
THE LAND AND THE LANGUAGE

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The importance of such traits as land, language, culture and environment in nurturing the personality of a writer has become an interesting topic for studies and research in recent years. There is no doubt that it is the unique traits regarding a writer's land, culture and language that make him/her distinct in his/her writing from others. All of these factors have as much importance as the writer's literary vision itself. The land and language that a writer has become acquainted with during his/her childhood can profoundly influence his/her writing. However, there is no reason for the land of birth of a writer to be the writer's preferred writing locations; a writer may accept any place that influenced him/her to be the setting of his/her creative efforts. Likewise, a writer may not become a particular land's writer just because he/she was born there. In short, the concept of localization that influences a writer is as intricate as it is complex.

The questions raised by M Mukundan, who had stated that it would be apt to say that he is a writer who has two souls and a body, such as what is his home land today—Is it Mahe where he has not lived even for a year completely or Delhi where he has been living for thirty-five years?, shed light on the doubts so as to define the concept of localization that emerges from a writer's creations. It would be impossible for a writer to be not influenced by the land where he/she was born and the childhood that was spent there. It is on the basis of the inquiries that we conduct as to how much influence of a writer's home land, culture, language and geography can be found on his/her works that we define and consider them the writers of a particular land and culture. Timelines have a profound role in the formation of a writer's creative personality as it is on the basis of a timeline that a story can be told. John Ruskin points that beyond as a backdrop, timelines have important role in a story just as its characters have.

A literary work need not have a particular cultural stamp just because a writer has been born onto a particular place and culture. The distinctions of a physical place and the one that a writer experiences internally come relevant here. Even though Mukundan was about 3000 kilometers away from Mahe, the stories that he wrote brimmed with the culture and semantic uniqueness of the place. When OV Vijayan was writing '*Khasakkinte Ithihasam*', he was one with the world of Thasarak emotionally, too. One can say that Thakazhi and MT are the writers who have been mostly associated with works filled with localized writing aspects. It is based on the local symbols that can be seen in their works that Thakazhi is described as the Writer of Kuttanad and MT as the Writer of Koodallur. In truth, the soul of their writing is the local cultural uniqueness that one can emote with clearly within their

writings. Kovilan who wrote about Kandaanassery and UA Khader who wrote stories about Koodallur, both come as the spokespersons of the localization of literary creations. On the other hand, it is really interesting that one cannot discover any such local cultural and linguistic elements and features in the books of K Surendran who was born into Ochira which is a village in Onattukara that is a culturally vivid, vibrant and diverse place. We cannot also ignore the fact that the cultural specialties and uniqueness of Onattukara can constantly be seen in the literary works of VP Shivakumar who was actually born at Pallarimangalam in Mavelikkara and lives in Trivandrum. All of these hint that just by the virtue of birth, a writer may not use the place of birth in their literary works in any manner. ONV opines that like a lamb that circles back to the comfort and care of its mother, a writer's mind can travel back to the pastures of their childhood memories. Thus, only those writers who carry their childhood and its pastures can become a writer of a particular land through their literature.

In a story, a place or a location comes as a background for the story to take place. In every literary work, especially in novels, time and place have markedly huge roles to play as the setting of the narrative. It is through the mediums of time and place that a writer interlaces the distinctive features of one's local culture. We can never define the narrative layout of a story just considering the geographical seams. Within the creative paraphernalia that a writer uses to form a narrative, a writer needs time and space equally and not just characters. Most of the times, a writer may utilize a socio-cultural setting that he/she is familiar with as the ground for their literary work. The society that functions as the backdrop for the story, the characters, and the events is also recounted to the land for a fixed duration of time. One of the benefits of the creation of this social background is that it helps make the characters relatable and more believable all the while leaving them coherent for the audience. Dr. George Irumbayam observes that a novel's social background will be centered on a world where parallels or roots of the real world can be found. One can see here that the narrative ground of a story will mostly be a place that is familiar to the writer, as well. The narrative place has huge significance as the location where a story takes place. For any story, description of the place where the story takes place is really important even in small quantities. The place where a story happens has significant role in the expansion and progression of its narrative revolution in both lucid and abstract manners. Such a story, along with being a narration of both experience and imagination, become a story of the place, as well. This irrefutable role of a place in writing is what is postulated by the American critic, Hillis Miller through the concept of Topography. A combination of the Greek word '*topos*' meaning place and '*-graphia*' meaning writing, topography signifies the idea of writing about a place. As such, a place that appears in and becomes an integral part of a story's narrative growth and its cultural uniqueness and relation to the story and everything complement each other, says Miller.

The role of a place in shaping the form of a literary work cannot be denied, at all. Most of the times, more than just being a background for the story to take place, place can assume a central role that decided the narrative growth of the story itself. It is based on a particular place which becomes the backdrop of a story that the social conducts, cultural specialties, and the way characters behave and converse take shape. Michael Bakhtin, who says that the influence of time and place cannot be undermined, explains this through the concept of Chronotope. The word 'chrono' denotes time and 'trope' denotes time. The word, Chronotope which is birthed by the combination of these two words brings forth the idea of writing integrated with time and place. Here too, a unique and particular place is asserted to be an integral part of storytelling.

By articulating a place or a land, a writer not just creates a background for him/her storytelling. The regulatory force that forms the culture, language, and identity of a place is the biodiversity of the place. The cornerstone of any cultural elements and specialties of a place is definitely its environment. In the book, *The Echo Criticism Reader*, written by Sheryl Glofauty and Harold Frome, addressing the relationship between literature and nature, they talk about the role of nature (place) that acts as the background in determining a narrative for the story. Creating a place in a story is not just a geographical exercise, instead, it relates and closely tethers to the language, dialects, nationality and culture as well as the narrative styles of the story. As such, the place and time used in a story, which is connected to many other things, have numerous roles to bear in any story. Bakhtin believes that all such elements as the local dialect, local beliefs and cultural distinctions, experience of living in such a place, the scars that nature has emboldened on the people, knowledge, value concepts and local arts must be the fundamental factors that must for the structure of the narrative in a story.

Every literary work is defined (read) being connected to the background that it takes place. There is no doubt that a writer's understanding of the nature can be observed thoroughly through his own writing. PK Rajendran says that it is through the realization and the efforts to define ourselves as a singular community that the sense of nationality is born. He observes that the sense of place that comes with writing is thus a manifestation of one's own land and community.

It is impossible for a literary work to exist without the support of a background place or space. The presence of place can always be felt clearly or abstractly in a literary work. In some stories, the role of a location can be readily seen as the ground where the entire narrative exists. In some other stories, a location become an anonymous element that controls the progression and directions that a story takes on. As such, no matter in any form, the role of location or place in a story as the maker of a culture is as important in establishing the narrative as the time period when the story takes place. Reading or interpreting a story or literary work as the narrative of a place is a part of a concept known as Eco-Aesthetics. The influences exerted by the unique features of the narrative ground in

making a story such are the major components of the studies involved in natural criticisms. Neil Eventern says the role of literature is to help humanity create an identity through the creations of human life based on the stories that are told with diverse locations as its background. It is the influence that a place exerts on creating the identity of the reader as well as the writer himself/herself. Human mind cannot be controlled by anyone and the dimensions of the mind largely depend on the nature that surrounds a person. Christopher Mans says that influence of places can be seen like these as given in the **Fukovian theory**, which states that the identity of human beings is on a constant flux due to the impact of circumstances and interests.

A place has profound role in a literary work as the source of a culture. The thoughts, actions, ways of communication and such traits of the characters in a story are the representations of the uniqueness of the culture that they are a part of. It is the narrative ground that makes it possible to use all these cultural nuances and specialties an integral part of the story. It is also the vision and understanding of writer about a culture that helps create the culture of the place which determines the unique socio-cultural ideologies that can be seen in a story. The nature of cultural criticism is to appraise the value of a literary work based on the cultural elements and features displayed through these stories. Neelanjana Gupta states that studying literary works and its complex relationships with the socio-cultural background against which these are written is one of the models for learning about cultures. Learning cultures put forth the idea that every creative work is the result of the physical dimension where it exists. This is one of the most interesting modern ideas—everything happens at a particular place and time. As such, nothing continues to exist without any change beyond time or space forever; or in history. By saying this, Cian Maccoy also emphasizes the importance of time and place in helping a literary work create its own unique identity through its own unique social, cultural and linguistic ideologies.

Eastern poets have observed the changes that can birth in stories when the narrative ground undergoes changes. In reality, it is only after the American biologist Rachel Carson has published her nature study book, *Silent Spring*, and the concept of ‘Deep Ecology’ was advocated by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss, that the Western world has started learning about and seriously considering the concept of Eco Aesthetics. It is only after 1970s that they have started to formulate diverse thought models about the changes that a particular place and time can bring into the cultural, linguistic and philosophical aspects of a literary work. However, the Eastern literary thinkers have tried to learn and understand about numerous complex mysteries related to the essence of time and place such as the writing depending on a particular country, the unique writing elements that influence the writing patterns of a writer, the influence that a place exerts on diverse dimensions of a story and the nuances of a place’s cultural heritage. Even before centuries, the concept of time and place in literature has made our literary thinkers impressed and think. The examples of these can be

found in many Sanskrit writing—the *Reethi Concept*—and in Dravidian literature which is the *Thina Concept*. Through these concepts, our literary thinkers have tried to study deeply about the place that becomes the platform for writing and the macro and micro influences that the place exerts on writing. Through the '*Reethi Concept*', Vaamanacharya brings forth a unique beauty to entire piece of story writing via creation of singular wordings. By singular wordings, the distinctions brought to the narrative are meant. The base for this distinction is certainly the place, called the narrative ground. The '*Reethi*' theory has been born from the concepts that Sage Bharatha, the author of *Natyasasthra*, has spoken about the actions such as *Avanthi*, *Dakshinathya*, *Panjali*, and *Udramagni*. In addition, Vamana has also spoken about the same—he says that there are three poetic manners such as *Vaidarbhi*, *Goudi*, and *Panjali* and he says that *Reethi* is a location-based concept of writing.

In '*Tholkapiyam*', a poetry work written before BC 400, the concept regarding '*Ainthanam*' talks deeply about the relationship between place and writing. Perhaps, it is impossible to find a book that connects the essence of a place as the background for a literary work this beautifully. In this book which interprets life, the dimensions of life, the behaviour and human relations against the place where a person lives, the relationship between a literary work and the place where it takes place has been narrated in the most beautiful way possible.

On the other hand, the book *Poruladhikaaram*, brings forth a comprehensive concept that connects a story with the micro elements of the place that acts as the setting for the narrative to take place. Here, the nature of geography is based on the environment; further, the nature of time, topology, and mental essence form the literary basics of *Poruladhikaaram*. Here, it is the comprehensive vision that becomes the platform for writing that is put forth by the concept of *Thina* or Environment. Dr. PK Rajashekhar opines that the concept of *Vattara Novel* or regional literature in the modern Tamil literature also emphasizes on writing stories that give importance to local cultural elements and linguistic specialties, which in turn talks about the undeniable relationship between a story and the environment where it takes place.

The writers who conjure a place to their writing articulates their own identity. Thus, the writing about one's own land become a medium through which the writer creates a profound self-awareness about one's own cultural and social legacies and heritages. It is through the efforts to realize one's own community and define the same that the seed of nationality takes shape. As such, only a writer who understands the uniqueness of one's land can reflect the same through their writing and such a writer evolves to be a land's writer. Celebrated writers such as P Padmarajan, Parapurathu and Thoppil Bahassi are some of the important figures that created a unique identity using the unique cultural elements of Onattukara as their narrative ground.

Here, novel, which is a medium that has profound possibilities to represent time and place, and theatrical play, which has tremendous possibilities for the vivid usage of language, are taken for

studies here. The novels of P Padmarajan and Parapurathu have been selected based on the fact that they represent the myriads of cultural and societal poses of Onattukara. On the other hand, Thoppil Bhasi has been selected to be studied as he is the most powerful user of the dialiect of Onattukara language.

In determining the identity of a writer, just like nation, the language also has an important role to play. Here, when we say language, the dialects of many languages are considered. Even though language is a common asset of the people that use it, based on the locational, cultural and racial uniqueness, there exist many distinctions in a common language. These distinctions are known as dialects.

There is no doubt that a person's character is established through the way one uses his/her language. The communication style of a person is the result of many factors such as his/her county, culture, race and education. The dialects are formed by the combination of similar, personal conversational styles. The opinions that individual linguistic styles within a dialect are similar than the same in a language denote the fact that despite the language being a common asset, the dialects have more personal elements, too. There are studies that state that within a community using a common language, there can be many dialects and individual linguistical varieties emerging based on diverse cultural elements and local characteristics. In a place, the spoken language may not be the same from one end to the other. Since the differences in a spoken language can immensely help scientifically assess the diverse forms that exist in a language, the studies about dialects have become prominent in linguistical studies due to the realization that they must also be given immense role.

Even in Malayalam, one can observe the emergence of numerous dialects that have been formed on the basis of local linguistic specialties. In addition to the broader dialects in Malayalam such as Travancore Malayalam, Mid-Travancore Malayalam and North Malayalam, there are a wide variety of smaller Malayalam dialects identified by linguists in Kerala bases on trivial local language features. The opinion that Malayalam has been divided into three different arms just like Kerala was, before Kerala's unification in 1956, divided into three different political areas such as Malabar, Kochi and Travancore points toward the distinctions that took shape in Malayalam based on the nuances and specialties of local borders. It was the Department of Linguistics of the University of Kerala that first carried out an authoritative study of dialects in Malayalam. Though the linguistic study was carried out based on such castes as Thiyya and Ezhava, the study can be considered one about the diverse dialects that can be found in Malayalam. Based on the study carried out, Kerala can be divided into twelve different verticals based on the local linguistic traits.

South Travancore

Middle-Travancore

Western Vembanad

North Travancore

Kochi

Sothern Malabar

South-East Palakkad

North-West Palakkad

Middle-Malabar

Wayanad

Northern Malabar

Peak Language Variety

Here in this, Middle-Travancore consists of such areas as Alapuzha, Northern parts of Kollam and some areas of Kottayam. We can consider Onakkattur language as a dialect that is a part of the Middle-Travancore. I wonder what mean when they say it is northerner's language as they hear the language of Travancore. I think sometimes, whether they know how many different types of language can be found in Travancore. The ideas about such dialects as Northern Paravoor language, Kottayam language, Onattukara language, Kollam language, Trivandrum language and Southern Travancore language brings to light the many subdivisions that can be found at such places at South Travancore and Middle Travancore. Even then, there is doubt whether all of these native dialects have been considered significantly by the researchers. Travancore language through the study of CV Raman Pilla's novel languages and Valluvanad language through the studies of MT's novels have been researched upon numerous times. I would like to carry out a profound study about the unique traits of the language of Onattukara that has been able to create a distinct identity through the writings of a variety of highly talented and proficient writers. The selected literary works of such literary legends as Thoppil Bhassi, Padmarajan and Parapurathu have been decided as the means for the study. The continued journey is to understand the influence that local language varieties have been able to exert to help their writings create a unique identify, naturality and individuality.

A language definitely represents the unique characteristics of the place where it has been used for communication. A language also reflects a bevy of elements such as the geographical features of a place, the relationships between different sections in a society and many others. Many socio-linguistic scientists who studied about language in associations with the society that predominantly uses the language have observed that language often tries to fix and shape the culture of the people who uses it. In a nutshell, it means that a language helps shape the attitude towards the world and tethers a man within the influences of the language that one speaks.

There have been many studies and researches that happened about the undeniable and unbreakable relationship between a language and the culture of the people who use a language. Language and culture are two unique elements that are complement each other in a myriad of ways. Each society

tries to treasure its unique cultural features. What is demonstrated via the usage of a language are the cultural specialities and characteristics of the society that uses the language. A unique amalgamation of such elements as religion, caste, culture, place and occupation and their interventions is what give birth to diverse dialects and local slangs. When a society, which has unique cultural identities and specialties, accepts a common language and considers a different system of language their own, a linguistic society and dialect is born. One can find such factors as the geography of a place, its history, the culture of the people to be the reasons behind the differences that can be found in a language. The fact that one may be able to get a unique sound, which cannot be found in the broader language, from the dialect asserts the importance of studying all dialects and slangs of a language. This also indicates the important role that diverse dialects have in the growth and expansion of any language. By submitting itself to various dialects and individual slangs without changing its fundamental structure, a language presents itself to the changes and renovations as needed by the dynamics of time. Likewise, Malayalam, when accepted as the common broad language, one can observe a variety of dialects and slangs in Kerala. Many linguistic researchers and scholars state that *Flexible Stability* of a language is highly integral to the development and embellishment of any language. The ability of a language to submit itself to the speech systems and methods of individuals and societies all the while maintaining the unity between them keeping its fundamental structures intact is what is coined by the terms *By Flexible Stability*.

All of the dialects and slangs that one can find in Malayalam are the representatives of the many diverse cultural elements and features.

Travancore, Kochi and Malabar were all under different kingdoms before India has gained her independence in 1947. Before that, even though Venad, Deshingad, Vadakkankoor and Thekkankoor, Vettathunadu, Kochikode, Kannur and Nileshwaram were all adjacent to each other, they were distant in their cultures and mentalities. The people of these places have always tries to keep their uniqueness and specialities as much as they could. The idea that most of the dialects and slangs one can find in Malayalam are a reminder of the borders of these places is really relevant about the many dialects that exist today.

There are numerous internal and external reasons for dialects and slangs to take birth in a language. The internal factors can be the changes happening to the letters and transformations of a language while external factors can be the acceptance of words from other languages, geographical distancing, migration and sociological differences. As such, local dialects based on a particular place and social dialects that form based on religion, occupation, economic stature and education can be seen every language. Hence, a language is a mixture of a variety of dialects and slangs thus formed. Even Malayalam that has been used within Kerala and outside is also an amalgamation of such numerous local and social dialects of the language. All of these dialects have been formed based on the many

internal and external factors that we talked about earlier. The Malayalam talked in Travancore, Kochi and Malabar also has numerous changes to itself. Even in these places, if we consider the language spoken in different areas, there are numerous changes that one can observe in pronunciation and formulation of words. We can consider that many geographical, racial and caste social sectors sustain these dialects as part of their social identity.

Language is one of the many means for communication in any society. However, it is not just ideas that are conveyed through a language—it is also a communication device for a culture as well. In a general society that accepts a language as its primary means of communication, diverse types of speech manners also come based on the differences that come due to the specialties of the place and the nature of the culture that they are a part of. As such, creating dialects and slangs is a common process that happens with every other language that is out there. When we say that the reality of a language and its creative spirit both lie in its dialects, it is the linguistic process that is being made clear over and over again. It is the dialogue differences which happen to these subgroups as the result of hierarchical differences of the relation between caste, religion and occupation, which give birth to these dialects. The changes that happen to a language based on societal hierarchies are observed by **William Lambove**. He says that as per the changes happening to these hierarchies, the pronunciation and the attitude of the language also change considerably. When, along with these hierarchical changes, the seams of localization are added, the birth of dialects happens even faster. Each of these dialects that thus formed due to the cultural and social reasons within a language ensures the fare cultural representation of each of the linguistic communities. Due to the geographical changes that can happen to a language, there can be local variations of the language as well—they are Northern language, Southern language and Middle-Kerala language. When we say that even these have subdivisions, we are acknowledging the sub-cultures that exist. Many linguistic scholars and researchers emphasize saying that a language represents a culture while dialects represent the many sub-cultures that exist. When we say that a culture can be represented effectively only by a language that has been born out of it and without language human culture could have been under darkness, we mean the interaction existing between a language and a culture.

A spoken language in a place may not be used in the form across the place. In addition, such instances can happen as a person living on end of the place may need to describe the meaning of a word to another person who lives on the other end. There are also chances for misunderstandings to arise about the meaning of a word between people living on two ends of the same place even when they use the same spoken language. All of these are the indications of the healthy growth of a living language. When **Himes Bell** says that a language emerges through the clear instances of social relations, he talks about this unique social nature of the language, as well. We can hence observe that a language is the culmination of numerous dialects formed from the local and cultural reasons.

We can also see that Malayalam, the spoken language of Kerala, is also the summation of numerous dialects that were formed locally. Each of these local dialects also represents the cultural streams that one can find in Kerala. There are numerous distinctions that can be observed in Malayalam, which is the spoken language from one end to the other end of Kerala. Situations can arise when South Travancore person has to explain the meaning of certain words to a North Malabar person when they talk to each other. It is also interesting to observe that even in Travancore, the differences one can observe in the ways the language is spoken in such places as Trivandrum and Middle Travancore are really impressive. There is no doubt that Onattukara dialect takes prominent place among the many dialects emerged in Malayalam that clearly sustains the most important aspect of any living language, Flexible Stability. However, the distinctions between the dialects have started to become lesser and lesser. Due to the pressures of various physical conditions, dialects have been subjected constantly to 'standardization'. In these times when the seams of local cultures and places are disappearing, the symbols of cultural uniqueness have also been disappearing quickly than we realize. We may give up the local symbols of communication to communicate better to others, knowingly or unknowingly. We must remember the observation that changes will happen in our languages just like changes happening in our eating and drinking habits.

Even from spoken language, local linguistic elements have been disappearing. Our societies that focus on globalization have no much interest in these things either. Localization has quickly been moving away from language in pace that makes it impossible to undo it even if we try to. The emergences of long-distance vehicles and trains, job transfers and marriages have also been responsible to fill the large gaps that existed in between the dialects of a language. Above all that, the competition between the dailies and other magazines to attract the attention of audiences has also made the change even faster. As a result, many localized dialects have converged and formed a common language. These opinions also state about the challenges faced by many dialects that face today.

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