intelligence and maturity of mind is found to be harmful not only to their husbands and children but also to their race and country. But there are some women who pay less attention to beautifying themselves and sporting haughty airs, who would rather devote themselves to careful management of household affairs, the comfort of their husbands and upbringing of their children..... if (such) sense of discretion and discipline is abundant in a woman then that is what is most valuable in her." From, Cheruvvalathu Chathu Nair, *Meenakshi* (1890), Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi, 1988, pp.243-45.

28. ibid., p.77.
capacities. Thus she is said to possess an inner space in which combines qualities as:

"Respect for the worthy, humility and devotion to teachers, compassion for the poor, affection towards dependents, repugnance for the licentious, fraternal feeling towards all creatures, efficiency in household management, reluctance towards unnecessary expenditure, lack of the craze for ornaments, horror of evil deeds."  

Well-developed capacities and the ability for self-regulation are thus found necessary for both the ideal Man and Woman. But they are found to occupy different domains, the public and the domestic. This is, further, seen to assign different sorts of authority to them. The relationship between Man and Woman was envisaged to be of a contractual nature: two different parties engaged in an exchange for mutual benefit. The contract presupposes the existence of two different parties before the exchange even as it constitutes those whom it links. In this contract, Woman must take charge of domestic life, familial relationships and the emotional environment attached to them while Man must locate himself in competitive activities pertaining to the public domain. This envisaged sexual contract was implicit in the formation of that new sort of journalistic institution, the 'Women's Magazine' in late nineteenth century Keralam. The earliest of Women's Magazines in Malayalam, the *Keraleeya Sugunabodhini* (1892), right at the outset, approved of this differentiation, in defining what women ought to know:

29. ibid., p.243.
"We will publish nothing related to politics. Principles, physiology, entertaining tales, writings that energise the moral conscience, stories, Womanly Duty, the science of cookery, music, biographies of ideal women, the history of nations, book-reviews and other such enlightening topics will be published... We will publish no narrow argumentation on religion".  

Such a faith regarding what constitutes the appropriate knowledge for women still strongly informs present-day Women's Magazines. One may also notice that it is precisely the two topics shunned by the Sugunabodhini, religion and politics, that figure in the all-male discussions in Indulekha, conducted in a place far away from the wranglings of domestic relationships. The topic in which the heroine intervenes actively, forcefully


31. The very name Keralaeya Sugunabodhini is indicative of the importance of developing internality in the fashioning of Womanhood. Later Women's Magazines would continue to uphold this as their mission. To quote just one instance, the MahilaRatnam in 1916 dwelt in length upon the desirability of female education and then presented itself as a tool for women's self-fashioning: "MahilaRatnam's ultimate purpose is to increase the mental culture of Malayala women in various ways, to dispel the darkness of ignorance from amidst them, and to make them deserving of the role of ideal housewives" (Quoted in G. Priyadarshan, Masikapodharanangal (Studies in Magazines) Kottayam : SPSS, 1974, pp.105-11). The history of journalism that addressed 'Women' could itself prove quite interesting. For instance, besides 'Women's Magazines', we find a 'Family Magazine' being published in the second decade of the twentieth century titled Sumangala which aimed at "householders and housewives" (quoted in ibid., pp.III-17). The significance of such subtle developments needs to be probed further.

32. Indulekha, op.cit., n.5, pp.218-61. It may also be mentioned here that in medieval Keralam, political power and control of economic resources were not always and strictly a male preserve. Female rulers were often assigned considerable political and economic power (whether they actually exercised it or not is another question). See, for instance, an account of the female Tampurans of Attingal, in K.Sivasankaran Nair, Venadinte Parinamam (The Transformation of Venad), Thiruvananthapuram : Dept. of Cultural Publications, 1993, pp.120-47; pp.228-30. By the nineteenth century, these powers were either reduced through British intervention or had fallen into disuse. The independent status of the...
advancing her opinion, is one intimately bound to the domain of the home and familial 
ties—the issue of chastity and marital fidelity among Nair women.33

If authority ensuing from the acquisition of material goods or participation in 
political activity or knowledge-creation was deemed to be Man's, a different sort of 
authority, of an emotional and sentimental sort, was assigned to Woman as overseer of 
domestic and emotional affairs. This authority was already acknowledged in Mrs.Richard 
Collins' novel Ghatakavadham (the Malayalam translation of The Slayer Slain, published in 
1877) in which the preacher sees in his wife the guardian of his soul, the keeper of his home 
and his children -- a moral authority which is effective not through coercion or the threat of 
it but through gentle persuasion which made use of words and emotion, advice, prayers,

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Rantis of Attingal ended in the eighteenth century; in the nineteenth century such powers were often left 
unused, as was evident in the case of the Kavalappara family of Malabar where the only female heir, 
on attaining maturity chose not to exercise control over economic and other resources (See, 
century Tiruvitamkko the Rantis were only regents, though in rituals of political power they were still 
accorded highest status (See the description of Col.Walsh of an interview with Gauri Parvathy Bhayi 
in 1819. He mentions that “Not a soul but the Ranee, however and the European gentlemen sat down, 
not even the Thumpooratty newly married, her bridegroom, the Ranee’s father and husband, the 
widower of a former Ranee nor the Dewan or prime minister”. Quoted in P.Shungoonny Menon, 
History of Travancore (1878), Thiruvananthapuram, 1983, p.289). In the twentieth century such an 
issue came up in Tiruvitamkoor after the demise of Shree Mulam Tirunal. The Malayala Manorama 
published an editorial on August 30, 1924 arguing that the senior Tampuran of Attingal possessed 
undivided powers under Marumakkathavam succession, and that the Karanavathy (female head of 
the family) did not rule in the name of a minor male successor but as the senior-most member. It was 
also pointed out that in the Hindu Law, it was different. However, this was not acceptable to the 
British; the Political Agent, Col.Cotton, pronounced the Rani to be the regent. See, speech by Col. 
Cotton at Derbar,Malayala Manorama, September 2, 1924.

33. ibid., pp.44-46.
entreaties, tears, affectionate gestures. But this made it no less an activity of management or ruling. Woman 'ruled' the home, if in a different way.

"Ruling a home is as taxing as ruling a country peacefully. Childcare is an even-heavier task. What a child sees and hears for the first time are its mother's face and words. If the child must grow up into an ideal citizen, the mother must be conscious of the importance of this (task) and strive to bring it up with care."  

Chattambi Swamikal, a prominent spiritual and reformist figure of the period, delivered a lecture in the second decade of the twentieth century to the members of a stree samajam (women's association) in which he elucidated the Man-Woman relationship. We find him pouring scorn upon those who call Woman Bharya (she who must be ruled) and names her the superior party in the Man-Woman relationship. He bases his argument upon a certain perception of capacities inherent to Man and Woman, the combination of which brings forth the Universe itself. Since the responsibility of reproduction is deemed Woman's, authority within the home is seen to fall to her as mistress of the household and mother. And this authority is seen to make her more important to the Universe. Man's


36. ibid., p. 808.

37. ibid., p. 809.
duty, says Swamikal, is merely to arrange adequate material support while Woman who performs her duty within the limits of her home rules the world itself with invisible authority.38

Crucially, the maintenance of the sexual contract in which Man and Woman engage in activity amicable to their 'natural' qualities is absolutely necessary for the availability of such authority to women. Woman should not aspire to cross over to occupy Man's roles.39 (Swamikal was, indeed, speaking in a context in which such aspirations were beginning to be more and more in evidence).

Besides helping men and women attain the kind of authority specific to their gender, Self-development was also prescribed as the ideal means by which they could attain the state of Swatantryam. Swatantryam figures here as a state in which external constraints have been removed and internal mechanisms of regulation installed. The word Swatantryam does not have an equivalent in 'freedom'. It means, rather, 'possessing self-means for survival'. One may find here a conceptual transformation at work in which people begin to perceive an equivalence between 'freedom' and Swatantryam. Many discussions sharply distinguished Tanthonnitham (wantonness) and Swatantryam:

38. ibid., p.814.
39. ibid.
"Swatantryam refers to action that results from the tempering of natural instincts through discipline; in contrast wantonness is action resulting from lack of discretion."  

One could demand Swatantryam only after first undergoing Self-development:

"Given that the disputes between men and women continue to rage in Europe despite the fact that European women are educated and possess a certain amount of social mobility, it is rather strange that our women, who are totally uneducated and confined to their homes have started arguing for Swatantryam..... Before our women are granted Swatantryam they must be educated and morally sound."

Besides, Swatantryam seemed to necessarily enable one to conform to ideal subjectivities as Man and Woman. In text after text which sets up the contrast between those who have developed them-Selves and those who have not-- such as in the contrast between Pankajakshi and 'Panchamritham' in C.V.Raman Pillai’s play Kurupillakkalari, or between Madhavan and Soory Nambutiripad in Indulekha, Swatantryam gets defined. This notion, further, serves as a nodal point in redefining the relation between the Self and the

40. 'Sharada', 'Streeswatantryam' (Women's Freedom), in Sharada Vol2 (3), 1905,p.58. This contrast is found to be repeated in a great many number of texts, which discuss Swatantryam. A fairly long discussion of the implications of Swatantryam and its rising popularity in the changing social environment of early twentieth century Kerala may be found in M.Rajaraja Varma Tampuran, Samudacharavicharam (Thoughts on Social Customs), Thiruvananthapuram, 1931.

41. P.K. Narayana Pillai, 'Streekalude Swatantrya Vyavaharam' (The Demand of Freedom by Women) from Neyar Vol 1(2), 1903, p.80. This was a speech read by him at the meeting of the Malayalam Association of the Maharajah’s College, Thiruvananthapuram.

42. C.V. Raman Pillai, Kurupillakkalari from Prahasanamala, Kottayam: SPSS, 1973, pp.1-31. These plays were written in the first two decades of the 20th century. See, Preface, Prahasanamala.
Collectivity. In Swamikal's text referred to above, the attack is directed against "......idiots who, repeating and observing the dictum Na Stree Swatantryamarhati, shuts her up like a caged bird" 43 who are incapable of recognising that" ...with Man's presence and help, Woman is the Mistress of the three worlds, completely free (Sarvatantra Swatantra)"44.

The Individual is, thus, envisaged to be both 'free' and implicated in new institutions. To be thus implicated was also a way towards commanding authority. Gender strongly mediates this implication determining whether the Individual is to be implicated in the public or the domestic domain. With its focus upon the internal and the naturally-given, and its recognition of the deterministic role of sex, Individualism in Keralam logically entailed a perspective of gender- difference. But this difference was at once organised through the projection of the Man-Woman relationship as a complementary, power-free one. So obvious, so unimpeachable did this seem that when it was found necessary to illustrate the nature of Complementarity, the Man-Woman relation was often called up as a sort of ideal model.

"As among the sexes between whom in regard to Nature has imprinted certain unalienable structural differences making them out for two distinct functions, man for society and woman for home, so in the variegated Universe, the law is not of equality but of complementarity."45

43. Chattambi Swamikal, op.cit.,n.36,p.809.
44. ibid.
45. N. Subrahmanya Aiyar, Onam Day Speech at Maharajah's College, Thiruvananthapuram, (..continued)
Creating The Right Attitudes

In the late nineteenth century the institutional networks that made up social life in Keralam were increasingly the target of critical scrutiny. The missionaries who had established themselves here in the nineteenth century had regarded many of the local institutions and practices with absolute horror, they being completely contrary to western and christian notions of decency and civilisation, as in Augusta Blandford's condemnation of the Sambandham sort of marital alliance as "very revolting". Such judgements were increasingly deployed in the various power-struggles that punctuated the late nineteenth century. Statements similar to that made by V.Nagam Aiya offering apologies for the "looseness of the prevailing morals and the unbinding nature of the marriage tie, which

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47. Robin Jeffrey's The Decline of Nayar Dominance (London: Sussex University Press, 1976) gives detailed accounts of some of the struggles between different groups in late 19th century Tiruvitamkoor. By this time educated Nairs and the Ezhavas of Tiruvitamkoor and Kochi, Tiyyas of North Keralam and others were beginning to confront the authority of non-westernised Nambutiri (Malayala Brahmin) aristocracy. As is clear from Jeffrey's work, such struggles took place not only between those who were getting westernised and those who were not, but also between Western-educated social groups themselves, such as the Tamil Brahmins and Nairs in Tiruvitamkoor.
possesses such fascination for the majority of our population "48 (obviously referring to those groups which accepted Sambandham as a valid form of marital arrangement) could be increasingly read as not only the criticism of 'barbarousness' made from the side of 'civilisation' but also as assaults made upon Western-educated Nairs by Western-educated Tamil Brahmins who dominated government service in Tiruvitamkoor and were engaged in struggle with them over the question of employment in the government.

Recent work on the late nineteenth century in Keralam has revealed the extent to which productivity was becoming a norm, a criterion by which institutions were assessed, and an end perceived to be all-important for the future of modern collectivities such as the nation or the community.49 In fact, at times productivity seemed to be more important than 'civilisation' as a norm of evaluation, and lack of productivity seemed more serious a defect than 'barbarousness'; 'barbarousness' sometimes seemed an easily eliminable defect if the institution appeared to hold the possibility of being transformed into a productive one. The caste system, for instance, seemed to hold this prospect:


"Some regard caste as the mark of the beast and these perhaps may be tempted to ask why we should trouble ourselves in the twentieth century with an account of duties and practices intended to regulate a social system of an antediluvian period. Perhaps so, but I shall only add that there are those even outside India and outside the pale of orthodox Hinduisms who hold that the system of caste has solved several of the social problems that threatened to undermine Western civilisation, and the system should be maintained of course with the later-day abuses eliminated." 50

The caste system, it is suggested, offers the prospect of being transformed into an efficient system analogous to the working of the body in which the perfection of the body "does not depend on every cell doing the work of every other cell but in each doing its own appointed work". 51

The criticism raised in these times against the Sambandham system of marriage alliances condemned it not only as an immoral arrangement; it was found despicable also because it seemed to hamper the bearing and rearing of a healthy future generation. 52 An


51. Ibid., p.214.

52. It is worth mentioning here that by this time, productivity was also the norm by which the quality of domestic life was evaluated. The home, by now, was increasingly expected to be the site in which children were not only to be brought forth, but also raised into obedient, useful, productive subjects. The ideal Mother, therefore, was not just she who gave birth; raising children into productive subjects became the crucial component of Motherly Duty. Notions of Motherhood already prevalent in local society often recognised a distinction between Pettamma (the Bearer) and Pottamma (the Rearer). Duty to one's mother was often perceived as the obligation ensuing from having born from her, and not affected by her goodness/badness. In 'Sahitya Panchanan' P.K. Narayana Pillai's reminiscences of his mother, we may detect the change: "Is it not the case that the respect and devotion (...continued)
author writing in 1865 opined,

"Though it is seen that the progeny of unions in which men and women live together in mutual fidelity are strong and healthy, the children of parents of easy morals are weak and sickly. And besides, it is clear from the condition of prostitutes that the immoral woman does not have the Pativrata's (devoted wife) capacity to bear children and this is therefore an impediment in the way of increase in numbers." 53

But besides being a bad arrangement for bearing children, it is also unsuitable for proper rearing: "If children arrive, the father's attention is required beside the mother's in their earliest upbringing", and Marumakkathayam (matrilineal descent) does not allow for

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we feel for our mothers does not ensue from (respect for) their good qualities or knowledge? It is also not common to increase or decrease the devotion to one's mother by measuring such qualities according to some standard. But in my mother's case, there are indeed special reasons for the intense devotion I have felt towards her". He then goes on to describe an incident through which he illustrates his mother's readiness to sacrifice her life for her children (P.K.Narayana Pillai Smaranamandalam (Domain of Memories), Kottayam: SPSS, 1964, first published, 1943, pp.104-109). It was mentioned earlier that internal qualities were considered important in the adequate performance of Womanly Duty. In overseeing the home and being a moral guide to the family, the mother would have to be a strong individual in this sense in order to be an able performer of Motherly duty, and therefore, respect for her would also be the response to her internal qualities. Indeed, in the West, during the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, women's role as Mother was beginning to stressed above that of the Wife, and the importance of the maternal role was perceived to be such that 'expert' advice was found necessary in the upbringing of children. See, Diane Richardson, Women, Motherhood and Child-Rearing, Macmillan: London, 1993; Jane Lewis, Women in England 1870-1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change, Sussex :Wheatsheaf Books, 1984.

this. On another side, this system, and the institution of the Taravad constituted by it seemed to prevent the increase of material goods through energetic production. In a 'Plea for Partition' made in 1907 these points were made with exceptional clarity, justifying the partition of Taravads:

"Emancipated from the thraldom of the family, the junior member learns to look upon himself not as a zero as he formerly was but as a unit.... He becomes industrious and prudent. The net result is to supply the incentive to produce industry. Partition supplies not only the incentive to industry but also the means to start it".

Such criticisms of Sambandham and the Taravad combined to form a general picture of decay and backwardness, amply used against the Nairs by their adversaries. It came to

54. 'Marumakkathayathalulla.....' ibid. The criticism of Marumakkathayam (matriliney) and the Sambandham alliances as permitting sexual anarchy and moral decay was voiced earlier in local society by the 18th century Malayalam poet Kunjan Namibiar. However this critique had no reformist overtones. For a reinterpretation of Namibiar's social criticism, see, Dr.K.N.Ganesh, Kunjan Namibiar: Vakkum Samoothavam, Sukapuram: Vallathol Vidyapeetham, 1996, pp. 189-208.

55. Changanashery K. Parameshwaran Pillai,'A Plea For Partition in Marumakkathayam Taravads', in Malabar Quarterly Review Vols 6(1)x(2), 1907, pp.15-29, pp.83-91. The tensions that accumulated in Marumakkathi families in these times is acutely documented in many autobiographies. See, for instance, V.R. Parameshwaran Pillai, Aa Ezhupatu Varshongal (Those Seventy Years), Thiruvananthapuram, 1974, pp.12-17. The figure of the fear-inspiring, often oppressive Karanavan, demanding total obedience from younger members, is also commonly to be found in autobiographies of individuals who lived in these times. See, for example, K.M. Panikkar, Smaranadarpam (Mirror of Memory) Vol.I, Thiruvananthapuram, 1949, pp.3-5.

56. See, R.Jeffrey, op.cit., n.47, pp.203-204*pp. 186-89. The figure of the hapless Nair woman subjected to an exploitative system of sexual alliances surfaced as a metaphor in many varied sites for a long time. For example it was used to describe the subjection of the Malayalam language to the domination of Sanskrit at the All-Kerala Progressive Writers' Conference at Kottayam in 1945. M.P. Paul, speaking on this topic, claimed that "Once upon a time a Karanavan called Ezhutachan (the recognised forefather of Malayalam literature) married off a girl from the Taravad of the Dravidas to (..continued)
be used even in characterising 'Malayalees' in general as a people seriously lacking in moral and productive habits. "The Malayalees are as a class the most idle and homesick of the whole Hindu community", wrote a 'Hindu Liberal' in 1891, "owing to the enervating influence exercised on their character by their peculiar system of inheritance and their obnoxious system of promiscuous marriage or no marriage at all".57

The relationship between the individual member and the institutions of the existent order such as the Taravad or the Illam was perceived to be such that the health and strength of the latter seemed directly proportional to the degree to which they cancelled out the possibility of the emergence of the Individual, as the 'Plea for Partition' quoted above claims. The Individual, now granted timelessness, is found to be stifled and undervalued in the existent order. This was not the case in the new order imagined as alternative. This was seen to rely not upon the suppression of the Individual but on the efficient extraction and extension of his/her capacities. This echoed from as early as Francis Buchanan's comment on the Nayadis of Malabar:

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the Sanskrit bridegroom. The wife can accept a gift from her husband without loss of honour. But intercourse with other sorts of literature was not permitted". (M.P. Paul, 'Malayalasahityathinte Kuravukal', ('The Failings of Malayalam Literature) in Purogamana Sahityam Eniham? (Why Progressive Literature?), Kottayam: SPSS, 1953, p.19, first published, 1946).

57. Quoted in R.Jeffrey, ibid. Published in The Hindu, 6 February, 1891, p.6.
"A wretched tribe of this kind buffeted and abused by every one, subsisting on the labour of the industrious is a disgrace to any country; and both compassion and justice seem to require that they should be compelled to gain a livelihood by honest industry and be elevated somewhat more nearly to the rank of men".58

This account implicitly draws upon an ideal relation possible between individuals and the collectivity, i.e., a relation in which the individual is implicated in the collectivity through her/his productive contribution to it, a linkage that seems 'positive'. The Nayadix, in order to be made honourable constituents of the country must be transformed into industrious and civilised subjects, who do not eat into the resources of the collectivity and lead a sterile existence within it but are able to find their own upkeep.

Such transformation was prescribed to local people as most desirable by the protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century. The ideal Christian was not to be slothful. This marked representation of the ideal native Christian, such as in the character Tejopalan in Sukumari, whom, it seems, "..... had no aversion to any sort of work. Because of the firm conviction that it was unworthy to beg, be a burden, and that it was worthier to earn one's keep by labouring as much as one's strength permitted, he carried on happily in humble tasks, content with the pay he received".59 Yet a 'positive' relation to the collectivity implied


more than finding subsistence for oneself. In *Ghatakavadham* in which spiritual goods are established as more valuable than material ones, Paulose, the ideal christian, accumulates spiritual goods through his devout practice of christian virtue, labouring not out of desire for worldly goods but in submission to the divine command that those who do not labour should not eat. His spirituality animates the *entire community*, working to strengthen internal bonds, doing good even to foes (like Koshy Kurian, his oppressive landlord) and inspiring others to participate all the more actively in the quest for christian salvation; in that sense, he contributes 'positively' to the collectivity. In contrast, Koshy Kurian labours to increase personal gain, neglecting spiritual duties. In a collectivity whose basis seems more spiritual than material, Koshy Kurian is a member who does not care to establish a 'positive' relation with the collectivity, and is therefore deserving of criticism.

This was also found necessary for the secular collectivities imagined more frequently by the end of the nineteenth century such as the community, the nation or the modern family. These too are found characterised by the reliance upon the expanded capacities of the Individual, not on their suppression. One's success and prosperity must not impair others' chances; besides, it must contribute to the general welfare of the collectivity:

"(If Individuals)...... strive towards improving the economic condition of the community and towards improving one's own condition in and through this, without desiring to get rich by

appropriating others’ wealth, then they are indeed practising ideal Human Duty...... To make one’s livelihood by one’s own effort, through the help of others, and to make available appropriate facilities to ensure the secure future existence of those who depend on oneself, is the primary duty of every member towards the progress of the community” 61

By the late nineteenth century, Man’s duties were spelt out. Man was expected to produce not only his subsistence but also of his family, as countless articles that appeared in the pages of contemporary Women’s Magazines would reiterate. When the collectivity of the nation was projected, the male subject, in order to have a ‘positive’ relation to it, was to produce above the subsistence of the family. The first prince of Tiruvitamkoor, in a speech made in 1874, quoted at length from the Administrative Report of the State that gave the picture of self-sufficiency and contentment reigning in the “rural Arcadia of Travancore” only to qualify it thus:

"But the very contentment and conservation have proved the greatest obstacle to industrial progress...... It has seldom or never entered into the thoughts of the peasant or those who are much worthier than him, to endeavour to make two blades of grass grow where only one does now”. 62


62. Prince Rama Varma , ‘Our Industrial Status’, Lecture delivered to the Trevandrum Debating Society, 26 September, 1874, Kottayam: CMS Press, 1874, pp.3-4. It may be noted that the demands that were being made upon the Tiruvitamkoor Sarkar in the late 19th century through the Malayali Memorial (1891) and Ezhava Memorial (1896) clearly voiced protest that the Sarkar was not doing justice to its citizens, who were desirous and capable of establishing a ‘positive’ relation with the nation. Responsibility for adequate maintenance of this relation, it was claimed, equally fell upon both (..continued)
In a strong sense, this is an appeal for new subjects who will have a different relationship, a 'positive' one, based upon their contribution as economic producers, with the collectivity, the nation. Given this imperative, this 'contentment' could well be inverted to being a breach of duty towards the collectivity one belonged to:

"What we know and have known for a long while in recent times is a condition of perennial want in greater or lesser degree.... the lazy and contented Travancore ryot ekes out a miserable existence, and his inexpensive clothing, food and drink contribute their quota to his general inefficiency...." 63

Here we have a "Travancore ryot" who is inattentive to improving his own life-style, remaining contented with a simple and inexpensive way of life. But since it does not produce a surplus, it becomes a breach of duty towards his collectivity, here, the nation, Travancore.

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Individuals and the Collectivity. The State was thus assigned a definite role here. The Malayali Memorial claimed that: "As the Malayali Sudras are the most loyal portion of your Highness' subjects, as they are in the point of intelligence, general culture and attainments not behind any other class in the country ... and as it is that they mainly contribute to the resources of the state... their claims on your Highness' government are far stronger than those of any other class in the country" (Quoted in R.Jeffrey, op.cit., n.47, p.170). The Ezhava Memorial also claimed for Ezhavas a share in government service on the grounds that the Ezhavas paid more taxes than any other social group, that all the educated Ezhavas were hardworking and loyal subjects (R.Jeffrey, ibid., pp.206-207). This continued in later demands such as those made in C.V.Raman Pillai’s Videsheeya Medhavivram (Foreign Dominance), Thiruvananthapuram: Government of Kerala, 1994, first published, 1922.

Of course, what is to be noted in all these different instances—ranging from the ideal Christian community to the Nation—is that they all call for individuals who would have a 'positive' relation to the collectivity, linked to it through expanded effort and productive presence.

The female subject too, is expected to exist in such relation with her collectivity: author after author emphasises that women are not merely vessels that give birth but agents of Reproduction. This notion, as used here, needs explication: it includes both bearing and rearing and personal care of other members of the family; it also refers to the institutionalisation of a set of domestic practices in and through women which were intended to develop children into complete individuals, to sustain and further the Individuality of the other members. As Reproducer, Woman is taken to be responsible not only for biological reproduction of a new generation but also for social reproduction through reproduction of institutions—i.e. the reproduction of the family through the everyday maintenance and transmission of modern family-values and practices and generally, the reproduction of the collectivity through the transmission and maintenance of collective values and practices. woman, too, was thus assigned a duty towards the collectivity and the possibility of a 'positive' relationship between women and the collectivity was conceded.

64. Being a Reproducer also involved being the provider of aesthetic pleasure within the family, This will be treated in greater detail in Chapter Five.
But in the late nineteenth century this was still a promise held by the future, to be fulfilled only through the actualisation of Ideal Woman and Man, and the Ideal Modern Collectivity in an inter-related way. A critique of the contemporary inadequacies of women—among which the lack of such 'positive' relation to the collectivity figured as the prominent one—seemed urgently called for. Socialising practices of women in contemporary society were roundly condemned as "......Relating nonsensical tales to young children, frightening them with descriptions of terrifying creatures, inculcating false beliefs and thus polluting their minds and manners".65

This account, drawn from a novel, corresponds almost exactly to what surfaces in the childhood reminiscences of the Ezhava reformer C.V. Kunhiraman regarding the state of women among the Ezhavas of Mayyanad, his native village, in this period.66 Innumerable accounts of the inefficiency of local women may be found in Women's Magazines of the period, and the need to educate them to rectify this failing was being advanced in the late nineteenth century itself. So also was the importance of transforming women for the

65. Komattil Padoo Menon, *Lakshmikesavam* (1892) from *Natu Novelukal*, op. cit., n.1, p.146. Indeed, by the late 19th century, the kind of education which women were to be given was already a debated topic. See, for instance, the debate between 'N.R.V' and 'N.A. Amma' which appeared in the Vidyavinodini in 1897-98. See, N.R.V, 'Streevidyabhyasan' (Women's Education), *Vidyavinodini* Vol 8(2), 1897, pp.73-77; N.A. Amma, 'Streevydabhyasa Doshanishedham' (Refutation of the Argument Opposing Education of Women), *Vidyavinodini* Vol 8(11), 1898, pp.427-431.

actualisation of the modern collectivity:

".....Children of ignorant mothers may be expected to be ignorant and senseless. Because children are completely under the care and affection of their mothers for at least seven or eight years, it is beyond doubt that they will come to share the goodness or evil of their mothers.....the fortune, welfare and prosperity of a nation are dependent upon the superiority or inferiority of the sense of discretion possessed by its women". 67

A suitable sort of training that would enable the creation of such a 'positive' relation between young women and their families, community and nation was urged as an immediate need (it may be significant to note that very often this was conceived not as the creation of a new relation, but as the radical transformation of an already-existing one). 68

The advantages of educating women were thus listed:

"If women are educated they attain great discretion of mind and are enabled to advice their men in times of need, like ministers. They will be able to keep all the accounts, like managers. They are made capable of caring for men, like mothers. They would keep good watch upon money and other valuables, they will be able to nurse and care for (the sick)...." 69


68. Protestant missionaries in Keralam seem to have perceived a robust relation between mothers and children, probably with reference to matrilineal groups, which they hoped could be transformed into a modern one through their intervention. Mrs. Hawkesworth, a missionary stationed at Kottayam in 1846, emphasised the necessity of educating Malayalee women on this ground: "If mothers in England exercise such an influence over the minds of their children, how very desirable is that in this country--where the influence of mothers is supposed to be greater--the minds of females should be directed in the right way!" From a letter dated 15 April 1846 in The Missionary Register, September 1847, p. 476.

69. From S.Sivarama Pillai, op. cit., n. 8, pp. 8-9.
The 'positive' institutions were also imagined to be significantly different from those constituting the established social order in the specific means by which they were to be maintained. One may remember, for instance, the contrast set up in Saraswativijayam between the order of Jati in which obedience is secured through the threat of violence and excommunication, and the order of gender, prevalent among missionaries, in which self-regulation prevailed.70 The collectivity may pressurise the Individual in a negative way only when she/he offends her/his 'positive' linkage to it: only that would constitute an offence.71 And ultimately, effective maintenance of such relations hinges upon "social consciousness", "commitment to duty" among members.72 "With the spread of enlightened consciousness", it was hoped, offences against the collectivity would decrease.73 The new order aimed at completely eliminating offences, even if only in a distant future. The power of self-regulation seemed to offer this prospect.

Besides minimising offences through self-regulation these institutions, ideally, were to rely upon certain 'internal forces'. This may be well-illustrated by briefly referring to the discussion about romantic Love in this period, which surfaces as an 'internal force' capable

70. Saraswativijayam, op. cit., n. 6.

71. Samudrayolkkarsham, op. cit., n. 61, pp. 17-18.

72. ibid., p.19.

73. ibid.
of ensuring the solidity and longevity of the monogamous marital union. Romantic Love, *Premam*, was at the very outset constituted by making less important the aspects of bodily desire which were accorded prominence in the notion *Kamam*, or lust. Term by term, *Premam and Kamam* are opposed:

"Unblemished love is a natural quality. It is not dependent upon the thickness of one's purse, one's station or lineage, it does not bend before the commands of parents and uncles. It is impossible to uproot it and replant it elsewhere. Readers must note that love and lust are vastly different. *Lust*......is like a forceful storm, it lasts little. It is perishable. Love is divine, eternal. It is ever-mild, gentle......Love accompanies virtues like persistence, truth, patience and faith. Lust is the accompaniment of evils like falsity, danger, indiscretion, jealousy, impermanence and so on." 74

Love appears as an 'internal force' which seeks not the body of another but the internality of another. Hence the prominence assigned to *Anthakkarana Vivaham* 25 in the Malayalam novels of the late nineteenth century. Love calls for a disciplining of bodily desire, reserving it for the culmination of the Love-relationship in marriage. This is a relationship in which sexual union is placed at the pinnacle of intimacies which may be reached only when the couple has gone through all other forms of intimate interaction-- that of sight, speech, touch or movement. Without such 'ascent' enduring union seems


75. See the second chapter of *Indulekha*, op.cit., n.5. The translation of *Anthakkarana Vivaham* would, roughly, be 'Marriage of inner-instruments'.
impossible. But strangely enough, sexual union seems the most dispensable of all elements constituting romantic Love. In *Indulekha*, the heroine, pining for her lost love, wakes up from a bad dream about him, calling him her 'husband'. Since the hero and heroine were yet to be united in marriage, this mode of address creates confusion. Justifying it, she retorts, "So what? Is he not the person whom I have made my husband in my mind?". The heroine who nonchalantly declares that wealth and social eminence are insignificant to her in the choice of a husband displaces her grandmother whose advice to her regarding such matters is strikingly different: "If women turn out well they must improve their Taravads. You must get a good husband. My child, what matters is wealth alone". Love, being above and beyond merely perishable material considerations, could apparently provide a firmer foundation for marital unions—this argument is found frequently in writings of this period opposing dowry.

In early modern Malayalam literature one may find that *Premam* is closely

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76. *Indulekha*, ibid., p.267.

77. ibid., pp.42-44.

78. ibid., p.107.

79. See, for instance, P.K.Kocheapen Tarakan's novel *Balikasadanam* (1922) in which a group of young Syrian Christian girls swear not to submit to marriages involving dowry and only to those based on *Anuragam* (Love), *Balikasadanam*, Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi, 1993, p.98.)
associated with animated Womanhood. The heroines of early modern novels—*Indulekha, Lakshmikesavam* or *Meenakshi* which have romantic Love as the abiding theme testify to this. It is through displaying a tremendous capacity for *Premam*, often against severe odds, that they assert themselves as individuals, and the success of the Love-relationship depends upon the steadfastness of the heroine's Love (here one may mention that the critic Sanjayan has expressed surprise at the presence of a relatively weak hero in accompaniment to the remarkably strong-willed heroine in *Indulekha*). But given the positioning of the sexes within *Premam* this is not surprising). Kumaran Asan's poetry too offers splendid examples of female characters who are the very embodiments of *Premam*—those in *Nalini* and *Leela* are particularly worthy of mention. These are characters whose

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80. This is true for almost all the literary genres that became popular in this period in Keralam. This is evident in the early Malayalam novels, mentioned before; in modern Malayalam poetry such as in N.Kumaran Asan's work. See, *Kumaran Asante Sampoorna Kritikal* (Complete Works of Kumaran Asan), Kottayam: SPSS, 1981; in early Malayalam short story, such as in those of Moorkothu Kumaran [see, *Moorkothu Kumarante Kathakal* (Shortstories by Moorkothu Kumaran), Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Publications, 1987]; early 'social plays' such as C.V.Raman Pillai's farces (see, *Prahasanamala*, op.cit., n.42). The theme of romantic Love was to prove highly durable in popular Malayalam novels, well into the 20th century, in 'social novels' like Moorkothu Kumaran's *Vasumatti* (1914) [For a detailed account of this work, see M.Kunhappa, *Moorkothu Kumaran: Jeeyacharithram* (Biography), Kottayam: SPSS, 1975, pp.248-55, and in popular novels by much lesser known authors like Tottappalli Bhaskaran Nair, *Bharati Athava Parajayangal*, Alappuzha: Vidyarambham Press, 1947, or K. Damodaran, *Onkara*, Thiruvananthapuram: Indira Publications, 1947, (Third Edition)].


entire mature life seems directed towards the pursuit of unblemished *Premam*, which leads them away from the normal progression of life laid down for women by convention. When the union with the beloved becomes a real possibility in these texts, the body of the lover becomes superfluous—as if it were nothing but the vehicle of a mind which had sought union with another mind. Asan's *Chintavishtayaya Seeta* (Thoughtful Seeta) celebrates Woman when Seeta is made to recognise her Womanhood, its "unestimable value", and her difference from Raman, who being King, political power personified, guardian of established and dominant values, has no capacity for 'pure Love'—*Shuddha Raga.m*. 83

When Love is activated between a Man and Woman, the latter is to draw the former into the world of emotional relationships and altruistic exchange in domestic life. A Love-relationship makes it possible for Woman to influence Man, to make him sensitive to personal and human relationships. This is probably why it was sometimes felt that true

83. For an interesting note on this aspect, see, S. Sreedevi, 'Swayamkritharthath Chintavishtayaya Seetayil' (Self - Fulfilment in *Chintavishtayaya Seeta*) in Kerala Kavita 1996, pp. 133-34. Interestingly, in *Chintavishtayaya Seeta*, Pranayam (Love) is seen as a Pasam (a binding - rope) upon women when not reciprocated. Pranayam (Love) can become an enabling force for Woman only when the object of her Love responds to it. The man who does not respond to unblemished Pranayam is worthy of criticism, as is Raman, in *Chintavishtayaya Seeta*. It is worth noting that Asan's Seeta was widely accepted as a progressive model of Womanhood in literature, questioning the limitations on female existence. [See, for instance, Joseph Mundashery, 'Sahityathile Street' (Woman in Literature), from *Puthya Kazhchohapadil*, Thissur: Mangalodayam Press, 1955, pp.34-45 and Sukumar Azhikode, *Asante Seetakavyam*, Kozhikode: P.K.Brothers, 1954, pp.55-56.] Lalitambika Antharjanam wrote about Asan's Seeta thus: ".... That was the Seeta of the 20th century. She was the symbol of the modern Indian Woman caught between duty and Individuality. That measure suited us all. All the questions which Asan made Seeta ask must have arisen silently, within the hearts of the women of my times". 'Enikku Ettavum Istappetta Malayala Kavi' (My Favourite Malayalam Poet) from L. Antharjanam, *Aimakathaikkku Oru Amugham* (Preface to an Autobiography), Thrissur: Current Books, 1991.
Premam may be found only in relationships in which a man feels respect for the woman he is in love with:

"When a woman is subjected to the test of love by a man, she must be strong enough to evoke respect for her in him. In the same way, if the woman who is loved does not inspire in the man the feeling that she is worthy of reverence, then one may be sure that true and sacred love has not emerged there. Womanliness is in itself an attractive thing. In true love towards such a woman, attraction dissolves in a sense of respect. That is, if a man is truly in love with a woman then the feeling that she will be capable of purifying his life and uplifting him towards god will definitely occur to him."  

Having said this, the author goes on to assert the necessity of Premam within the ideal marriage: "The woman a man intends to marry must be a strong influencing force in his moral existence and prosperity..... A man who marries out of fancy for beauty or a sweet voice does not realise that he is committing a folly..... A woman who is without a sense of morality and humility cannot be a wife capable of sacred love...."  

The association of animated Womanhood with Premam therefore seems understandable. Unlike Kamam in which women may figure, it seemed, only as passive

84. 'P.C'., 'Anuraga Pareekshanam' (Test of Love), Malayala Manorama, 11 January, 1927.

85. Ibid. Though most accounts which endorse Premam or Anuragam also inevitably endorse the monogamous marital union, there are some in which this link is not made. For instance, Mahakavi Kunhikuttan Tampuran's play Chandrika has a heroine who receives schooling, a culturing of the mind, who falls in love with the king who is also the husband of her mentor. Here her culture of mind is made to reveal itself in her self-restraint in a passionate affair. She is united with the king in marriage later, but with the whole-hearted consent of his first wife. See, Chandrika, in A.D. Hari Sharma (ed.), Mahakavi Kunhikuttan Tampuranete Swatantra Natakangal (Plays of Kunhikuttan Tampuran), Kozhikode: P.K. Brothers, 1965, pp. 269-368.
victims or seductive objects, *Premam* seemed to endow them with active agency. Within modern marriage and courtship *Premam* is seen to work as a cohesive force that permits Woman to exercise influence over Man in a positive way. The second chapter of *Indulekha* in which the progress of the Love-relation between the superbly self-controlled heroine and the emotionally weakened hero is detailed, illustrates this brilliantly.

One is not arguing that romantic Love was the actual force which enabled the increased acceptance of the monogamous marital union or ensured its popularity and cohesiveness in twentieth century Keralam.\(^86\) This was a time in which legal enactments that sought to stabilise and reorganise marital arrangements were being actively contemplated and carried out—from the Malabar Marriages Act (1896) and P.Thanu Pillai's attempt to introduce marriage legislation in the Tiruvitamkoor State Council in the same year, up to the spate the of family legislation in Malabar, Kochi and Tiruvitamkoor in the 1920's and 30's. The very structure of the patrilineal family that was being upheld as desirable in the reform movements of the period and given legal recognition progressively, itself seemed to imply moral obligation between the parties constituting it. The Malayalam novelist Takazhi Sivasankara Pillai in his autobiography remembers listening in his childhood (in second decade of the twentieth century) to a speech in favour of individual partition of *Taravads* by

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86. This has been documented—R.Jeffrey gives detailed references in his *Politics, Women and Well-Being*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.53.
the Nair reformer Mannath Padmanabhan in which he claimed that there "...is prosperity only in those homes provided for by husbands. We need to keep our women in place by making them virtuous. For this husbands must be made to bear their expenses". Making the husband occupy the position of chief provider (and possibly that of the head of the household) seems to bind the wife in a moral obligation to the husband. Tracing descent in the male line, it was argued, would impose a moral obligation upon the father/husband to support his family—in fact, some discussion of the reform of matriliny supposed that such obligation already existed, being 'natural', a product of the 'natural affinity' felt by a man towards his offspring which, it was claimed, was really stronger than his feelings towards nieces or nephews. Legislation was often characterised as intended to give recognition to this 'natural' affinity. Such bonds given by moral obligation implied by the structure of the modern family itself must be distinguished from those given by Premam. Of course it was argued at times that the very structure of the monogamous relation lent itself to Premam. As the authors of the Nambutiri Family Regulation Committee Report argued, "If there is but


88. See, Sir C.Sankaran Nair, Speech at 4th Annual Conference of the *Keralaeya Nair Samajam*, reprinted in the *Malayala Manorama*, 11 June, 1910. The 'natural affinity' supposed to exist between the father and his natural children is of course questionable. An interesting account of a different sort of affinity, between the maternal uncle and nephew, may be obtained from the autobiography of Puthezathu Raman Menon. He has included a short memoir by his maternal uncle in this work in which this affinity surfaces appearing to be no less intense than the supposedly 'natural' affinity between father and children. See, Puthezathu Raman Menon, *Kazchappadukkal* Vols. I & II (Viewpoints), Thrissur, 1959, pp.27-41.
one (wife) the natural course is to continue (family life) affectionately. If there is more than one (wife), to have equal Love for each (wife) is what is unnatural. But the distinction between these two forms of bonding was also clear, even as it was accepted that they could lead to each other. An argument that was made against making divorce difficult in Nair family legislation precisely identified this distinction: it claimed that marriages which were not organised by both forms of bonding—those, for example, which were not inspired by Premam, simply held together by moral obligations given in legal ties—were not really healthy.

A third form of bonding that was seen to underlie the monogamous marital union was that activated in the mutual moral shaping expected from the husband and wife within it. It was simply not enough to insert a man and woman as husband and wife within the modern family-form, so it was claimed, at times, they should be capable of bearing the obligation to shape each other. Mariam in the novel Ghatakavadham makes exactly this point when she objects to her father's choice of a bridegroom for her: "I know well that if I am not wedded to someone who is more intelligent and compassionate than myself then I


90. See, 'A Nayar', 'Nayar Billum Streekalum' (Women and the 'Nair Bill), The Mahila Vol 4(9), 1924, pp. 293-96.
shall definitely turn to evil ways". This also underlay the objection that was sometimes voiced against including Sheelavati (the mythological heroine whose wifely devotion was such that she would comply even to her husband's demand that he be taken to a prostitute's house, by carrying him there upon her shoulders) among the exemplars of 'Indian Womanhood'—i.e. amongst Seeta, Savitri, Damayanti and others:

"But is it not that such wives (as Sheelavati) encourage evil tendencies in some men? It seems more important for a peaceful life that a true wife be ever-diligent in persuading her husband away from evil ways and directing her effort to his improvement".

This too is different from the bonding attained in Premam, though the latter was often found to be in active co-existence with the former.

The 'internal forces' which were seen to ensure the cohesion and efficiency of the modern family are therefore many not just Premam alone— they are, however, mutually supportive. It was the complex interaction of these that was found to underlie the stability of modern marriage. Measures of a negative sort, such as the regulation of divorce in the Nair Bill (1924) did figure in legal enactments that sought to institutionalise the patrilineal

91. Ghatakavadham, op. cit, n.60, p.122.

family-form, and were found essential to the "community's survival and moral well-being". But the stability of the modern family was clearly perceived not to rest upon negative measures. The importance of 'internal forces' in modern institutions other than the modern family can hardly be underestimated, given the innumerable references to the necessity of sense of duty towards the nation and the community and of Deshasneham (Love for the country) or Samudayasneham (Love for the community) and so on, in nationalism and reformism in twentieth century Keralam. We have also seen how important gender-difference is in all the internal forces within the modern family, as an element that shapes them, and is shaped by them in turn. How this element appears within the internal forces that are to ideally underlie other sorts of collectivities needs to be explored in detail.

III. Subjects: Carving Them

Authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries perceived a huge gap between this ideal Self and its actual presence in contemporary society. Such lack sometimes appeared to be a 'characteristic feature' of people. K.M. Panikkar, writing about

93. 'Nayanmarude Vivahamochanam' (Divorce among Nayars), Malayala Manorama, 12 June, 1924.

94. Premam was, in this way, recognised as a 'social need'. Presenting the draft of a Civil Marriages Act in the legislative assembly in the Kochi State in 1935, Sahodaran K. Ayappan argued in defence of Premam which he claimed, had "... a very important place in worldly life", as an individuating force, separating people from established institutional structures. However he did not forget to clarify: "To say that love must be granted freedom is not to say that lust must be granted freedom". Quoted in M.K. Sanoo, Sahodaran K. Ayippun, Kottayam: D.C. Books, 1981, p.151.
the Nairs, found the lack of a unified, organised, internally consistent Self to be a striking feature of these people. The 'Nair attitude' towards religion seemed to reveal this:

"...in the unorganised and uneducated human mind, be it 'civilized' or 'primitive', there is a horizontal stratification of the most contradictory ideas which lie absolutely undisturbed in the ordinary course of life. It is not an uncommon sight to see a thoroughly hinduised Nayar who talks about Absolutism and Illusion and believes in paying a Kantyan to get the devil out of his little niece."  

But learning English or acquiring Western knowledge, by themselves, were found to be inadequate solutions to such lack. This awareness was clearly present, for instance, in the characterisation of the 'B.A.B.L' holder Parangodan, the target of mockery in Parangodiparinyam. With English education, Parangodan loses the sense of self given to him by the established order.  

Here is how he tries to figure out the 'true'nature of Nair Sambandham:

"He had held the view that the Nair Sambandham was as stable as ordinary marriage. He had also published some books affirming this. Then, in order to please a friend, he altered his views and claimed that it was no better than concubinage. One doesn't know what opinion will surface at the next turn-about".

96. "By the time one understands who Tipu Sultan is, one would have forgotten who one is"—Parangodiparinyam, op.cit., n. 1, p.249.  
97. ibid., p.268.
Here is depicted an unsure, vacillating self, seeking to figure out what it really is. *Parangodiparinayam* marks an important moment: the registering of a breakdown of the sense of self given in the established order, and the perception of a lack. This lack is that of the mechanisms for the construction of a truly unified, strong new Self. In these times this was a concern that provoked writing, bringing forth great many plans, projects, critiques and evaluations.

The act of projecting the ideal, first of all, trained the subject's gaze upon itself. This placed the subject within a new visibility; self-knowledge would proliferate in and through this visibility. In other words, an image of 'lacks', 'defects', or 'shortcomings' was revealed which seemed to call for corrective action. For the protestant missionaries of nineteenth century Keralam, such self-knowledge—the admission of one's sinfulness in the light of divine faith—was the essential first-step towards salvation. In *Sukumari*, it was admitted that "... teaching the utterly ignorant is far more difficult than enlightening those who are educated and sensible", 98 and further, that it was far more difficult to inculcate the principles of the christian religion in those natives who were scrupulous about their (native) religious observances, than in those natives who were not so fastidious. 99 In *Sukumari*, Mata, who is highly dedicated to her native faith, is one such resisting figure. She is finally overcome by

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99. ibid.
the power of persuasion, by words, to accept a visibility of herself as sinner. She chooses for herself the name *Jeevi* (meaning 'living thing') after baptism, making a metaphorical leap into the new subjecthood.\(^{100}\) By the late nineteenth century, such imperative was no longer confined to religious proselytising. And the mirror which gave insight into oneself was no more Christianity alone. Dewan T. Madava Row, Tiruvitamkoor's well-known moderniser, in his manual of the ideal upbringing of the young,\(^ {101}\) found it pertinent to point out that "Science is the ultimate truth regarding worldly things. We must occasionally examine whether the facts in our knowledge are in accordance with this truth".\(^ {102}\)

How the appearance of the ideal model turned one's gaze upon oneself is clear from the following short passage from V. Nagam Aiya's *Travancore State Manual*:

"....closer intercourse with Anglo-Indian sisters is desirable in the interests of our Indian sisters in as much as this will elevate them and open their eyes to the higher sphere of usefulness occupied by the women-kind of Western countries and enable them to see better their recognised influence in society, morals, religion and politics, their active participation in the work of their husbands through all the grades and ranks of life from the prince to the peasant instead of a humble, passive, unexpressed subordinate co-operation..."\(^ {103}\)

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100. ibid., p.295.

101. T. Madava Row, *Hints on the Training of Native Children*, V. Nagam Aiya (trans), Kottayam: CMS Press, 1889. It may be noted that the Dewan was the former palace-tutor in Tiruvitamkoor.

102. ibid., p.59.

The attention of 'Indian sisters' is here first directed at a model considered worthy of emulation—the women of Western countries. This seems to immediately evoke another image of women's social role—"humble, passive" etc.—a lacking one that is projected on oneself. But this does call for a more complete evaluation of oneself—search for defects, assessment of elements possibly positive. Nagam Aiya is prompted to undertake an assessment of "Hindu Women", admitting that their illiteracy was indeed a defect while simultaneously searching for elements in 'Hindu Women' that would reveal cultivated nature.¹⁰⁴

As Parangodiparinayam pointed out, self-correction had to necessarily follow self-knowledge if a strong new Self had to be fashioned. This was solidly emphasised by the protestant missionaries in Keralam in the nineteenth century. Among the texts which they circulated there were many which gave advice about what constituted 'correct training' that would build a new Self.

Let us consider a text published around 1849, Hermann Gundert's translation of a German work titled Manusha Hridayam (The Human Heart) in Malayalam.¹⁰⁵ This describes, step by step, how a soul steeped in sin may gain salvation. The first step is of

¹⁰⁴ ibid., pp.300-302.
course the gaining of self-knowledge-- the visibility of one's sinfulness through repeated exhortations of god's messenger which arouses horror at one's state of sin and provokes repentance.\textsuperscript{106} But the sinner must not despair; he/she must engage in systematic effort to rectify this undesirable state. Systematic, regular effort is necessary for making the 'ascent' of the soul possible and for maintaining it. The regimen the text recommends is called \textit{Daivabhaktiyil Abhyasam} (Training in Piety),\textsuperscript{107} through which the sinner acts upon his/her soul so as to 'raise' it towards god. Such self-correction and vigil must continue until death: "Alas, Man cannot survive-- if he does not develop, he will surely decline".\textsuperscript{108} This sort of training turns the sinner away from the material world and prepares him/her for the heavenly world. The text uses the mirror-metaphor to describe its function which it claims, is to reveal the deceptiveness of material pleasure "as in a mirror"\textsuperscript{109} which the reader may gaze at to see his/her worldliness, following which she/he must turn to god in remorse.

But along with this sort of training which turned one towards the other-world, training of another sort, that which directed one towards this world, was also introduced by

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{106} ibid., p.6.
\item \textsuperscript{107} ibid., p.19; p.25.
\item \textsuperscript{108} ibid., p.26.
\item \textsuperscript{109} ibid., p.26.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the missionaries, best represented by the missionary boarding-school\textsuperscript{110}. Such training imposed controls upon pupils so as to prepare them for the efficient performance of 'natural roles' which also seemed quite important to the project of other-worldly salvation. This involved not only prayer but also the ordering of pupils in space and a precise apportioning of their time among various activities. These were to be maintained through surveillance, norms of conduct and periodical examination. In short, the this-worldly training introduced by the missionaries was of a disciplinary sort.\textsuperscript{111} The prominent CMS evangelist Rev. George Mathen, in a lecture delivered in 1867 identified three key elements in this sort of training: 'Increase in Knowledge', 'Exercise of Mental Faculties' and 'Inculcation of Good Habits', \textsuperscript{112} all three requiring diligent training, the third as much as the first two.\textsuperscript{113} As we shall see, this sort of training was also to develop boys and girls into ideal Men and Women, imparting the specific skills that were to help them conform to subjectivities

\textsuperscript{110.} For the description of life in a missionary boarding-school, see Sukumari, op.cit., n.1, pp.310-15. It may be noted once again that the expressed intentions of this work included providing an account of the life of Basel Mission converts of North Malabar.

\textsuperscript{111.} As Michel Foucault has pointed out, such training "...increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)". M. Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish}, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986, p. 138.


\textsuperscript{113.} ibid., pp. 419 - 20.
deemed 'natural' to them, besides developing self-governance.

This form of training proved highly adaptable-- it could be used, for example, to produce ideal Citizen-Subjects for the modern Nation. The test of the success of a school, it was later remarked,

"...is the culture, mental and moral, it imparts to its votaries. In so far as a school can show a roll of well-conducted, well-trained alumni, leading a honest life as good citizens, and as long as it lives, continues to turn out such good products, its success is achieved." 114

The ideal school works upon pupils as a raw-material to produce full-fledged Citizens. Hence the comparison of the school with a Mint. 115 Disciplinary training was recommended by a Dewan of Tiruvitamkoor as the exemplary means of producing ideal Citizen-Subjects:

"Such an education should be given under conditions favourable to the health of pupils. Their bodies should be developed and trained by vigorous exercise. Their eyes must be trained to see, their ears to hear with quick and sure discrimination. Their sense of beauty must be awakened.... Their will must be kindled with an ideal and hardened by the discipline enjoined by self-control. And through the activities of corporate life in the school, it should give the pupils experience in bearing responsibility, in organisation..... It is only by imparting such an

114. "A Prize Distribution" – Speech to the students of the Mar Dionysius Seminary, by M.Rajaraja Varma Tampuran, Inspector of Schools. Published in Malayala Manorama, 3 November, 1906.

115. "....Our mint has always to remain open. We have to receive day after day the rough ore taken fresh from the mines, smelt it, drain the scum off the metal, allow it to cool, examine its touch, heat it again, strike and cut it into shape, polish its surface, rim the edges, and then stamp on it the hall-mark of currency and send out into the world the sterling coin to play its part". M.Rajaraja Varma Tampuran, ibid.
And if Citizen-Man could be produced through such training, it seemed that the Reformer-Man could also be produced by it:

"What is the use of the 'pass' secured by an individual if it does not give him the ability to do good or his family and community? Therefore, rather than focus upon a 'pass', we must be attentive to correct training .... We have experienced the sheer pointlessness of advocating religious reform and the reform of customs, industrial development and other social changes before an ignorant public.... Imagine that a school as described above (the model referred to was that of a missionary boarding-school) is established in Sivagiri, and that several of our children spend their entire childhood in that ennobling atmosphere, eating clean and wholesome food, learning languages, the sciences and other subjects, engaging in sports and other kinds of physical exercise ....instilling in themselves religion and morality, physical and mental strength, emerging successful in examinations........ If they are the householders of the future, the representatives of the community, then will anything remain beyond our grasp?"

As early as in the first missionary boarding-schools such as the Talashery institution described in Sukumari, the need to inculcate skills deemed appropriate to sex was recognised, and different sorts of training for boys and girls were proposed. In the late

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nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the criticism of the existent system of public education that was being extended through State-support was two-fold: one, that it was not sufficiently disciplinary; two, that it did not help girls to develop the capacities which would have enabled their conforming to the subjectivity deemed 'natural' to women. *Parangodiparinayam* strongly voices this twin critique.\(^{118}\) The figure of Parangodan *Vakil* represents the newly-educated male whose insufficient training has alienated him from the established social order but has left him weak, doddering and pompous. At the same time, existent forms of female education are found inadequate in that they did not seem to equip women to be able managers of the domestic domain. *Parangodiparinayam* identifies the disciplinary rigour and sexually-differentiated curriculum of schools in England to be the source of the power of the English.\(^{119}\)

To illustrate the pattern of the numerous plans and proposals for educational reorganisation that frequently appeared in this period, one may briefly take up one such scheme which appeared in the *Swadeshabhimani* in 1924-25.\(^{120}\) This proposal, however,

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119. ibid., p.253. The education of white women is thus described: "...besides being educated in this rigorous, disciplinary fashion, white women are trained in all the tasks they have to perform, including attending to the comfort of their husbands and the care of children, with considerable diligence. A white man does not have to pay any attention to household affairs after his marriage. His wife is capable of managing all affairs. If the family is well-off she supervises the servants in their work to fulfil all domestic tasks and makes sufficient corrections.... If not then she adjusts accordingly...."

120. L.A. Ravi Varma Tampuran, *Lokopakaramaya Oru Vidyabhyasakramam* (A Scheme of Education (..continued)
stands apart from those which advice the reorganisation of female education, seeking to separate it from the general sort of public education, taken to be more suited to equip pupils for participation in the public domain. This seeks to reform the education of both boys and girls, putting forward two special subjects, Grihasasthadharmam (Householder's Duty) for boys and Grihnidharmam (Housewife's Duty) for girls. The former was to comprise of:

Methods of producing and utilising wealth; obligations and duties towards parents, spouse and children, and the World in general; principles of the correct instruction of the young. Through this subject the pupil must be made fairly aware of his duty...."

Grihnidharmam was to consist of

"....the care of the home, hygiene, principles of nutrition (not cooking), home-nursing, principles of supervising junior members and servants at home, care during pregnancy, principles of moral life....... Instead of Mathematics, subjects like music, painting, embroidery and other crafts may be made available to the pupils as optionsal".


(continued)


121. This proposal, in fact, took serious note of the complaint that the bookish training in schools was actually impairing the development of practical and management skills in not only girls but also in boys. "The spread of the new education", wrote one author in Lakshmiṭhayi, "has made young men loiter around schools and school-books at the age in which they ought to exert themselves industriously and gain experience in accumulating wealth". This is linked to an earlier observation that "In reality, one may find very few men who are truly Manly among upper-caste Malayalees". Kodungalloor Kunhukuttan Tampuran, 'Streekalude Apathul(The Danger Facing Women), Lakshmiṭhayi Vol 5 (6), 1909-10, pp. 236-40. Also see, Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar's lampooning of modern-educated Malayalee men in K.Gopalamkrishnan (ed.), Kesari Nayanarude Kritikal (Works of Kesari Nayanar), Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Publications, 1987, p.33.

The study of music, painting and such fine arts had an important, though debated, place in the ideal curriculum for girls. Parangodiparinayam lampooned these as fairly useless skills which, it claimed, only added to vanity. Female education on a public scale often aimed at securing a balance between the 'useful' and the 'accomplishment'.\textsuperscript{123} The predominance of the latter over the former was never encouraged, and indeed may be found advocated only rarely.\textsuperscript{124} But these elements continued to figure in proposals of female education. One reason for this could be that they provide the pupil with a convenient means of focusing attention upon one's own activity. It may be of some importance to note that these were often recommended as a way of regulating women's leisure, and contrasted to the ordinary experience of women spending leisure time in social company, chatting and 'gossip'. Indeed, the necessity of regulating social interaction among women was often perceived as an important requirement in reforming them.\textsuperscript{125} Many types of activity other than music, painting etc. came to be recommended as means of filling up women's leisure--

\textsuperscript{123} The \textit{Administrative Report} of Tiruvitamkoor for 1890-91 remarked that the "useful should always be preferred to the mere accomplishment" in schools like the Sircar Girls' School, and reported plans for a cookery class. See, \textit{Administrative Report} 1890-91., p.178.

\textsuperscript{124} See, for an example, the memoir of Karimpatta V.K. Lakshmikutty Netyamma, wife of the Elayu Tampuran (Junior Prince) of Kochi in \textit{Malayala - Manorama Weekly} Oct-Nov. 1938.

\textsuperscript{125} One of the first steps taken by the preacher to reform his wife in \textit{Ghatakavodham} was to "....forbid some indecent women who leave their households and neglect their homes, idling away their time here and there, chattering and chewing betel....." from entering his home \textit{Ghatakavodham}. \textit{op.cit.}, n.60, p.89. It is not uncommon to find frequent references to women's tendency to indulge in idle 'gossip' in articles published in Women's Magazines of these times.
prominently, cottage industry.

However in all such debates regarding what elements were to figure in the ideal Womanly education, and in what proportion, the single most important criterion for inclusion was this: the element in question should be instrumental in initiating the pupil into his/her specific domain, the public or the domestic, as a useful, efficient and obedient subject. This is well-reflected in the discussion regarding the place of English in Womanly education which appeared in the Women's Magazine *Sharada* in 1905-1906. In reply to the question whether Malayalee women needed to learn English or not, different answers were given. But it was commonly accepted that the answer would depend upon whether the knowledge of English would or would not help Malayalee women perform their 'natural' role better. English, it was argued, was not so essential in the domestic domain as it was in the public, and hence was relatively less important for women. On the other hand, the argument in favour of the inclusion of English insisted that knowing English would definitely make women better home-makers and increase the pleasures of home-life, that women's grasp of English would increase the pleasure of communication between (the modern-educated) husband and wife, or that it would throw open a whole world of books on house-wifery, childcare or other Womanly skills, or that the mother's competence in English would filter down to the children.126

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126. T. Ammukkutty Amma, *Nammude Streetalum English Vidyabhyasavum* (Our Women and English (continued))
By the third decade of the twentieth century, Womanly education seems to have gained considerable ground. It figured prominently in discussions on education, it was seen to underlie the achievement of many a woman considered successful in the performance of her 'natural' role. The mother of the Maharajah of Tiruvitamkoor herself, in a text written in 1942, was seen to have undergone such a training that appeared to be the basis of the 'success' the text attributed to her: "She studied all the subjects best suited to women-folk—music, literature, painting, playing the Veena... There are not many women who are as well-versed as she is in the secrets of good housewifery". Womanly education figured high in proposals for reform of public education emanating from different quarters—for instance, in the Educational Reforms Committee Report in Tiruvitamkoor of 1933 or in the Tiruvitamkoor Education Reorganisation Committee Report of 1946, and also in

(continued)

Education) in Sharada Vol 2 (3), 1905-06, pp. 50-52; V. Narayani Amma, 'Streekalkku Vendataya Vidyabhyasam' (The Education Which Women Require), Sharada Vol 2(12), 1905-06, pp.271-73. See also, P. Kavamma, 'Streekalam Paschatyavidyabhyasavum', (Women and Western education) Lakshmi Bhucyi Vol 8(10), 1913, pp. 331-37, for a defence of English education for women using similar arguments.


independent proposals like 'A Plea for a New Outlook in Travancore' (1940)\(^{130}\), or in the scheme for Women's education suggested by the organisation of women-teachers in Kochi in 1927.\(^{131}\) Interventions made by members in the legislative assemblies of Kochi and Tiruvitamkoor during discussions of educational reform, as well as independent resolutions proposed by members endorsed this.\(^{132}\) Speeches and resolutions passed at the conferences of the All-India Society for Educational Reform at Thiruvananthapuram in 1927\(^{133}\), and at Kozhikode to select representatives for the All-India Women's Educational Conference, endorsed a curriculum that would train women to be capable-bearers of modern domestic


\(^{131}\) 'Kochiyile Stree Vidyabhyasam - Putiya Scheme' (Women's Education in Kochi - New Scheme), *Malayala Manoroma* (henceforth, *M.M*), 16 August; 19 August, 1927. This was prepared by a sub-committee consisting of Elizabeth George B.A. LT, an Inspectress of Schools, Mrs. A. Velayudha Menon B.A. LT, who was the Headmistress of the Ernakulam Girls' High School and the Secretary of the Kochi *streesamajam*, and P.K. Draupadi Amma B.A.LT, a Headmistress (*M.M*, 16 August, 1927). Also, see, Editorial, 'Stree Vidyabhyasa Paddhati' (Scheme for Women's Education), *M.M*, 20 August, 1827. Indeed, one of the justifications put forward for the necessity of such an Association was the formulation of an adequate scheme of Womanly education through consultations between Women-teachers. See, ibid.


\(^{133}\) See, for instance, Speech by T.V. Narayani Amma on this occasion, reported in *Varitakusumam* Vol 1 (10), 1927, pp.366-71.
responsibility. The innumerable women's meetings organised by various reformist organisations and streesamajams were occasions for discussion of the ideal plan of education for women, and its practical implementation.

Schools for girls were often sensitive to the criticism made of the available public education for girls. The management of a new girls' school at Tiruvalla in 1919 claimed awareness of the inadequacies of the available sort of education and proposed Womanly

134. See, report on conference held at Kozhikode to select Malabar's representatives for the Women's Educational Conference. This was presided over by K.P. Ammikutty Amma. Reported in *M.M.,* 13 December, 1927. Report on *Stree Vidyaabhyaasa* (Women's Educational) Conference at Kozhikode, *M.M.,* 6 December, 1928. This meeting was presided over by Kalyanikutty Amma.

education as solution:

"Seeing that female education is in a very decadent state among Syrian Christians and that the few who have gained English education, having had no chance to obtain sufficient knowledge and training in subjects related to housewifery, have become burdens to their husbands, this girls' school has been established with the aim of ending such disadvantages and giving our girls and young women enough general knowledge along with training in piety, etiquette, morals and home management techniques....."136

Interestingly, Womanly education has never really ceased to be a concern in Keralam, though its content and orientation has been the centre of much discussion, and this has evoked suggestions for modifications etc.137

Yet, even though schools were looked upon as key sites for achieving the ideals advanced by the projects of self-correction, they were by no means the only sites of such effort. Take, for instance, the little-noticed institution of the streesamajam (the women's association) which operated in close connection with reformist organisations, schools, churches, etc. By the early twentieth century they were beginning to appear all over...
Keralam. In 1907, a *streemasajam* at Thiruvananthapuram was conducting a quiz on domestic management; in Palakkad, another such group was felicitating a member on her husband's securing of the Rao Bahadur title; news of the Attingal *streemasajam* was reported in 1909; that of the Guruvayur *streemasajam* in 1908; activities of a *streemasajam* at Kozhikode were reported in 1905; *Arya Balika Samajam* was formed at Tiruvalla in 1909; a *streemasajam* was operating at Talashery in the 1910's that made arrangements to home-deliver library books to women and conducted classes in childcare and sewing; the effort of the Head Mistress of the 'Girls' School at Kollam to start a

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138. 'Swadeshakaryam' (Local News), *M.M.*, 13 October, 1909. The question asked was this: "There is a family consisting of a husband, wife and two children, a boy and girl, below five years of age. The husband earns a salary of Rs.20. With this amount all expenses including rent, food, clothing and for children must be met, and a saving must also be made. How may one calculate the spending? If after ten years, the husband's salary rises to Rs.35, how may one organise spending? Matters like expenses on children's schooling should not be omitted".


140. 'Swadeshakaryam' (Local News), *M.M.*, 18 September, 1909.


streessamajam there was reported in 1909. Streesamajams continued to spring up throughout Keralam in the course of the twentieth century, often in connection with reformist organisations, religious institutions or by themselves. Prominent figures of the period addressed them. T.K. Krishna Menon remembers Chattambi Swamikal lecturing on 'The Place of Man and Woman in the Universe' at a streesamajam at Ernakulam in the early


twentieth century;\textsuperscript{147} Mahatma Gandhi addressed the Hindu Vanita Sanghom at Thiruvananthapuram in 1927.\textsuperscript{148} Women’s Magazines actively promoted them and reported their activities. Some stree samajams had their own magazines, such as the Manorama Samajam of Kottakkal which brought out the Malayala Masika in 1929,\textsuperscript{149} and the Hindu Mahila Mandiram of Thiruvananthapuram which had its own magazine, the Mahila Mandiram.\textsuperscript{150}

Stree samajams were also important in their recommendation of new sorts of social interaction between women, contrasted to older forms, now devalued as ‘idle gossip’.\textsuperscript{151}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{147} T.K. Krishna Menon, ‘Smaranakal’ (Memories), appended to K.Bhaskara Pillai, Chattambi Swamikal : Jeevacharitram (Chattambi Swamikal : Biography), Kottayam : SPSS, 1960, pp.154-56.
\item \textsuperscript{148} ‘Mahatmajiyude Rajadhani Sandaranam’ (The Mahatma’s Visit to the Capital), M.M, 11 October, 1927.
\item \textsuperscript{149} M.M, 3 July, 1929.
\item \textsuperscript{150} Women’s Magazines were important as a medium through which ideas regarding Womanhood and Womanly education were disseminated. Proposals of Womanly education were discussed frequently in these. The first issue of the Malayala Masika published by the Manorama Samajam set down such discussion as one of the chief aims of the magazine [See, ‘Swantam Karyam’ (Editorial Note) in Malayala Masika Vol 1(1), 1930, pp.1-5. A proposal on Womanly education appeared in the early issues, titled ‘Streevidyabyasathinte Mattrka’ (Model for Women’s Education) by B.Kalyani Amma, in Vol 1(1), (2) and (3), 1930, pp.6-15, pp.33-42, pp.65-78 respectively.] These reached not only homes but also schools and stree samajams—copies of The Mahila were bought since 1924 onwards in all the Girls’ Schools in Tiruvitamkoor by government order. The Mahila, Vol 4(5), 1924, p.1.
\item \textsuperscript{151} Padmini, ‘Namnume Streekalum Samudayavum’ (Our Women and Society), Lakshmisatyai Vol 8 (8), 1907, p.196. Also, see, P.G.Ponnamma, ‘Streekalodu’ (To Women), Sahodari Vol 2(5), 1929, pp.127-33. The members of the Thiruvananthapuram stree samajam too stressed this aspect of ‘usefulness’ in a felicitatory address presented to Mrs. Catherine Booth Tucker in 1908 in which it was mentioned that the monthly meetings were availed by women ‘..to renew old acquaintances, to contract (..continued)
Now, within these groups, social interaction, ideally, would help women's self-transformation. These groups were useful, an author argued, for "...Increasing our worldly experience, actualising our aims through the power of affection, bringing civilisation and sophistication to our habits," making clear that these are not associations for pursuit of women's selfish goals or for the simple pleasure of social intercourse.¹⁵²

The importance that was granted to the need for separate and different training for the sexes is understandable, given the fact that the development of gender-difference—training men and women to operate efficiently within different domains deemed 'natural' to them—seemed important for the realisation of the governmental concerns of the State in early twentieth century Keralam, such as, for example, the concern regarding population improvement. Speaking at the Baby Welfare Week celebrations at Kollam in 1924, the Secretary of the Rama Varma Club told his audience:

"... We should not forget the reality that as fathers, we are obliged to pay direct attention to household matters. Yet men are bound to be absorbed (in such affairs as) understanding the ways in which legislation, municipal authority and the production of wealth are organised in other countries. It is women who are likely to be more attentive to advice given on such matters as the care of young children and pregnant women and opportunities for social work new ones and to rub away angularities." It was further claimed that this had helped them to "appreciate the benefits of personal contact, the interchange of ideas and the cultivation of social amenities". Published in Sharada Vol 14(1), 1909, pp. 9-10.

¹⁵² Padmini, ibid., p.198.
among the poor and the ignorant...".\textsuperscript{153}

It is hardly surprising, then, that the State was an active advocate of different curriculae of education for men and women.

It may be briefly mentioned that there was also considerable debate around the question of what would be the ideal sort of training for young men that would be of use to them as participants in the public domain. The report of the committee appointed to study unemployment in Tiruvitamkoor recommended in 1928 a revamping of the educational system and stressed the improvement of agricultural and industrial skills among educated youth, and emphasised the need to accept agricultural activity.\textsuperscript{154} The tendency to look upon government service as the ultimate goal of modern education was criticised. Education, however, was not to produce an unthinking labouring class. N.G. Nair in his 'A Plea for a New Outlook in Travancore' observed that "The so-called educated youth on the threshold of a new life, too refined in his own opinion to fall back upon manual labour...\textsuperscript{155} was no

\textsuperscript{153} 'Kollathe Shishuvaraghosham' (Baby Week Celebrations at Kollam), \textit{M.M}, 19 January, 1924.

\textsuperscript{154} 'Tiruvitamkoorile Tozhilillaima' (Unemployment in Tiruvitamkoor), \textit{M.M}, 9 June, 1928; also, \textit{M.M}, 6 July, 1928. The need for a more flexible system of training that would produce different levels of skills in pupils, assumed to be male, of different levels of intelligence, was recommended much before—see, K.G. Seshaiyer, 'Some Pressing Problems of the Hour', Speech delivered at 13th College Day Celebrations at Maharajah's College, Thiruvananthapuram. Published in \textit{The Malabar Quarterly Review} Vol 9(4), 1910, pp.295-307.

\textsuperscript{155} N.G. Nair, op.cit., n.131, p.2.
more the ideal. The ideal was also not "the militant, mechanical youth who know only to command and obey nor the weak, desponding, undisciplined youth". The ideal youth was to be he who did not hanker after government service, who did not shun manual labour, but who would "... raise the dignity of manual work itself by bringing into it a scientific spirit of pioneering experimentation and organisation." The need raised here is for education that would develop young men into ideal producers.

IV. Strategies of Re-presentation

Much of the writing that projects the internally-focused consciousness and new forms of social ordering and institutions as desirable also hint at the presence of considerable resistance to these in late nineteenth century Keralam. The fear that the acceptance of these new goals would completely upset the existent social order, disrupt ordinary life, and the abhorrence towards these as essentially foreign ideas are all frequently touched upon, condemned, explained, allayed and dealt with in a number of ways. These writings had to legitimise the new goals as valid, credible, essentially better alternatives. We find that this was done through the deployment of specific strategies of presentation,

156. ibid., p.55.

157. ibid., p.57.
through specific ways of presenting new goals of Self-building, new sorts of institutions etc. that seemed to assure their legitimacy and validity. In this section, some of the frequently-encountered strategies are briefly discussed. This list, however, is not exhaustive.

First, the emotive meaning is retained, while the conceptual contents of existent usages pertaining to sex and ideas referring to sex-specific qualities and sex-differentiated domains are changed. For example, the notion of Paurusham which in everyday contexts was associated with not only manliness, but also bravery of fantastic proportions and hence with bragging (such as in the phrase Paurusham Parayuka)\(^{158}\) now got defined in such a way that it came to be associated with hither-worldly, concrete, material sorts of power and authority. For instance in the political polemic Videsheeya Medhavitvam (Foreign Dominance), written in 1922, C.V. Raman Pillai linked the term to the capacity for modern political management;\(^{159}\) in an article titled 'Paurusham' which appeared in a reformist journal in 1927\(^{160}\), it came to be firmly attached to material sorts of power, economic and

\(^{158}\) In Rev. Gundert's dictionary, Paurusham is defined as "Manly, the measure of a man", "Manliness, bravery", "bragging, boast" and "....fantastic, presumptuous". Rev. H. Gundert, A Malayalam and English Dictionary (1892), N. Delhi : AES, 1989, p.728.

\(^{159}\) C.V. Raman Pillai, op.cit., n.62, p.13, p.19, p.22.

\(^{160}\) C.N. Chellappan Nair, 'Paurusham' in Kerala Nandini Vols 1(1), (2), 1927, pp. 77-82, pp.134-38 respectively.
political. Mobilising the well-known proverb *Panamillathavan Pinam*\(^{161}\), the author of this piece argues that *Paurusham* essentially consists of acquiring the capacity to accumulate material resources and effectively exercising the political authority deriving from it. The wealth that is the sign of *Paurusham* is not that which is inherited, plundered or amassed through dishonourable means, but that which is acquired through hard labour.\(^{162}\)

Such wealth *alone* can be the sign of *Paurusham*. Such *Paurusham* is, further, central to the formation of the modern community. The author, therefore, urges *Veluthedathu Nair* (a sub-group of the Nairs) men to attain *Paurusham*:

"Only when the community gains access to public affairs can it advance upon the path of progress. Therefore, *Veluthedathu Nairs*, you must attain *Paurusham* through the accumulation of wealth and glorious deeds, leading towards the progress of the community which wealth makes possible."\(^{163}\)

Women are advised to support this male endeavour by being good, self-controlled wives and mothers and efficient, hardworking home-managers\(^{164}\). Glorious deeds still figure in *Paurusham* as in the older order, but now they are linked to the accumulation of wealth, to

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161. ibid., Vol 1(1), pp.80-81. Another version of this proverb directly links *Paurusham* with wealth: *Panamillatha Purushan Pinam* (A man without wealth is but a corpse).

162. ibid., Vol 1(2), pp. 135-36.

163. ibid., Vol 1(2), p.137.

Similarly the existent ideas of sex-specific domains get redefined; For example, intellectual activity was associated mainly with men in the established cultural milieu—especially in the aristocratic high culture. Now, while this exclusivity is retained to a large extent, what is identified as intellectual activity changes radically. To quote from the *Mitavadi*:

"The Brahmin is as intelligent as the European. But the Brahmin devotes all his intelligence and scholarship to deciphering the difference between the soul and the 'Supreme Spirit'! Does this ... do anyone any good? The Europeans, in contrast, have, like *Purushakesarikal, (Lion-Hearted Men)* laboured to establish in the world the locomotive and the steamship."

The same sort of reconstruction may be seen with regard to the home. The delineation of the home as women's space might not have been new. What is different is that now the domestic domain seemed to consist of entirely new elements. For instance, among Malayala Brahmins, the inner-quarters of the *Illam* (the Malayala Brahmin homestead) was

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165. This is strikingly revealed in that most of the women who engaged in high-intellectual and literary activity in the pre-modern and early modern period in Keralam—judging from the legends around the Kozhikode Manorama Tampurati and much later, from the works of Tottaikkattu Ikavamuna and Kuttikunhu Tangkachi—made it clear in their own ways that they were indeed situating themselves on terrain which was not given to them, or clearing a space for themselves within an essentially-male domain. In her play *Ajnathavasam*, Tangkachi makes this clear in the opening (Nandi) scene. See, S.Guptan Nair(ed), *Kuttikunhu Tangkachiyude Kritikal (Works of Kuttikunhu Tangkachi)*, Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi, 1979, p.240.

largely the space inhabited by women-folk, who were restricted from freely moving outside. The Nambutiri reform-movement did not completely and fundamentally unseat this; but the inner-quarters, the home itself, was completely redefined. The daily routine of women within Illams was traditionally a highly regimented series of ritualistic observances. This was to be fully or partially displaced with a new one that gave stress to home-management, child-care etc. The homestead and the specific agency granted to women in it are transformed. The place assigned to women—their place within the Illam—seems undisputed; but the function attributed to the home, the power-relations traversing it, the practices of domestic life, and the agency of women, are all different. Change is to be made not by a simple rejection of the institution but by a radical redefinition of it.

Secondly, the ideal is situated in local tradition and history, and a place is found for it within one’s cultural past. This is to refer to a golden age in the past—‘Hindu’, ‘Aryan’, ‘Muslim’, ‘Nair’, ‘Pulaya’ or whatever—in which the sexual contract is found to have been operative. The establishment of the order of gender becomes in part the rediscovering and restoring of one’s own, indigenous tradition, the revival of a certain long-

167. Even bathing was a ritual :” After finishing with the scrub and the dip they (i.e. Antharjanams) must come up to the steps and anoint their foreheads with the paste of raw turmeric and castor-seeds, making it by rubbing these upon the stone-step by the tank and dip again. The first thing to be done after bathing is anointing the forehead with sandal-paste and embroaching the face with kanika grass. While doing this one must sit facing eastward....” See, Kanippayur N.Sankaran Nambutripad, Erte Smaranakal Vol I (My Memories), Kunnamkulam: Panchangom Press, 1963, p.159. For a detailed account of the routine of women in Illams, see, ibid, pp.158-66.
lost golden age. This strategy was very widely used. An author writing in 1926 sought to refute the idea that women in ancient India were uncivilised, stressing that one had to see not just the difference between 'ancient' and 'modern' but also the similarities.\textsuperscript{168} Indeed, the main effort here is to demonstrate that women's status, duties and education in ancient India were entirely consistent with modern ideals of Womanhood and Womanly education:

"Women in those days were not educated simply for adornment's sake. It was insisted that the knowledge thus gained must be used properly. The conversation between Draupadi and Satyabhama testifies to this. The Grihaneeyika (Mistress of the House) should not just eat and sleep; she must have good grasp over management of domestic expenditure. She must be aware of the occasions in which special expenses are incurred and of the means by which they may be met".\textsuperscript{169}

Another such article seeks to place Womanhood within Indian legacy, making reference to works of diverse content and produced in different times, to speak of 'Indian Womanhood': the Epics, the works of Manu, Yajnavalkya and Vatsyayana, Mrichchhagatikam, Mucirarakshasam, Dasakumararcharitam, Geetagovindam, Meghadutam and Shakuntalam.\textsuperscript{170} Modern ideals of gender were sought within these. A commentary on Vatsyayana's sutras titled Bharyadharmam (Wifely Duty) in Malayalam,

\textsuperscript{168} Neduveli Narayana Menon, 'Pracheenabharathatikile Sreekal' (Women in Ancient India), \textit{The Mahila} Vol 6(5), 1926, p.155.

\textsuperscript{169} ibid., p.160.

\textsuperscript{170} Chirayinkizh P. Govinda Pillai, 'Pracheenabharatathile Pramadajanangal' (Young Women in Ancient India), \textit{LakshmiBhayi} Vol 5 (8), 1909 -10, pp. 339-40.
began with this argument:

"A false notion has spread among Westerners that women are not valued in India, that they are considered to be but slaves by men, and that this is the fault of the social norms and customs of traditional Hindus... (but) Many English scholars... have agreed that Hindu women were perfect in their roles as daughters, wives and mothers... that their greatest happiness lay in the achievement of success by their children; that they believed that their true glory proceeded from complete respect and devotion to their husbands." 171

Similarly when the modern ideal of Womanhood was put forth as desirable in Muslim reformism, it was found to have been present in the Muslim past and accepted by tradition. An author in the *Muslim Vanita* argued that "The Koran says that women have rights like men.... the Muslim religion lays down that men and women are equal". 172

Another author claimed that Islam was the Deliverer of women in Arabia and that its spread encouraged women's freedom: "By giving women *Swatantryam* along with men, and by pointing out the natural bond between women and men, Islam saved women from this abyss of danger" 173

Through these efforts there emerged a set of mythological heroines--from Hindu

171. Quoted in K. Bhaskara Pillai, *Swadeshabhimani*, Kottayam: SPSS, 1950, pp. 98-99. A commentary with the same name appeared in *Lakshmi Bhuyai*, serialised in Vol 5(1) and (2), 1909, pp. 44-48 and pp. 73-78 respectively, but the author is not named.


Mythology—consecrated as 'Indian Womanhood'—Seeta, Savitri, Damayanti and others. It was often argued that Womanly education in India must seek to raise women to the exalted state of their foremothers. Those involved in chalking out educational programmes for women, it was suggested, must:

"......have grasped well these models (i.e. of Indian Womanliness) that give knowledge about India's ancient culture ....... the help of Western women interested in instituting Indian Womanliness in the model of the leading women of India's past like Seeta, Savitri, Damayanti and others may be accepted by the Commission."

This sometimes led to the displacement or questioning of some established ways of venerating mythological heroines. The veneration of Panchakanyas (Five Virgins), for example, was often part of morning Japam (chanting), at least in many Savarna homes. Later, it was asked why Ahalya, Tara and Draupadi, who were not chaste—and in the case of Ahalya, not even self-controlled—were adored along with Seeta and Mandodari.

This strategy was to become ever-more popular in the twentieth century. The theme of 'Glorious Indian Womanhood' was to attain tremendous popularity through Mahakavi


175. 'Ahalya, Draupadi, Seeta/Tara, Mandodari Tatha/Panchakanya Smarennityam Mahapatakan-ashanam' was the chant.

176. N.Lalitambika Antharjanam, Seeta Mutal Satyavati Vare (From Seeta to Satyavati) ,Kottayam :SPSS, 1972, p.68.
Vallathol's poetry. Here Indian Womanhood is equally represented by mythological and historical figures; Womanhood is firmly installed as part of Indian heritage. The desirability of the sexual exchange is affirmed as valid for this society, its 'Indianness' strongly argued.

Thirdly, the activation of a process of selection within the existent social order is recommended so that certain aspects are found worthy of preservation, while others are dismissed as undesirable. Here, the new ideals function as a silent standard that fixes what is desirable and what is not; but the impression given is that their function is a limited one—the encouragement of 'good' elements of the older order, and the elimination of 'bad' ones—a rather innocent-looking 'correction'. That Christian education need not always require the total elimination of all ideals of female virtue of the older order, but only a 'correction', was often proclaimed by the protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century:

177. For a survey of Vallathol's female characters see, Shooranad Kunhan Pillai, 'Vallathol Kavitayile Stree' (Woman in Vallathol's Poetry) in Kairalee Samaksham, Thiruvananthapuram, 1979, pp. 319-34. Also see, M. Leelavari, Malayala Kavita Sahitya Charitram (History of Malayalam Poetry), Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi, 1980, pp.201-203. Besides, several retellings of stories of 'Indian Women' also appeared in Malayalam, particularly of characters from the Rajput tales, who were idealised as patriotic Indian Women. To point to one instance, one may mention Pallathu Raman's novels. He was a prominent writer and reformer active in these times, and produced several novels centered upon such female characters. Of these, 'Rajasthan Pushpam' (The Flower of Rajasthan) retold the story of Maharani Padmini and her resistance to Muslim aggression; 'Vilasakuman' and 'Vanabala' were built around such female characters in a similar historical setting. Pallathu Raman, Moonnu Novelukal (Three Novels), Fort Kochi: Pallathu Memorial Publishing House, 1998.
"To a Hindu female, christian education is almost a transition from irrational to rational being. Sprightly gentleness of character, with a strong disposition to confide, gracefulness and timidity of manner, combine often with an elegance of form and engaging countenance, are thereby rescued from a wild thoughtlessness or from the dullness of ignorance to exhibit in some manner the original idea of Woman's creation".178

Christian education is seen to be a total revolution; but it does not seem to require a total uprooting of all that was there before. Rather, it appears to be a sophisticated process which retains 'good' elements while discarding 'bad' ones, to create ideal, 'original' Women out of native women. Similarly in Meenakshi, one may see such a process of selection operating with regard to existent systems of training in local society. Of these, the acceptable one is that which is undergone by a repentant Kochammalu under the supervision of a venerable patriarch and ascetic which involved strict controls on the body and mind through such practices as fasting and Japam (chanting). The aim of this training was to insert Kochammalu into the World, as a chaste wife in a monogamous marital union.179 The unacceptable sort of training is that which is presented as the normal sort of education for Shudra women, and this is virtually stripped off its claim to be an education at all:


"I do not call education that system which gives some command over one or two languages and some bit of music, or enables them (i.e. women) to dance half-naked without the slightest shame before men, to seduce them with eye and gesture..."  

Further it is learning "...lewd songs and verses which encourage the seeking of paramours, and give advice on how to seduce and dupe men off their money, which most of our people call 'female education'". In Meenakshi school-based Womanly education is no doubt upheld as ideal. But this does not seem to imply a rejection of all the existent forms of training. Apparently, those which resemble modern education are acceptable--i.e. those which promote an internally-focused consciousness. In devising training programmes at the practical level, the necessity of such selection was stressed as early as T. Madava Row's text:

"There are several games that are suitable for both boys and girls among native people. We must not reject them as uncivilised or reprehensible. They offer children happiness; they exercise their bodies. In a populous country, it is not easy to establish new sorts of physical exercise other than those already in prevalence".  

180. ibid., p.155.  
181. ibid., p.126. A less stringent criticism of a prevalent form of female education is found in Kundalata in which it is remarked that such education may give "great familiarity with the Kavyams, Natakams and Atankarams", but is incapable of producing what is accepted as more important, "a blenushless and well-informed mind", Appu Nedungadi, Kundalata, Alappuzha : Puthakashala, 1981, p.9. However, it was sometimes explicitly stated that a Sanskrit-based education which gave importance to Kavyams, Natakams (Poetry and Plays) etc. would only promote sensuality, and that by avoiding these and teaching the Dharmasastras (moral canon) instead, women could be made virtuous. Shreekrishnadasan, 'Bharyabharanam' (Rulling a Wife), Saarabodhini Vol 2(4), 1906, pp. 150-57.  
In this reckoning, the heroes and heroines of early modern novels in Malayalam may be easily made to appear fully 'Malayalee' -- as not at all alienated from the established order, only resisting its 'evils'. The author of Indulekha is careful to tell the reader that the heroine, despite her English education, "......has not abandoned her identity as a Malayala woman even a wee bit. Hatred towards the Hindu faith, or atheism or the total contempt of everything (native), has not even touched Indulekha".183 That Indulekha has attained individuality does not seem to jeopardise her status as a 'Malayala woman', since she is said to follow local custom in manners, speech, observances, habits and so on. She seems to represent the 'purified' version of a Nair woman which English education has made real. Here English education has not alienated its recipient from her socio-cultural milieu; it has merely enabled her to make a judicious selection. In this strategy, the new ideals are, posed in such a way that they do not seem to be a threat to the older order in the sense of displacing it. Rather, their role is made to appear a limited one, of elevating the better elements of the older order, strengthening the older order rather than displacing it.

Fourthly, models for comparison are constructed. In this, a 'good' version of a specific practice or institution of the older order, and a 'bad' version of the same are contrasted. The 'good' version is that which seems closer to the new ideal; the 'bad' one is that which is distant from it. In Meenakshi for instance, we find two versions of the Nair

Taravad contrasted to each other. Of these, the 'good' one is that of the heroine Meenakshi, the ideal Woman, while the 'bad' one is that of Kochammal, uncultured and materialistic, the very opposite of Meenakshi. The 'good' Taravad has as its head, the Karanavar Gopala Menon who qualifies to be Man.\textsuperscript{184} The other members of the Taravad are his sisters who ably attend to domestic duties, lead sexually-disciplined lives and are highly conscious of their importance as the bearers and rearers of a future generation.\textsuperscript{185} Though not the modern nuclear family, this 'good' Taravad is constituted by the sexual exchange, with Man and Woman in the roles deemed proper to them. In the 'bad' Taravad, in contrast, there is a role-reversal. Women earn here, and that too, through evil, promiscuous ways. Men here are wastrels, idle pleasure-seekers who do not mind living off women's dishonest income.\textsuperscript{186} It is worth noting here that neither the Karanavar of the ideal Taravad, nor his disciplined sisters are English-educated. The 'good' does not seem to be constituted by English education, but seems to represent the real Nair Taravad, which produces the ideal Woman, Meenakshi. In the 'good' Nair Taravad, it so seems, the new ideals are easily acceptable. This strategy of constructing opposing models would continue

\textsuperscript{184} Meenakshi, op.cit., n.28, p.142.

\textsuperscript{185} ibid., pp.66-69.

\textsuperscript{186} ibid., p.228.
to figure in much writing, particularly in fiction, for many years to come. 187

. End - Note

The writings referred to in the previous section probably hint at the formation of a number of new fields 188 in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Keralam--artistic, educational, legal, legislative, commercial etc. They also highlight the emergence, as an immediate need, of the development of skills among people that would enable them to operate effortlessly within these fields, to make smooth manuoeuvres

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187. See, for instance, a novel which centres upon the Nair Taravad written in the 1930's and set in the early 1920's. K. Gopala Pillai's Pulakkolgamam Athava Iruttum Velichavan, Kollam: Sri Rama Vilasom Press, 1954.

188. "In analytic terms, a field may be defined as a network, or as configuration of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (siitus) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology etc...) In highly differentiated societies, the social cosmos is made up of a number of such relatively autonomous social microcosms, ie., spaces of objective relations that are the site of a logic and a necessity that are specific and irreducible to those that regulate other fields". (P. Bourdieu and Loic J.D. Wacquant, Introduction to Reflexive Sociology, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, p.97). The field is, further, a site of struggle, in which those who dominate must always contend with the resistance of the dominated (ibid., p.102). Habitus is "...the generative (if not creative) capacity inscribed in the system of dispositions as an art, in the strongest sense of practical mastery..." (ibid., p.122). "Habitus being the social embodied, is "at home" in the field it inhabits, it perceives it immediately as endowed with meaning and interest. The practical knowledge it procures... (is like) the coincidence between dispositions, and position, between the "sense of the game" and the game, explains that the agent does what he or she "has to do" without posing it explicitly as a goal, below the level of calculation and even consciousness, beneath discourse and representation". (ibid., p.128).
and adjustments, to adjust to the changing internal configurations and external alignments of these fields. Certain groups of people in Keralam—particularly those who had greater access to modern knowledge—acquired such skills earlier than others and could stake ever-greater claims within them. So it needs to be kept in mind that these writings were relevant, in this period, only among limited circles in Keralam, which meant that to large sections of people, these were more or less irrelevant. For instance, even in the 1930's when the ideals of modern domesticity had received considerable circulation and support from various sorts of reformism, the ideal modern home was far from being actualised as a general feature of modern social life here. Large numbers of women continued to be active in traditional agricultural and artisanal work and in the modern labour force. In the Kuttanad paddy tracts of Tiruvitamkoor while the work of reclamation was done by men, the rest of the major agricultural operations from planting to harvesting were all done by women. In 1911, over thirty percent of the labour force in the plantations in Tiruvitamkoor were women. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the bulk of the coir-spinners,over

189. Such competence was inevitably claimed whenever a particular group sought entry into a particular field. See for instance, a plea for greater representation in the legislative assembly made on behalf of the women of Kochi made by ‘A Cochin Lady’ in 1925, in which such claims are advanced. *M.M.*, 28 March, 1925.


191. ibid.
sixty-thousand of the total eighty-one thousand in Tiruvitamkoor were women. When the domestic/public divide was accepted in the classification of occupations of female population in Tiruvitamkoor, the greater share of women-workers came under the classification 'Domestic Service'. But the classification itself was betrayed when it was mentioned that female 'working dependents'--women who actively helped male-earners in their income-generating work--were included in it.

Thus to large sections of women, the ideal of modern domesticity was inaccessible and indeed, impossible. But the Census of 1931 also showed that women in those social groups in Tiruvitamkoor which had relatively less access to modern education were more frequently engaged in income-generating work by themselves, and therefore further away from the ideal Domestic Woman. Even for those groups which managed to enter the new fields, the need to acquire cultural capital that would ensure smooth operation and secure survival within them was certainly urgent--and any incongruency between the inhabitants of

192. ibid.

193. *Census of India 1931, Travancore* - Part I, p.240: Out of the total of 1,128,770 female workers, 692,164 were classified as being engaged in 'Domestic Service'.

194. "Taking all occupations together, we see that the number of women workers per 1000 men has more than doubled itself between the last two censuses. This is mainly due to the inclusion of female working-dependents under domestic service at the present census and their exclusion at the previous ..." ibid., p. 241.

195. See, table on the proportion of female to thousand male earners in some important castes, ibid., p. 241.
a particular field and their habitus was acutely perceived.

As far as the historical actualisation of modern domesticity in Keralam is concerned, by the 1930's the demand for reconstituting family life along modern lines was openly and vociferously advanced via different sorts of reformism, and legislation that could help to realise this was actively contemplated and carried out. By this time, the ideal of modern domesticity too had gained considerable circulation, as mentioned above. There were also concrete signs of the institutionalisation of modern sexual morality: in 1930, the Tiruvitamkoor Sarkar pensioned off a class of traditional women-workers supported by it—the Devadasis, despite their protest. The Census of 1931 commended this: "No woman has been returned as a prostitute in this Census of Travancore. Probably, the abolition of

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196. For example, total unfamiliarity with the procedures of business within the modern legislature was sometimes found to be characteristic of the Jenmi (land-lord) members, especially Nambutiri (Malayala Brahm) members, and often commented upon. The inability of the Nambutiri-member to communicate in English, to follow adequate procedure in drafting legislation etc. was noted. MM, 3 May, 1927. Changanasery Parameshwaran Pillai remarked about the efforts of Nambutiri-members to draft a law: "It is evident that the number of Nambutiri members in this House is only three, and that they lack both the numerical strength and the technical support to draft a Bill appropriately and make the House approve of it.... The introducer of the Bill lacks experience in law and the ability to understand the procedures of this House where the debates are all conducted in English..." (ibid.) See, also, comments by the MM's reporter on the speech made by Parameshwaran Tuppan Nambutiri in MM, 1 March, 1927.

197. 'Swadesha Vartha' (Local News), MM, 3 August, 1930. Interestingly the petition of grievance submitted by the Devadasis to the Sarkar was reported to say that it was unfair to abolish their profession at the very moment in which women were being encouraged to enter the public domain through State support, such as in the granting of jobs in public service.
Devadasis has contributed to this happy circumstance." ¹⁹⁸

But then, there are also developments that might complicate the impression that modern domesticity was on its way. The entry of women into the public domain by the 1930's in Keralam is one such development. Modern medical institutions in Tiruvitamkoor had been training and employing midwives ever since the late nineteenth century.¹⁹⁹ By the 1930's, several women had entered the various professions, become members of legislative bodies, and begun to gain attention within the field of modern literature. As will be seen in Chapter Three, women who sought employment through modern education were often criticised for lacking the skills and will for modern housewifery, and the pursuit of higher education by women was itself often interpreted as a rejection of their 'natural' role. Considering these developments, the historical constitution of modern domesticity in Keralam appears as a problem in itself, calling for historico-sociological enquiry, which is not pursued in the present work. It could be that women's entry into the new institutions outside the home did not really affect the formation of the modern family, but how this became possible, what effects it had in the formation of the modern family in Keralam, and other such questions should be the subject of separate and more detailed enquiry.

¹⁹⁸. *Census of India 1931- Travancore* Part-I, p.169. That an equivalence between *Devadasi* and 'prostitute' is perceived is itself significant.