

**Performance as Sacrament: A light on States of
Trance, Pain, and violence by comparing *Kuthu Ratheeb*
with Artuadian Theatre**

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By

USMAN V. K.



**DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS
S.N. SCHOOL OF ARTS AND COMMUNICATION
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
P.O. CENTRAL UNIVERSITY, GACHIBOWLI, HYDERABAD
TELANGANA, INDIA
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DECLARATION

I, USMAN V. K., hereby declare that this thesis entitled, **“Performance as Sacrament: A light on States of Trance, Pain, and violence by comparing *Kuthu Ratheeb* with Artuadian Theatre”** submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Assoc. Prof. Rajiv Velicheti is a bonafide research work which is also free from plagiarism. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhganga/INFLIBNET.

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This thesis is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Further, the student has the following publication before submission of the thesis for adjudication and has produced evidence for the same in the form of acceptance letter or the reprint in the relevant area of her research:

1. "Analyzing *Kuthu Ratheeb* with pain, based on *Performing Bodies in Pain*" (e- ISSN Number: 2319- 7722, p- ISSN Number 2319- 7714), International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention

And has made presentation in the following conferences:

1. Performance Theory of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. International seminar on Four Decades of Performance Theory. Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, 2019, Kalady, Kerala.
2. Implementation of Folk Elements in *PULI JANMAM*. International Conference, Theatricality in Theatre and Other Mimetic forms, Bangalore University, April 2017, Bangalore.

Further, the student has passed the following courses towards fulfilment of coursework requirement for Ph.D. was exempted from doing coursework (recommended by Doctoral Committee) on the basis of the following courses passed during her M.Phil. program and the M.Phil. degree was awarded:

Course Code	Name	Credits	Pass/Fail
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Hyderabad

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

This research investigates how performance becomes a sacrament on the stage. In this study, I analyse Artaud's concepts of solar drama in the context of a ritualistic performance the *Kuthu Ratheeb*. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a Muslim ritual that is performed mainly in Malabar, the northern part of Kerala. This study aims at an analysis of the theatre experiments and solar drama elements of Antonin Artaud in the ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. By separating the theatre elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb*, to analyse the performance theatrically, this thesis attends the experience of physical and mental transformations of a performer/actor.

During a sacramental ritual, performers go through physical and mental transformations, and in particular rituals, that transformation may lead them to a state of trance. Pain, violence, and trance are some of the aspects that I look into in this study of *Kuthu Ratheeb*; a solar drama and form of physical theatre. A performer who undergoes trance during a solar drama and a ritualistic practice like *Kuthu Ratheeb* generates violence through torturing one's own body. If the three different states of trance, pain, and violence occur within the body of a sacrament ritual performer, how such states happen in *Kuth Ratheeb* is a major concern of this research.

This research, as an analysis of Artaud's theatre styles in the performance of *Kuth Ratheeb*, addresses how the body is used for performance, how the consciousness of the performer transforms, and the performer's relation with the audiences as well as other elements embodied in a ritualistic performance.

1.1 Research question

To what extend ritualistic elements can be implemented in performance and practice is a major aspect of this research. To address this problem, I used the following research question.

- How significant repetition, consciousness, and surroundings impact the process of trance in a ritualistic solar performance *Kuth Ratheeb*?

1.2 Objectives of the study

To address the above-mentioned research, question the research adopts the following objectives.

- How *Kuth Ratheeb*, as a process of repetitive stabbing affect the consciousness of the performer to attain trance?
- What is the relation between the surrounding and consciousness in *Kuth Ratheeb* as a repetitive performance that leads the performer to a trance?

1.3 Theoretical framework

Artaud, by using solar theatre, and experimenting with aspects of rituals into theatrical experiments and practices attempted to bring the aspects of trance in theatrical performances. To make the audience feel the performance through the language of performance instead of the language of texts, he utilised the means of violence, pain, and trance since the role of a performer is not to speak the language of text but to make, feel, and sense through a theatrical experience. It is through the body as a spectacle, a performer in physical theatre communicates with the audience. Body emotions, feelings, and sentiments are the powerful tools of physical theatre, especially in solar drama light, action, and explosiveness are crucial.

1.4 Review of major theoretical concepts

I considered Marla Carlson's *Performing Bodies in Pain* into the study of *Kuthu Ratheeb* because it deals with pain and its different manifestations. In *Performing Bodies in Pain*, she discusses the creation of an urgent demand by pain to communicate things that are generally not listened by anyone. Pain strongly demands the spectators to engage. The role, aesthetical bodily harm plays in the creation of an emotionally vibrant society and also in the consolidation of social memory is

discussed in this book. An inquiry on the performance of bodily harm is dealt with in this book. In her book, Marla Carlson discusses that medieval cruelty might be a mirror held in a distance for contemporary cruelty. Theatrical pain is generally used to enter into the consciousness of the people which reside in their bodies. Marla Carlson asks questions along with pain like, why express pain? Why one should watch such a performance? Why this kind of pain at a particular time? Marla Carlson is interested in bodily actions than verbal explanations, pain not as a concept or symbol, not to portray the body as a metaphor but in the real body that expresses pain does the experience of pain exist. Pain is included in the purview of social relations and its formation. Experience of pain creates cultural formation. She argues that in the scattered spheres of post-modern culture, to form ordered public actions, theatrical pain plays a vital role. The understanding of pity in imagining death is discussed. Descartes's conception of pain, the role of the discovery of endorphins, and the scientific research's role in the alteration of the conception of pain are explained in this book. In this book, Marla Carlson discusses pain's physical manifestation and the actor's use of that in communication. Intention's role in pain's performance is discussed by her. She says about what female mystics of medieval times have done through self-harm and their union with the Christ. The performance of miracles by the bodies of female saints and their rapture experience on the infliction of pain is described in this book.

In this study about *Kuthu Ratheeb*, the concepts of Antonin Artaud are relevant since it addresses the elements of pain, violence, and trance in solar drama. Theatre of cruelty gives insights to how the sensation and feelings of the audience can be intensified and used as an effective medium for communicating the aim of the performance to the spectators. Antonin Artaud opposed the Western presentation style that existed at his time that used written texts to explain the story line. Artaud used the possibilities of body and emotions to communicate with the audience than the senseless, emotionless logical language of the text. Thus, for him, the essence of a performance is all about the sensuality of the physical and emotional depth. In this respect he conceptualised solar sdrama as more communicable, expressive and intense, thus communicable to the audience.

1.5 Methodology of research

Extensive ethnography has been conducted for this research. Apart from interviews, and focused group discussions, participation in various theatrical and ritualistic practices are integral aspects of data collection method. A research on *Kuthu Ratheeb* that examines Artraudian notions of solar theatrical concepts demands a method of experimental practices. Towards this, I performed theatrical experiment *Repetition* that uses the concept of repetition as well as violence, disturbance, and such emotions to intensify the feel and sensation of the spectators. Experience from this production is also an important element in giving insights into this research on *Kuthu Ratheeb* as a solar drama that invokes fear, pain, and violence as well as leading to trance.

Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Data from the primary source were collected through field methodology. Only three methods are utilized in data collection, the participation method, observation, and interview. Taking into consideration the nature of the primary sources, the construction of a structured questionnaire was not possible. Fieldwork was conducted for short periods between July 2016 and December 2019 in coastal areas of Malabar ranging from *Chavakkad, Ponnani, Kondotty, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Kasarkode*, and also certain islands in *Lakshadweep*.

Repetition has been staged at *Natyashastra* theatre society in Kerala. The stage setup of the presentation is detailed. The music and light pattern used in the play is explained. In *Kuthu Ratheeb*, self-torture leads the performer to trance. In *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Repetition*, the use of flesh as a material is done. Irritation is given to the audience through the play. Pain and trance are opened up to the audience when *Repetition* adopts the elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The state of pain, state of violence, and trance experienced in *Repetition* are similar to that of *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

1.6 Thesis Organization

There are six chapters in this thesis including the introduction and conclusion. Chapters two, three, and four are reviews of literature and the fifth chapter deals mainly with field data. The fifth

chapter is divided into two parts: part one and two. Chapter one is the introduction and chapter six is the conclusion.

Chapter 2

The sacramental performances of *Mappila* folklore in Kerala and its cults

Second chapter is about Mappila folklore and its cult. This chapter deals with the syncretic culture of Malabar Muslims and their folk elements. This chapter explains how the *Mappilas*, the Malabar Muslims enjoyed and exploited the possibility of their mother tongue Malayalam to articulate the essence of Islam that has been originally written in Arabic; a language that is foreign to them as *Malabaris*, but familiar as Muslims. The intention to form *Arabimalayalam* as a folk slang or a popular aesthetics is more or less is an artistic element than an Islamic agenda. The peculiarity of this chapter is that it discusses the life and flesh of *Mappila* life in relation to language, performance, and ritualistic elements related to human life and its existence. The aesthetics of *Arabimalayalam*, vigour of *Kuthu Ratheeb*, romanticism of *Mappilapattu*, and adventurism and hero worship of *Mala* songs can be a mere Islamist propaganda by a crude understanding of non-Islamic perception, but in reality these folk art forms represent the existential crisis of entire humanity in the context of simple societies. Thus this chapter, by describing the art and aesthetics of *Mappila* life, examines the question of theatrical experiences of Artuad and gives an unrefined example of how rituals act as powerful theatrical forms of trance- transformation for the perception and understanding of life and existence.

Chapter 3

The *Kuthu Ratheeb* Ritual Tradition of Kerala Muslims based on the Ideological – Customary Differences of *Mappila* Communities

This chapter explains the reception of *Kuthu Ratheeb* among different Mappila communities- the communities with different lineages- and how ideologies and politics of various sections of Muslims make an impact on the practice of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. This chapter discusses the history and ontology of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The impact of *Kuthu Ratheeb* in the diversity of Muslim culture is also explained.

Chapter 4

Muslim Ritual Practice *Kuthu Ratheeb* as a Performance: Analysing its Method of Trance, Pain and the State of Violence.

This chapter addresses the Muslim ritual *Kuthu Ratheeb* as a performance. By analyzing *Kuthu Ratheeb* as a performance, this chapter attends the method of trance and the peculiar spectacle provided by *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a theatrical performance as much as it is a ritualistic performance. Beyond being a performance and a spectacle, ritualistic and theatrical, *Kuthu Ratheeb* demonstrates pain, violence, and trance as a mediating element between life and beyond, through performing the vibrancy of existential anxiety as pain and violence. This chapter deals with the emotional, sensual, spiritual, and philosophical elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb*, but all extracted as a description of empirical accounts. Subjectivity of the performer and spectators are analysed in this chapter, since such subjectivity is that which gives meanings to various interpretations of *Kuthu Ratheeb*; ritually, religiously, theatrically, spiritually, philosophically, etc.

Chapter 5

Field Study on the Performance Experience of the Performers of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and Audience of research production *Repetition* based on Artaud's Ritual Concept

The fifth chapter, based on ethnography, is divided into two parts. The first part is about the ethnographical studies about the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performers. The second part is about the experimental research production *Repetition*, which is inspired from the elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and Artaudian theatre. This chapter explains how the researcher implemented the elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and Artaudian theatre in practice to learn the relation between ritualistic and theatrical performances. This chapter also gives light on how this experiment helped to get an insight to approach the research problem in a proper framework.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This chapter concludes the findings and argument of the research. An overall analysis of the research and findings are concluded in this chapter.

CHAPTER II

***Mappila* folklore and the sacramental performances of it with its cults**

A glance on various works in *Mappila* folklore, the language variant *Arabimalayalam* used among *Mappilas* and various works on *Arabimalayalm* and investigation on the divine and the theatrical elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Theyyam*.

2.1 A glance on *Mappila* folklore of Kerala

The mutual relation of sacramental performances among various folklore practices of different communities is very significant. The notable feature of the folklore exists in Kerala is its mutual relation among different religions. Even though, there is a collective folklore representing the entire Kerala society, most of its elements are particular to specific religions and are based on their traditions; Hindu, *Mappila*, Christian, etc. It is observed that even though, the folklore is religion based, in many instances the predominance of religious principles is less.

Mappila folklore is an important fragment of Kerala folklore. In certain local traditions across religions like *Theyyam*, *Poorakali*, *Uroos*, *Nercha*, *Palliperunnalu*, etc., the participation takes place irrespective of caste or religious differences. The art forms of *Mappila* and Christian communities were formed as part of religious beliefs, but, at the same time, also by imbibing various elements of Kerala's folk tradition. As a result, in *Mappila* arts and Christian arts, the folk elements of Kerala seemed to have got mixed and combined in certain forms. It is also observed that the art forms like *Mappilapattu*, *Oppana*, *Kolkkali*, *Chavittu Nadakam*, *Margam Kali*, *Parichamuttu kali*, etc. originated in accordance with this cultural concomitance. Kerala's Muslim community has imbibed many elements of Kerala culture in their life. *Mappila* folklore was formed in Kerala by comprising the customs, rituals, beliefs, arts, spoken language, and the traditions of the Muslim community in the Northern Kerala, especially Northern Malabar. Professor Muhammad Ahammad defines *Mappila* folklore as "a big world comprising of *Mappilpaattu* (*mappila songs*), legends, myths, stories, rituals, proverbs, riddles, *Perunnal*, festivals, *Uroos*, language, food habit, decorations, history through

words, and *Mappila* life”. *Mappilapattu* (*Mappila* songs) is one of the most significant art form in *Mappila* folklore. The famous songs such as *Muhyudheen Mala*, *Kappapattu*, *Badrul Munner-Husnul Jamal*, etc. created a momentum in the history of *Mappila* folklore. In the devotion in Mala songs, ‘the presence of Hindu literature in devotion’ is also analysed. Another art form called *Mappila Theyyam* refers to the different *Mappila* deities of the *Theyyattam* in the North Malabar region where in the elements of secularism is still beheld. This is how folklore forms. There are clear power limits to ones on the outside and inside as far as folklore is concerned.

What all are consisting in making a folklore? The other significant *Mappila* art forms such as *Daffumuttu*, *Arabanamuttu*, *Kolkalai*, *oppana*, etc. are also significant cultural expressions of *Mappila* society. Even though there is a large influence of Kerala tradition, through *Nercha* (offering festival) and *Uroos*, Kerala Muslims express their identity. It has to be seen that the most important peculiarity of folklore is its predictability. *Mappilapattu* becomes folklore in organic life situations. The expressions of it through various versions make it folklore. *Mappilapattu*, *Oppana*, *Daffumuttu*, etc., which are now popular in Kerala are folklore.

Mappila folklore is Islam’s Kerala form: All the *Mappila* folklores of Kerala are not following the fundamental customs of Islam. They all are Islam’s Kerala version. *Mappila* language, *Mappila* songs, *Oppana*, *Daffumuttu*, *Arabana*, *Mappila* food, *Mappila* dressing style, *Mappila* legends, *Uroos*, *Nercha*, etc. are Kerala versions.

How is folklore and collectivity connected? The term ‘folk’ has meanings such as villager, farmer, etc. In Malayalam, the name folklore is given to folk knowledge, the life of people, knowledge of the land, tradition of the land, commune customs, etc. But the range of the word ‘folklore’ is much more than that. It’s that the folklore of Kerala is intertwined with the rituals. Folklore is the study of collectivity. “It is in the background of collectivity that folklore is recognised, and a collectivity is recognised in the togetherness of folklore”.

How is *Mappila* folklore and collectivity connected? “Who sung it first? From whose throat does the first sound came? Who converted a sound into music? To know these, one should go back to a folk art”. Each society can be a part of a large collectivity by retaining its own peculiarities. Folklore shows us the common traits among societies. *Mappila* folklore has two specialties; one, a distinct vision it has created in the areas of beliefs, rituals, and customs. Second, the path of unity it has paved even amidst these differences. After death rituals, wedding engagement, mutual exchange of rings, tying of wedding knot (*thali*), bringing wedding dress from the house of bride groom, etc., are acquired by an unavoidable section of Kerala society even by ignoring the foundational stone of religious beliefs. In the early stages of Islam in Kerala, the Muslim community created a mixed language of *Arabimalayalam*. For a long time, *Mappila* prose and poetry were articulated exclusively in *Arabimalayalam*.

2.2 *Arabimalayalam* –The language of sacramental performances of *Mappilas*

Arabimalayalam is a regional language with Arabic script and Malayalam vocalisation which is used in sacramental performances like *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Ratheeb*s and in Muslim performing arts such as *Arabana*, *Daffu*, and *Kolkali*. The terms and *shlokas* (anthem) used in the Muslim ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb* is used in *Arabimalayalam* also. But it is *Baiths*, systematised in Arabic language, which have been used in most parts of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. In some places where belief traditions of Muhyudheen *Shaikh* are believed and followed, in *Ratheeb* traditions, *Baiths* in *Arabimalayalam* are chanted. With *Kuthu Ratheeb*, *Arabimalayalam* works have many relations in comparison. *Kuthu Ratheeb* in the name of Muhyudheen *Shaikh* is there in many places. In *Arabimalayalam* language, there is even a book named *Muhyudheen Mala* which praises Muhyudheen *Shaikh*. In Islamic religion, *Madrasas* (educational institutions) is where *Arabimalayalam* is taught. The language *Arabimalayalam* is largely included in the musical recitation of Muslim performing arts such as *Arabana*, *Daffu*, and *Kolkali*. Moyin Kutti Vaidyar was a great poet who became famous in *Mappilapattu* (*Mappila* song). *Arabimalayalam* is a language used in *Mappilapattu*. Like *Kuthu Ratheeb*, the art forms such as *Arabana Muttu* and *Kolkali* are staged in *Nercha* (offering festival)

places. The subaltern ritual of *Chavittu kali* is also presented in *Kondotti Nercha*. *Malapattus* are sung in *Nerchas* so that they are known as *Nercha Pattu*. Like their prominence in *Arabanamuttu*, it is also through the rituals of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Ratheeb* that some *Mappilapattu* (Mappila songs) grabbed a place in *Mappila* culture. When *Ratheeb* presentation is done, *Arabimalayalam* is also used.

As a part of the Islamic culture, the language *Arabimalayalam* was born. The general literature of Malayalam language has its source in Sanskrit language. The Kerala Muslims, with due consideration of Arabic language, have written in Arabic script, thus creating another language or new style for Malayalam language. This is called as *Arabimalayalam*. The special bond Arabic language has towards Islam and God is what made it more precious. *Mappilas* enriched the language by adopting words from Urdu, Persian, Tamil, Kannada, Hindustani, Sanskrit, etc. The poetic literature of *Arabimalayalam* is known as *Mappilapattu*. *Mappilapattu* is generally performed during the marriage ceremony to glorify the bridegroom or/and bride through the songs (pattu). There are *Mappilapattu* that glorify different war situations and adventures. The *Mappilapattu* has gained attention due to its tonal beauty and rhythm. The rhythm of its tone is called *Ishal* that have the influence of Sanskrit meters. There are hundreds of varieties of *Ishals* such as *Thonkal*, *Adiankam*, *Pukayinar*, *Kombu*, *Oppana Chayal*, *Oppana Murukkam*, *Kappa pattu*, *Virutham*, etc. The base of many of those is in the style of Dravidian songs. The main rhyme schemes of *Mappilapattu* are *Kambi*; *Kazhuthu*; *Palkambi*; *Vallumal Kambi*, etc. *Kambi* means the first letter rhyming of the song. In *Kazhuthu*, all the four beats have the second letter as same. It can be seen as *Ethuka* or *Dweetheeyakshara Prasam* (second letter rhyme scheme). *Valkambi* has a last letter rhyme scheme. *Valummal kambi* is same as that of the beginning and the ending rhyme scheme of *Ramacharitham* etc.

It is estimated that *Arabimalayalam* poems existed before 12th century itself. The Tamil influence is clearly seen in *Arabimalayalam* poems. Depending upon the topics related, *Mappilapattu* has been further classified as *Malappattu*, *Padappattu*, *Kissapattu*, *Kalyanapattu*, *Madahpattu*,

Thadiurudhipattu, Viruthams, Kessas, etc. Mappilapattu is performed during marriages, house warming, delivery, crop sowing, harvesting, etc. and also in *Mappila* art forms such as *Oppana, Daffumuttu, Kolkali, etc.*

2.2.1 Spoken language usage, a cumulation of different languages onto *Arabimalayalam*

Arabimalayalam is used as a sacramental language in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. *Arabimalayalam* language is a language that has not evolved as a spoken language. The texts mostly used in *Mappila* rituals are written in *Arabimalayalam*. In the *dargahs* and mosques where *Nercha* happens, in sermons and praise songs, it is *Arabimalayalam* language that is used. So that the belief wise ambience created by *Arabimalayalam* language makes presentations like *Kuthu Ratheeb* different. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a Muslim ritual conducted on the basis of religion and belief. Due to the use of texts in Arabic and *Arabimalayalam*, very few Muslims could understand the completeness of the presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

Most of the *Mappila* songs are in spoken language forms, stories and legends. The language usage of each land has strong influence in the respective *Mappila* song.

Table No. 2.1

***Mappila* dialects of some Malayalam words**

Language usage	Malayalam	Meaning in English
<i>Punnakku</i>	<i>Pinnakku</i>	Oil cake
<i>Uchi</i>	<i>Ucha</i>	Noon
<i>Punayunnu</i>	<i>Pulambunnu</i>	Uttering
<i>Iravu</i>	<i>Irappu</i>	Pray
<i>Puyyapla</i>	<i>Puthiyapla</i>	Bride groom
<i>Irkies</i>	<i>Arakkies</i>	Miser
<i>Njangal</i>	<i>Njangal</i>	We

<i>Inakku</i>	<i>Enikku</i>	For me
<i>Besam</i>	<i>Visham</i>	Poison
<i>Pooyi</i>	<i>Poozhi</i>	Sand
<i>Thooshi</i>	<i>Soochi</i>	Needle
<i>Pasam</i>	<i>Pazham</i>	Banana
<i>Pusu</i>	<i>Puzhu</i>	Worm
<i>Bai</i>	<i>Vazhi</i>	Path

Many of the terms are ancient words remaining here and there. Different language terms have richly entered into *Mappila* language. Many terms from Sanskrit, Tamil language, and Karnataka language (Thulu) have mixed with *Arabimalayalam*.

Table No. 2.2

List of Few *Arabimalayalam* Words which are influenced by Sanskrit

Sanskrit	Arabi Malayalam	English meaning
<i>Nimitham</i>	<i>Nimusham</i>	Moment
<i>Ardham</i>	<i>Artham</i>	Meaning
<i>Bhasha</i>	<i>Pasha, Paya</i>	Language
<i>Anyayam</i>	<i>Aniyayam</i>	Injustice
<i>Anubhavam</i>	<i>Anoopam</i>	Experience
<i>Ishttam</i>	<i>Istam</i>	Love
<i>Dandam</i>	<i>Dannam</i>	Pain
<i>Kushttam</i>	<i>Kuttam</i>	Leprosy
<i>Garbham</i>	<i>Grakarppam</i>	Pregnancy
<i>Siksha</i>	<i>Sicha</i>	Punishment

Table No. 2.3

List of Few *Arabimalayalam* Words which are influenced by Tamil

Tamil	Arabi Malayalam	English
<i>Uyir</i>	<i>Ushir</i>	Life
<i>Uthavi</i>	<i>Udhavi</i>	Help
<i>Unkal</i>	<i>Unkal</i>	You
<i>Imbar</i>	<i>Imbar</i>	Here, this place
<i>Pesum</i>	<i>Peshum</i>	Speak

Table No. 2.4

**List of Few *Arabimalayalam* Words which are influenced by Thulu
(A language spoken by people of Karnataka)**

Thulu a Karnataka Language	Arabi Malayalam	English
<i>Beedar</i>	<i>Beetar</i>	Person of home
<i>Ealu</i>	<i>Eal</i>	Which
<i>Alud</i>	<i>Alud</i>	Is this man

Sometimes, terms from *Malayalam* with the change of one or two letters also used.

Phonetic letter ‘e’ instead of ‘i’:

For example:

<i>Irachi</i>	-	<i>Erachi</i>	-	Meat
<i>Irakki</i>	-	<i>Erakki</i>	-	brought down
<i>Idangeru</i>	-	<i>edengeru</i>	-	difficulty
<i>Ini</i>	-	<i>eni</i>	-	Next

‘I’ instead of ‘u’:

<i>Urumbu</i>	-	<i>Irumbu</i>	-	Ant
<i>Punnakku</i>	-	<i>Pinnakku</i>	-	Oil cake

‘Ma’ instead of ‘itha’:

<i>Idathil</i>	-	<i>Idamil</i>	-	In the place
<i>Itharathil</i>	-	<i>Iramil</i>	-	like this

‘Sha’ instead of ‘Zha’:

<i>Pazham</i>	-	<i>Pasham</i>	-	Banana
<i>Vazhang</i>	-	<i>Bashang</i>	-	yielded
<i>Mizhi</i>	-	<i>Mishi</i>	-	Eye

‘Ba’ instead of ‘Va’:

<i>Veedu</i>	-	<i>Beedu</i>	-	House
<i>Vanam</i>	-	<i>Baanam</i>	-	Sky
<i>Vicharam</i>	-	<i>Bicharam</i>	-	Thought

‘La’ instead of ‘zha’:

<i>Ezhupathu</i>	-	<i>Elupathu</i>	-	Seventy
<i>Eppozhum</i>	-	<i>eppolum</i>	-	Always

Kizhavan - *Kilavan* - Old man

‘Sha’ instead of ‘ya’:

Uyarnna - *Usharnna* - raised

Uyir - *Ushir* - Life

‘Pa’ instead of ‘Bha’:

Bhavana - *Pavana* - Imagination

Garbham - *Kerpam* - Pregnancy

Bhagam - *Paakam* - Part

‘Sha’ instead of ‘Cha’:

Chodyam - *Shodyam* - Question

Vicharam - *Visharam* - Thought

In *Mappila* songs, literature forms, and in suffix participles, some changes have been adapted accordingly. The suffix participle ‘a’ has made changes with the participle ‘ne’.

Example:

Oruthine - *Oruthiye*

Penninikku - *Penninu*

Avare - *Avarude*

Mappila usages in Kerala folklore: There are *Mappila* usages in Kerala which became popular through spoken language and written language as well. The term *Ishq* in *Mappila* language can be translated to Malayalam as *Ishttam* (Love). Another usage of it is *Muhabath*. All these usages light upon more on the internal rather than external level. This method which makes different emotions to dissolve completely by opening the heart makes *Mappila* usages provide ecstasy. The world of words with ascending–descending order of terms that equips the sounds to create ambience and to relish fulfils *Mappila* songs.

Two examples from the *Badar Padapattu* of Moyin Kutti Vaidyar;

Thudaremadhalavum muriyodu

Maruvaottakalum bajayodu

Dudikal davukalum kaimani

Munikalalthashikalal

Chenda dangadu otta dundudu dumdumuthukalal.

Another war description of *Badar Padappattu* reminds us of the poetic beauty of Ezhuthachan's renowned lines starting with *Niranja peelikal nirakkave kuthi*. It goes as; *Kirikidamakudathiruvadinirthithalakoovaivaaye*.

2.2.2 The distribution of *Arabimalayalam* songs

Arabimalayalam works in the name of holy beings of Muslim community: There are various religious books, stories, and songs written in *Arabimalayalam*. In the *Kuthu Ratheeb* that is conducted in the name of Muhyudheen *Shaikh* and Rifayi *Shaikh*, it is in *Arabimalayalam* that the superhuman abilities of Muhyudheen *Shaikh* are described. The praise songs of Rifayi *Shaikh* are also recited in *Arabimalayalam*. To sing praise songs of myths and of those who did superhuman acts and to tell their stories, *Arabimalayalam* is used. *Muhyudheen Mala* is the book that recites the superhuman abilities and stories of Muhyudheen *Shaikh*. Like this, the songs which are written praising and admiring great beings and prophets are known as *Malapattu* (songs).

The *Arabimalayalam* song culture boosts a very intricate and expansive nature on its literature side. The love song category of *Mappila* song tradition has many such sweet and innocent ones.

Thaamarapoonkaavanathilthaamasikkunoole,

Panchavarnapynkiliyilpankurankulloole,

Poomukham kandaalmathiyo?

Poothitheerkan kaalamayo?

Kaaminiaduthuvanno..?

Kaaladoshamtheernupooyo..?

Translates to – (It can be written as ;)

‘The one who lives in the lotus garden,
The one with the beauty of a colourful parrot,
Is it enough to just see your face?
Is it time to fulfil your desire?
Did your lover come to you?
Did your bad times come to an end?’

The *Mappila* poets have also penned several fun-filled and natural songs which inherit and influence the everyday life of the listeners. There are songs sung in the ambience of home by the friends –

Appamchuduchudupaathumma,

Ippamvarumvarummaappila

Roughly translating into –

Bake, bake the cake Paathumma,

The Maappila will come now.

There are also songs which try to provoke and entice young girls, set in the tone of lullabies.-

Karayanda mole, pizhiyanda mole,

Nine kettanakalyanathinu,

Pathanjooraanavarum

Translating into –

‘Don’t cry little girl, don’t mourn little girl,
On the day you will get married,
Hundreds of elephants will come’.

At the time of doing hard labour, the labourers sing some songs to engage themselves. These songs are usually very humorous in nature and they are called *Ambakal*.

For example,

First person – *Moosakakkakappaloottam*

Rest– *Aayimaadaame.*

First person – *Kappalilkandamthenga*

Rest – *Aayimaadaame*

There is another branch of *Mappila* songs called as *Puppechalukal*. For this, children form into two groups, one group sings a line and the second group reacts to it with a different line. The songs comprise the names of flowers, fishes, animals, birds, trees, household items, and food items. *Puppechal* is a competition of sorts which helps children, memorize the names of each section of items.

For example,

First group –

Manikkachayal, manichaayalum

maanichoodum penne njanpooppeyunnu

njanchoodum poo nallamullapoova,

Nee choodumpovinteperukelkkatte

In this stanza, the third line says the name of the flower which the girl has kept in her head and the fourth line asks ‘which flower does the opponent wear?’ Rest of the lines is repeated and when one group falls short of any more names of flowers they lose the game. Such recital questions happen not just with the names of flowers but also fishes, birds and other things mentioned before. In Eranad, on the day of Ramzan, the girls in the neighbourhood would sit together to play the *Pennuchodilkkal kali*; the game where they ask for the gir.

2.2.2.1 Devotional nature of *Mala* songs

The devotion in *Mappila* songs reaches to the devotion in *Mala* songs. The songs which describe the important incidents which fulfil the life of holy persons who have lived as great devotees and are dead, gaining the respect of the people and also songs respecting their lives are called as *Mala* songs. The important work in *Arabimalayalam* poetry is *Muhyudheen Mala*. In *Kollavarsham* (Malabar era) 782, i.e., A.D. 1607, *Muhyudheen Mala* was written. It is from the book *Bahja* written by a Bagdadian scholar named Shatnufi that Qali Muhammad has found out the plot. *Mala* songs are written by collecting facts from authentic history books. *Maalappaattus* are also known as *Nerchapaattus*. Other than *Muhyudheen Mala*, *Badar Mala*, *Rifai Maala*, *Nafeesat Maala*, *Manjakulam Mala*, *Mamburam Mala*, *Malappuram Mala*, *Mahmood Mala*, etc. are the main *Maalas*. They are sung for relief from diseases, sorrows, etc. *Mala* songs are sung in highly devotional atmosphere. Praising the glorious deeds of worldly and other worldly powers, *Mappila* songs have the contents of openly pleading that the power shouldn't hurt oneself, one's needed and beloved ones, as well as the prayer to get rid of misery. *Badra Kali Pattu*, *Kannaki Thottam*, *Malayapattu*, *Pulluvanpattu*, etc., seem to follow this style. That means here devotion is not considered as the supreme form of devotion. On the other side, it is the tone of begging that clearly exists here. The *Malapattu* known as *Iravu*, even though are of different forms, have uniformity. The writing method of Hindu praise songs (*sthothram*) and *Mala* songs is seen to have similar form. In *Mala* songs, the entry of Quran which is the epicentre of Islamic knowledge is very rare.

2.2.2.1.1 The initial part of *Mala* songs

Content of *Mala* songs written in *Arabimalayalam*:

*Allah*¹ *thiripperumthudiyum*² *salavathum*³

Athinalthudanguvanarulcheythabedambar

¹. God

². praise

³. Songs on Nabi

Alamudayorvanyekanarula

Aaye Muhammad avarkila⁴anovar

Ella kilayilumbankilaaanovar

Ella thishayilumkelimikachovar

Sulthanulauliya⁵yennuperullovar

Sayyidavarthayumbavayumaanovar

(Muhyudheen Mala)

Bismiyumhamdhum⁶salathumsalamalum

Bindepirakethudangunanya Allah

Ashrafadanesahabbal Badar mala

Aduvanenniludhakanbashangalla

All *Mala* songs start with these types of praise words. God- worship and hymns in praise of preceptor is what is found as a general trait in *Mala* songs. Another important feature seen in the devotion of *Mappilapattu* is the presence of Hinduism.

For example:

Kashamerumravilnadannangupokumbol

Kai viral choottakkikattinadannovar

Kozhidemullodukookennuchonnare

Kushathekukkiparappichubittovar

(Muhyudheen Mala)

Meaning:

⁴. Fence

⁵. King of Scholars

⁶. Praise

On a densely dark night, making the finger as *chootta* (country torch made of dried and rolled coconut leaves and is lit in one side), walked using that light. When ordered the bones of a cock to bawl those bones flew as cock, bawling.

MannumaramKalluudumbumiblukal

Mannukaludapushupambilpeshiyal

Khabarkathinumabappaykkuhayathittu

Karuthikalimaurappichubechovar

Thinkalnebiyemashrikkummagribil

Thingikondattalbeefathimakandovar

(Mahmood Mala)

He who spoke with soil, tree, stone, camel, monitor lizard, deer, ass, cow, and snake, he who gave life to parents who were buried and recited to them the witness word of Islam, *Nabi*, who could be compared to the moon is seen by *Fathimabi* as present in east and west.

2.2.2.1.2 The devotional literary work *Muhyudheen Mala*

Muhyudheen Mala and *Muhyudheen Shaikh*: There is *Ratheeb* and *Kuthu Ratheeb* which is done in the name of *Muhyudheen Shaikh*. Presentation of these types is ritualistically presented near *Kondotti* of northern Kerala. The believing followers of *Muhyudheen Shaikh* attend *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation. *Mappila* songs have a tradition of dealing with many philosophical, spiritual subjects requiring high levels of thinking. *Muhyudheen Maala* is one of the foremost *Mappila* songs. The time of its inception and its style are mentioned at the beginning of the song.

Kollamezhunoottiambathirandil njankoothanimmalanenoottiyamathanjummal

Mundummaanikyavumonnayi korthapol

Muhyudheen maalene korthennjanlokare

The above lines mention that ‘in the year 752, like 155 pearls and precious stones beaded together to make a necklace, I have beaded together this *Muhyudheen maala*. Khaali Muhammad, a Khaali from Kozhikode is the author of this *Maala*’.

KhaaliMuhammadennuperullovar

Kozhikkodathuraathannilpirannovar

Korvalathokkeyumnokkiyeduthovar

Avarchennabythinubahajukithobinu

Anganethankamilathaninnumkandovar

Impact of Muhyudheen Mala among *Mappilas*: Khaali Muhammad was born in the city of Kozhikode selected the facts for this *Mala* from the Book *Bahja* and its appendix, claims *Muhyudheen Mala* itself. This is used as a pathway for spirituality. This was recited in the Muslim houses of Kerala as an act of praising Muslim scholar Muhyudheen. For a long time, within the Muslim society, *Muhyudheen Mala* was considered as an important pathway for the people towards faith and spirituality. In the Malayalam month of *Karkkidakam* (July -August) when in the Hindu households Ramayana is recited, *Muhyudheen Mala* is recited among the Muslim houses. It praised Muhyudheen’s achievements and miracles. He walked through heat and rain and had to face several challenges in his time.

Impact of Kerala folklore in *Mappila* community: Among the Muslims, who pray directly to the only God, Muhyudheen became a middleman, and this could be attributed to the influence of Hinduism in Kerala. So this shows the existence of a folk culture within and across the religious beliefs in the Kerala society’s history. If we keep aside some Arabic word formations, most of the songs in *Muhyudheen Mala* are written in Malayalam.

2.2.2.2 *Mappilapattu* and its impact in Kerala Muslims

Even though there is a strong opinion that there were many *Arabimalayalam* poets before the 12th century itself, we can say doubtlessly that the first noticed *Arabimalayalam* poem is *Muhyudheen Mala*. It is being found that like the poems of Kannashan and Ezhuthachan, the light of the Bhakti movement in Malayalam is related to *Muhyudheen Mala* also.

Certain words used in *Mappilapattu* representing devotion are *Rahman* (Ultimate merciful), *Rahim* (Treasure of mercy), *Malik* (Master), *Habib* (friend), *Ashiq* (lover), *Samadu* (master of all), *Rab* (guardian), *Rafiq* (friend), *Asees* (majestic one), *Mehboob* (lover), *Ahad* (the one), *Rasiq* (provider of food). For centuries the mixing up of cultures is what formed the *Mappila* language. Language is the asset of a culture. For a group of people, to make them aware that they are part of same commune, folk language plays an important role.

Mix of words of different languages in the folk language of *Arabimalayalam*: The level of the one, who speaks, and social conditions, etc., influence folk traditions. Interaction with Arabs who have come to trade to the coastal regions of Kerala, the spread of Islam during the medieval period, language structuring suitable for new followers, etc., inspired the formation of *Mappila* language. Arabic and Malayalam terms were combined and a new language was formed. Through *Arabimalayalam* script, the language has come to spread. Later, the verbal usages of Persian, Tamizh, Kannada, Telugu, and Sanskrit were also assimilated to the *Mappila* language. From *Muhyudheen Mala* to *Badrul Muneer*, *Mappilapattu*, for its songs, has not only used language blending, but also the peculiar features of the song itself. It is a return from folk songs to the literature form of songs. Farsi and Hindustani terms are used in *Arabimalayalam* language.

2.2.2.2.1 The philosophical nature of *Mappilapattu*

The philosophy of *Mappilapattu*: The philosophy that ‘nothing has existence’ and life is temporary’, is shown to us by *Mappila* songs. *Mappila* songs exist by keeping temperance. Kunjaji Musliar is one who has made *Mappila* songs reach heights through philosophical lines. His *padappattu* is an example of it. By comparing the human body to a sail boat and life as the journey of the boat, *Kappapattu* holds a position in philosophical literature.

2.2.2.3 *Mappila Ramayanam*- An indication of presence of Hinduism in *Mappila* folklore

Influence of Hindu epic *Ramayana* in *Mappila* folklore: *Mappila Ramayanam* is a book which is very important in *Mappila* folklore. *Mappila Ramayanam* is an important evidence to prove that how much the Hindu myths, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have influenced the people of Kerala. The diversity of *Mappila* culture is what is exhibited by *Mappila Ramayanam*. *Mappila Ramayanam* is one significant proof of Kerala’s cultural heritage. It is widespread in the Vadakara region of Kerala. A prominent personality in folk songs, T.H. Kunjiraman Nambiar is the one who has carried this folk song in his heart. The lines of *Mappila Ramayanam* sung by him are introduced to the world by Dr. M. N. Karassery, who is also a researcher in *Mappila* songs. He explains, these songs are found in different tones of *Mappilapattu* known as *Ishals*. So, this could be included among different *Mappilapattu* which are spread as folk songs. The themes of these songs are different story situations of *Ramayana*. Also, the characters of *Ramayana* are presented as *Mappilas*. Ravana was called as *Pathalathil Sulthan* (emperor of the nether world) and his sister Shoorpanakha as *Beebi*. In its theme, language, and tune, it is *Ramayanam* in *Mappilapattu*.

Kunji Raman Nambiar clearly states that he learnt it from Hassan Kutty who was roaming around in the land. *Ramayanam* is an epic poem which has contributed much to India’s Cultural fusion. *Ramayanam* has spread across all parts of our land (India). It has even secured

a place in some of the world languages. The cultural presence of *Ramayana* is found in countries like Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, etc. Naturally, the Muslims of Malabar also have known *Ramayana* and in *Mappila* language have created another distributary (level) of it. Sri. K.N. Bharathan, an expert and researcher in folk songs, states that the cultural ambience of Kerala Muslim life is proving to be the base for *Mappila Ramayanam*. The facts which he points out by stressing on *Mappila Ramayanam* are as follows.

Thadikkaranouli, Lashalashan mouthilaya pattu, Ummanadinupoya varathan, Bappanadu, Kosalanadu, Lavanante pengalumma, Beebi Shoorpanakha, Sulthan mayyathayi, Sheelamkettolkkinnum venam mappilayonnu, Koode kanunnara pennu beedarano?, penninagane padillenna shareeyatilunemam, njammalkenthinu meleleme pennum nikkahum, Cheeni, Thappu, Chotti thattam, Koyi biriyani etc.

Through all these expressions⁷, *Mappila Ramayanam* was able to be the keystone of *Mappila's* life, culture, and language. *Mappila Ramayanam* proceeds by properly sustaining the vocal beauty, tune, devices such as *Kambi, Kazhuthu, Valkambi*, etc. of *Mappila* Songs. This *Mappila* work includes Shoorpanakha's venture, her love seeking, Ravana's entry into Ashoka forest, Hanuman's entry into Lanka, etc. We could see the humour sense and insights of the *Mappilas* in *Mappila Ramayanam*.

Lines which explains the significance of *Ramayanam* story:

Lama Lama Lama Lama Lama Lama Lama

Lama Lama Lama Lama Lama Lama Lama

Panduthadikkaranouli padivannorupattu

⁷*Mappila Ramayanavum nadan pattkalum.*

Compilation: C. H. Kunjiraman Nambiar Vaa mozhi puthmozhi thedmbol- K.N. Bharathan (page 20 (2007))

Kandathallenjammalee Lamayanam katha pattu
Karkkidakam kathu kathu kuthirikkum pattu
Kathu randilum kaiviralittorikoottum pattu
Moonnupennine Dasarathan nikah cheytha pattu
Ammikummayammarinjumakkalilla pattu
Payasam kudichu moonnum nalum petta pattu
Nalilum muthulla Lamantelukoottum pattu
Nanju nakkiya padachonte villodicha pattu
Kunjukutti thankamole kai pidicha pattu
Halilaki thadi Laman waithadanja pattu
Halumattiettannu Lamannattilethiya pattu
kooni 'nonakettennelomma' vashikattiyapattu
Lamanepathinalukollam kattilakkiya pattu
Koodeyanushankoottinolumkoodippoyapattu
Makkale kananju bappa veenurunda pattu
Vikki vikki lashalashanmouthilaya pattu
Ummanattinu poyavarathanodivanna pattu
Lamane kootti veruvaan poyivanna pattu

The above lines which indicate the story flow from Dasarath's marriage to death is very attractive not only because of its direction, but also of its language flow and change, social conventions, and its easiness to sing. In describing Shoorpanakha, the local usages themselves are the marks of wisdom of the unknown poet. When Shoorpanakha got attracted to Rama, she proposes him. It is the Muslim marriage style that paves way for the song.

Aaninu pennu nalo ancho vechalantha

Penninagane padillenna Shareeyatilu nemam

A man can have four or five wives, but women cannot do that, according to the law. Like this, even when pointing to the Shareeyat, the poet intends to gently touch on Rama's vow of having a single wife.

Njammakkenthina mele mele pennum nikkahum

(Why would I have other than one woman, a marriage on another?)

This is what Raman asks.

Thamarathalirodokkumpoovudalen qalbil

Immininalayimuthekandidanum asha

The flower like body of yours, which excels the tip of lotus, was wishing to see that for a long time. Ravana's proposal towards Seetha was colourfully framed with words. The epic poem is a major factor in linking different beliefs.⁸

2.3 Comparison of divine and theatrical elements in *Theyyam* and *Kuthu Ratheeb*

Theyyam is a folk ritual performed in northern Malabar. The ritual and performative aspects of *Theyyam* can be seen in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Spiritual purity, penance and belief come under these observances. *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Theyyam* share common aspects of origin and articulations. The presence of *Baiths* which come as songs of *Kuthu Ratheeb* makes the performative presentation using body very convenient. In these times, the memory of the forefathers arises in the spectators. Even though the presentation is seen with fear, spectators

⁸.Ouli: saint (Valmiki),

Lamyamam	: Ramayanam
Ammikummayam marinjum	: even after so much effort
Nanju nakkiya padachon	: Shivan
Kunju kutti thankamol	: Seetha
Thadi Laman	: Parashu rama
wai	: way
Olu	: wife
Mouth	: death
Qalbu	: mind
Pakshi pattu	: Bird song

start to worship and respect the forefathers. While singing praise songs about a person whom the spectators respect and performance is done by injuring the body, the performers are seen as people who are close to the forefathers (great beings). *Theyyattam* is a rare ritual which integrates the symbol of Kerala's cultural history such as sacred grove, tree worshipping, forefather obeisance, deity worshipping, mother goddesses, and weapon obeisance. *Theyyam* and *Kuthu Ratheeb* which are the worshipping systems of layman are simpler than idol worship. The performers are seen in *Theyyam* as gods which move and converse. *Theyyam* is an art form that implicates the idea of deity completely in man. The presence of super humanness in man is believed as God's presence and is presented in the art form of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The performers of *Theyyam* and the performers of *Kuthu Ratheeb* come from working class. When *Theyyam* becomes God, that is the only time that the performer is respected and blessing are sought. But there are *Shaiks* above the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performers. It is only when these *Shaiks* give permission and power to the performers that *Kuthu Ratheeb* performers start to perform super humanness. Basically, *Theyyam* is an art form of sacred groves.

Into the life of extraordinary forefathers and ancestors, by sharing the light of extra-terrestrial power is how the person who assumes the form is given the position of God. *Theyyam* and *Kuthu Ratheeb* could be seen as art mediums for the devotees to interact with the formless and imperceptible God. Those who are from special communities, such as lower castes of *Vannan*, *Malayan*, *Anjoottan*, *Munnoottan*, *Pulayan*, etc., are the ones who present *Theyyam*. The holistic goodness and well-being of the society is the aim of *Theyyam*. Our sacred groves were the neural centres of the society and sources of culture. *Theyyam* is an art of emotion of the commune that has originated as a cultural defence. Considering man as God or attributing God in humans is the mode of *Theyyam*. All the *Mappilas* who come in the myth of *Mappila Theyyam* are considered as gods in *Theyyam* culture. *Theyyam* is a ritual presented in northern Malabar from Vadakara to Kasaragod's frontier of Karnataka. Specific

communities such as *Vannan*, *Malayan*, *Anjoottan*, *Munnoottan*, *Pulayan*, *Panan*, *Koppalan*, *Velan*, *Kalanadi*, *Perumannan*, etc. perform *Theyyam*. *Mappila Theyyam* is also presented by these sections. In northern Malabar, *Mappila Theyyam* is presented in the area of Payyannor. *Mappila Theyyam* is not performed by people of *Mappila* community. The deity form of gods who are *Mappila* characters is presented in *Mappila Theyyam*. In all the sacred groves and other places in northern Malabar, each community has got the right to perform *Theyyam*. In a single sacred grove itself, there are *Theyyam* which are presented by more than one community. Rituals that have divine elements are *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Theyyam*.

The states of trance, violence, and pain in the *Mappila* ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb* are closely related to the *Theyyam* of fire forms. The one who present *Thee Chamundi* which is known as *Ottakkolam* (single form) must take penance for twenty-one days. Into the fire heap known as *melari*, the *Thee Chamundi* falls one hundred and one times. It's the people from *Malayan* community who perform *Ottakkolam*. Everybody in the *Malayan* community does not play *Ottakkolam*. The chance to play *Ottakkolam* is considered as divine calling. The *Malayan* who played *Ottakkolam* becomes *Panicker*. Other than that, *Cherukunnan*, *Vadakkankooran*, and *Peru Malayan* are the names of the positions given to *Malayans* by the feudalists. Like *Thee Chamundi*, *Pottan Theyyam* is one that falls into *melari* (fire heap). The members of *Pulayan* community play the *Pottan Theyyam*. In the *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Nercha's pettivaravu* (procession with boxes), we can see adventurous performance using fire flambeau. Like that there are *Theyyams* which dance by placing flambeau on the body.

Comparison of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Theyyam* with theatre forms giving an emphasis on Artuadian idea of theatre: The first *Theyyam* each *Theyyam* performer plays is that of *Veedodi Theyyam*. Boys of the age of eight to ten are made to play small *Theyyam* and are made to perform in houses. The children born in the community of *Theyyam* performers knowingly or unknowingly start to learn to become a *Theyyam* performer. What he sees and hears from the

age of understanding gets cemented in his mind. In Kerala, there are many folk theatres and ritual theatres. *Mappila Theyyam* and *Kuthu Ratheeb* are ritual theatre. But in *Mappila Theyyams*, elements of folk theatre can be seen. When compared with the idea of environmental theatre by Richard Schechner, *Theyyam* and *Kuthu Ratheeb* can be said as Theatre forms. Schechner's stage presentation is not focused on a specific theatre space. Theatre space and actor do not have any type of limits. To freely self manifest is its intent. It goes among the audience and does performance among them. For example, in Thiruvananthapuram (southern Kerala) Bheema palli, in between the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance, performers stabbed with lances in faces and heads go into the audience without taking it off, in order to collect money. In this, the participation of audience is more. What happens in *Theyyam* is also the same. Besides this, *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Mappila Theyyams* can be related to Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty. The position of ritual custom in theatre space is what Artaud talked about. The societal order and social traditions which man acquired through centuries had made humans uneasy, in Artaud's view. He recognized the rituals and nature worshipping of ancient life. Through myths formed with new meaningful levels from this, the terrible state of modern man could be expressed, argued Artaud. A thorough theatre platform using completely the medium of actor is what is needed says Artaud. Through ritualistic frenzied dance is how communication occurs. In *Kuthu Ratheeb* or *Mappila Theyyam*, this is what happens. It is centred on *Theyyam* performer that the communication happens. Any play is creative, likewise the ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Mappila Theyyam* also have creativeness. Belief is the basis for rituals. By being firm in a society's beliefs, dramatics is used as a tool for manifestation is what is done in ritual dramas like *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Knowledge based on experience is the basis for beliefs. If *Mappila Theyyam* and *Kuthu Ratheeb* can be considered as theatre, the performers can be seen as actor.

In early ages, in each society, the first actor has occurred when accredited as reflected image of God. He had many types of authorities. He is the one who talks to God for man. There was a belief that he could save people from attack of wild animals and incurable diseases. Having such superhuman abilities was the one who was the first actor. In *Kuthu Ratheeb* when self-injuries are made by cutting the body and when the *Theyyam* performer jumps into fire, around him a nimbus of belief of many people is being created. This consciousness is that which urge a performer to again and again self-torture or sacrifice.

2.3.1 Classifications among the ritual art form of *Theyyam*

The various classifications of *Theyyam* forms: The *Theyyam* that are more than four hundred in number can be mainly classified as male section and female section. By recognizing the aim of the incarnation or by considering the mission accomplished, there are many sections. Leopard, Lion, Monkey, Alligator, etc. are deities in the image of animals. There are many *Theyyams* in the form of mothers, virgins, heroic ladies, ones who have incarnated in the Earth as part of Gods, ones who have raised to the position of Gods after death, ones in the form of snakes, ancestors of a race, deities of diseases, deities of fertility, Yakshas, *Gandharvas*, *Kinnaras*, war gods, etc. Every *Theyyam* seems to have relation with Shiva, Parvathy, or Vishnu. The indications of this are found clearly in the face designs, crown, and body design or in the *Thottam* (praise songs) of the *Theyyam*. Most of the *Theyyams* are women deities called in the names of *Achi*, *Thampuratty*, *Kali*, *Chamundy*, *Pothi*, *Muthachi*, *Amma*, etc. The decorations of *Theyyam* are extraordinary dress and ornaments which generates wonder in the spectators. In this, there are hand decorations and leg decorations. Same way, there is upper body decorations, hip decorations, headgear, holy weapons, etc.

2.3.2 *Theyyam* forms among *Mappila* community

Influence of *Mappila* community among Hindus of Kerala and their entry in to *Theyyam* world: The Muslims of Malabar are called as *Mappilas*. In early times, the Arabs who have married the women of Kerala were called by others using the term *Mappilas*. The landlords were appointing Muslims as managers of their outside work. *Mappilas* were guests in any Hindu house. Muslim women who know the technique of beating rice to produce rice flakes were received by Hindu ancestral homes. It is from them, the villagers collected rice flakes to offer to the *Theyyam*.

The impact of *Mappila Theyyams* in Kerala ritual life: *Mappila Theyyams* are also called as *Mappila Porattu*. Ritualistic entertainment is what is meant by this word. Like other *Theyyams*, devotees call for the support of the *Mappila Theyyams* and give offerings and bow to them also. *Mappila* women do not forget to see these *Theyyams* and seek for solace. The *Mappila Theyyam* which has received worshipping position in *Theyyam* world is mainly performed by a *Koppala*.

By wearing checkered dhoti and a knot on the head and beard and by dancing with other *Theyyams* and by doing the Muslim ritualistic prayer, the *Mappila Theyyam* is worshiped not just as a *Mappila* but as a holy man of divine mission in the sacred groves. *Mappila* women are also part of *Mappila Theyyam*. *Ummachi Theyyam* which comes to the sacred groves by wearing a covering cloth (*hijab*) in the head, bangles in the hand and chest decorations, also is included among the goddesses. Even though they have received god position after death, still they also have the presence of any one main deity, according to the belief.

Conclusion

Specialities of various languages are used in the presentation of the ritual *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Among these the languages, *Arabimalayalam* and other the spoken languages are

discussed in this chapter. *Mala* songs and its devotional nature are discussed in the chapter along with a specification on devotional literary work '*Muhyudheen Mala*'. *Mappilapattu* which constitutes the poetical form of *Mappila* literature, and its philosophical nature is also described. The influence of Hinduism in *Mappila* folklore is elucidated through *Mappila Ramayanam* where different story situations of *Ramayana* are used along with *Mappilas* characters. This chapter also compares the divine and theatrical elements in *Kuthu Ratheeb* and the ritual of *Theyyam*. Classifications among ritual art form of *Theyyam* and description about *Mappila Theyyams* are also given in this chapter.

CHAPTER III

The Theatrical and Folk elements in *Ratheeb*: The Musical instruments, Islamic embrace, and customary differences

A study on the development of *Mappila* culture, Sufism in Kerala, customary differences among the *Mappilas* of Kerala, imbibing of Kerala culture into *Mappila* culture, differences in the customs and presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* along with a detailing on the history of *Ratheeb* culture, different types of *Ratheeb*s and the different musical instruments used in *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

3.1 Socio historic profile of the *Mappila* culture and its diversities with an emphasis on *Kuthu Ratheeb* and its cult

The relation between folk theatre and worship methods: Folk theatre is something that presents the local art traditions and the scopes and diversities of performance. Systematic acting, mannerisms, and styles are evolved according to the dynamics and transformations of societies. The discussions in the study of Greek theatre and tragedy progress in the context of religious practices and performances of the Greek god Dionysus. The development of acting gestures and symbols in ancient India took place in relation to evil worship, hero-worship, and snake worship. What western and oriental viewpoints have made clear is the existence of this relation.

In Kerala, there are different sections such as *Ponnani Thangals*, *Kondotti Thangals*, *Persian Thangals*, etc. Among them, the section of *Ponnani Thangals* and *Persian Thangals* mostly live along coastal regions. The *Ponnani Thangals* claim the lineage of the Arabian country Mecca. Along with the coastal areas of Thrissur such as *Chavakkadu*, *Anchangadi*, and *Edakkazhiyoor Persian Thangals* are seen. In *Kondotti*, *Thangals* of Shiite lineage lived. In all three regions, *Kuthu Ratheeb* was presented with different beliefs and customs. It is in *Kondotti*

regions that *Kuthu Ratheeb* is mostly conducted. Even though there is *Kuthu Ratheeb*, what is mostly practiced is *Ratheeb*. *Ratheeb* is a ritual tradition without body mutilation but only *Baiths* are there. In the coastal areas closer to Malappuram district (*Chavakadu, Anchangadi, Edakkazhiyoor*), *Kuthu Ratheeb* is practised. Famous *Mappila* poet Moyin Kutti Vaidyar knowingly or unknowingly has been the propagator of *Shiite* literature. Persian stories were translated to him by Nizammudin, a member of the scholars' assembly of *Kondotti Thangals*. Vaidyar who had received much encouragement from the *Shiite* scholars of *Kondotti Taqiya* had a good bond with them is the reason for the theme of several of his poems to be imaginative stories of Shiites. *Karamath Mala* written by Vaidyar in *Hijra* (Arabic year) 1285 is the history of an important personality among *Kondotti Thangals* named Muhammad Shah second (*Ishtiyaq*). Many words from Arabic and Persian languages have reached Malayalam through Arabs and *Arabimalayalam*. Because when Islam came to Kerala, Malayalam language and script has not yet been formed. C. Gopalan Nair who was Malabar deputy collector says that Cheraman Perumal had met Muhammad Nabi directly.⁹ When Malabar's history is studied, chances of Islam's entry to date back to the time of the Prophet are seen.

Impact of Tamil Nadu's Muslim folk culture in the Muslim folk culture of Kerala: When looked accordingly, we cannot refute the possibility that *Arvi*, Arab Tamil could be the predecessor of *Arabimalayalam*.¹⁰ It is during the fifteenth century that *Makhdooms* came to Kerala. *Makhdooms* were the ones who steered the Kerala Muslim reformation. It is from Tamil Nadu that *Makhdooms* came to Kerala. The Malabar of Kerala and the Ma Abar of Tamil Nadu have inseparably close relations. South India's Celon facing eastern coastal region (*Chola Mandalakkara*) was called in ancient times by Arabs as Ma Abar which means 'ferry' and the

⁹. C.Gopalan Nair, Malayalathile Mappilamar, page 63-65.

¹⁰. Nulman, Risala weekly, ed.1104, 10 September 2014.

western coast was called as Malabar. In the areas of *Kayal Pattanam* and *Keelakkara* in the regions of Ma Abar, there were many Muslim scholars. They have kept relations with Malabar.¹¹ The *Makhdooms* who steered the reformations among Kerala Muslims had come from Ma Abar of Tamil Nadu. The spiritual preceptors, *Ustads*, many major scholars of Kerala were *Labbas* of *Keelakkara* and *Kayal Patnam* says history. In different parts of Palakkad, which is a border region, it is Arab Tamil texts that are taught in Islamic *Madrassas* (religious schools). In short, like Malayalam from Tamil, Arabimalayalam from Arab Tamil and certain other rituals and practicess from Tamil Nadu have evolved out. From time immemorial, Arab world has been in cultural relation with Kerala for trade and other reasons. Arabia's beliefs and customs are seen to have existed in India before the advent of Islam.

Islamic embrace of Kerala people: About the attires of Kerala people and lifestyles, interesting information has been given by *Shaikh Sainudhin Makhdoom*. To get rid of shyness, a small cloth piece called *kauppeenam* is what men were using. The lower castes were allowed only to wrap the body with a cloth.¹² As a way to be free by escaping from tortures is how several have seen their Islamic embrace. Jafer Shareef, who wrote the history of Muslim culture of South India, writes that the conversion to Islam was mainly because of social reasons. The untouchable lower castes have seen Brahmanism as a religious burden. To escape from that, they accepted Islam which propounds equality for them like for others.¹³ It was the existing social system that made many attracted to Islam asserts Humayun Kabeer.¹⁴ The attitude of handicraft experts and workers towards Islam is clear through the stories of *Kunjelu* who a goldsmith in *Pada* of *Malappuram* was and *Ponnani* Asari Thangal. *Kunjelu* was a lower caste

¹¹. Prof. K.P. Abdu Rahman, Mappila Charitra Shakalangan, page 15.

¹². *Shaikh Zainudhin Makhdoom*, Thuh Fathal Mujahideen, English translation, Muhammad Hussain Ninan, 1945, page 32.

¹³. Jafar Sharief Qanum i Islam, English translation, 1975, London, Page 4.

¹⁴. Humayun Kabeer, Our Heritage, Bombay, 1946, page 20.

goldsmith but in 1738 he fought alongside Muslims in the fight against Hindu feudal lord *Paranumbi*. He received martyrdom as Muslim.¹⁵ Asari Thangal was a lower caste person during the 16th century who had given leadership in the construction of *Ponnani Juma Masjid*. After the completion of the mosque, he has gone to the top of it and seems to have seen the light of the Ka'bah of Mecca. He is said to have accepted Islam religion right away and people have respectfully treated him by calling him Ashari Thangal. His corporal body is buried near Makhdoom Thangals.¹⁶ The lines *Kottaykkalomana Kunjalikku, Nayarum Theeyanumonnu pole* (for dear *Kunjali* of *Kottakkal*, *Nayars* and *Theeyers* (two caste communities in Kerala Hindus) are same) of *Vadakkan Pattu* (Malayalam ballads of medieval origin) indicate the attitude of Muslims towards different castes.¹⁷ The lower caste people used to visit Muslim sacred places and seek the blessings of holy men. The *Dargah* of Mamburam Sayyid Alavi *Thangal* at *Thirurangadi* is still a place of hope for the lower castes. *Kozhikaliyattam*, a festival of lower castes that happens in *Kaliyattamukku* near *Thirurangadi* has started with blessings and wishes of *Mamburam Thangal*, is said in a folk song about *Kaliyattam*.¹⁸ Towards the Muslims who were converted from lower castes, the Brahmins did not take the attitude towards untouchables but have instead honoured them. The casteist notion towards them was forgotten. The Muslims have respected the belief of Brahmins also. Even though Muslims were low and underprivileged by the law of Brahmins, they have respected Muslims. Ibnu Bathutha affirms this.¹⁹ William Logan also notes, when the lower caste changes to Muhammadian, his social status raises and Hindus honour him. Let us see the lines of the *Ezhava* poet Kumaranasan.

<i>Ethrayo</i>	<i>dooram</i>	<i>vazhithetti</i>	<i>nilkkanda</i>
<i>Ezhacheruman</i>		<i>poy</i>	<i>thoppiyittal</i>

¹⁵. Al Irfadh magazine, December 1987, page 20.

¹⁶. T.V. Abdul Rahman, Malabarile Macca, Al Irfadh, 1988 Nov. Page 16.

¹⁷. P.K. Mohd. Kunch. Muslingalum Kerala Samskaravum, Thrissur, 1982, page 13.

¹⁸. Salim Idid, Kadha Parayunna Mamburam, Chandrika Newspaper, 27 April 1991, page 3.

¹⁹. Ibnu Bathutha, Travels in Asia and Africa, Translation, New York, 1929, page 237.

*Ottumpedikkanda thampurane*²⁰.

'If the lower caste *Ezhava* puts a cap (i.e., become Muslim), no need to stay certain distance out of the way, he could be made sit close, no need to worry, Highness'. Not only in Muslim histories but in Hindu Brahmin histories like *Keralolpathi*, the incident that *Chera* king had accepted Islam and has gone to Mecca need not be unconsidered.²¹

Entry of Sufism and other Islamic cultures into the culture of Kerala: Four important Sufi paths and its branches were spread in Kerala. An important one among these is *Khadiri* way propagated by *Makhdooms*. Before that itself, *Shaikh* Abdul Khader Jeelani's disciple *Shaikh* Fareedhudheen Ibnu Abdul Khader Khurasani had established the *Khadiri* way in Ponnani.²² *Khasis* of Kozhikodu are also followers of this faith. The hymns and praise songs that represent *Khadiri* path are many. The *Ratheeb* hymns of Abdullahibinu Alavi Haddas and *Qutubiyyath* of Swathakhathulla Alkhahiri are important.²³ The way of *Kondotti* Muhammad Shah who did preaching work in *Kondotti*, *Areeckodu*, *Pallakad*, *Kutti para* was judged fake by *Makhdoom* scholars.²⁴ The followers in *Kondotti* still not only follow *Ratheeb* but practice the ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb* also. *Shaikh* Abdul Rahiman Thanuri who is dead is the famous *Nakshabanthi* Sufi of Southern Malabar. To *Tanur*, he has come from *Mahee*. *Rihlathul Mulooke* of Muhammad Binu Umar Subrra vardi who has preached *Suhra Vardhi Thariqath* in regions of *Mahee* is also a history work. Sayidath Majida Beevi and her husband Mahin Aboobackar of Trivandrum, *Shaikh* Pareerudheen Auliya of *Kanjiramattam* of Ernakulam, Malik Binu Muhammad of Kasargodu, Bava Kunjahammad Musliar of *Perumbadappu*, *Shaikh* Hussain

²⁰. Kumaran Asan, *Asante Padhyakrithikal*, Kottayam, 1999, Page. 509.

²¹. MGS Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala* page.65.

²². Seyed Mohidin Shah, *Islam in Kerala*, page 12.

²³. For *Ratheeb* and *Qutubiyyat*, see 333 vaka Moulid, page 384,460.

²⁴. Sayyid *Shaikh* Jifri, *Kansul Baraheen*, Istanbul, 1865, page 463.

Madri of Palakkad, and Hajiyyar Uppappa of Malappuram were famous Sufi propagators. Different from North India, Islam had come to Kerala directly from Arabia. Even though Malik Binu Dinar and the team have come through Persia, Islamic culture had become complete during the end of the fifteenth century when *Shaikh* Sainudheen Makhdoom and his followers have come. *Makhdooms* have come to Kerala from Yemen. The origin of the Persian tradition seen in Kerala Islam to an extent is through *Makhdooms*. In most places, to religious institutions and religious life, leadership is given by the ones who have completed religious education from *Ponnani*. In ritual practices and functions, Kerala Muslims had developed their styles and they were retained by comparing it with Kerala's indigenous styles. *Shafii Madhab* (path of Action) is followed by Kerala Muslims. The dress code of Kerala religious scholars is a blend of Kerala and *Yemini* styles. Checked cloth and *lungi* of men and *kanjiprack* and *Turki Thoppi* (Turkish cap) which they are using are part of this merging. Now also, Muslim women use to wear a dress that has Kerala ingenuity and *Thattam* (cloth covering head). The *Marumakkathayam* (matrilineal culture) of coastal areas is taken from Yemen to Malabar.

Spread of Sufism and arrival of Sufi preceptors in Malabar led to the Islamic embrace of *Shiite* practices: During the nineteenth century, other than *Kondotti Tariqa*, no ideologies were there against *Ahalussunat* in Malabar. So, for the reformers, such community divisions were not much of an obstacle. In beliefs and practices, they followed traditional methods. From *Halar Mowth*²⁵, Sayyid Abdur Rahman Hydrose had come to *Ponnani* and has married from the *Unchunganakam* family and started to stay permanently there, and then the spiritual aura of *Ponnani* was enshrined more than before. *Makhdooms* taught religion and spiritual training was given by *Saiyids*. Sufi saints Muhammad Shah and Sayyid Shaik Jifri who reached Malabar during the eighteenth century started working by making *Kondotti* and Kozhikode respectively

²⁵. The older name of Yemen.

as their centres. Muhammad Shah who was born in AD 1687, January 29 is a native of *Kardhan* of *Bombay*. He received a Sufi path from Karam Ali. He came to Malabar because of a revelation from prophets during a prayer at Palestine. Getting down at Kochi, Shah from there through *Puthu Nagaram* of Palakkad reached *Mulliakurushi* of *Perinthalmanna* (places of Malappuram district). From there, he went to *Areekodu* and started secluded meditation on a hill there. Then after, Makhdoom, Kunjara Mutti and Manisseri Koyamma together invited Muhammad Shah to *Kondotti*. It's in AD 1717-1718 that Shah reached *Kondotti*. The fame of Shah had spread across the land. On the activities of Shah, scholars including *Khali* developed doubts later. In AD 1766, Muhammad Shah died. His dear ones had built a *dargah* there and have conducted *Nerchas* and *Kuthu Ratheeb*; otherwise also they enthusiastically did spread the way of Guru.

Shaikh Jifri is the Sufi saint who had come to Malabar from *Halar Mowth*. It's in AD 1726 that Jifri was born. He received the title of *Khadiri Sufi* from *Shaikh* Muhammad Binu Hamid. It's in 1746 that *Shaikh* Jifri reached *Kozhikode*. The *Samoothiri* of Kozhikode had well received him and given him a place called *Thekkum Thala*. Tipu Sulthan had visited Sayid Jifri. Within less time, many became disciples of Sayyid Jifri. Sayid, Abdu Rahman, and Hydrose of Jifri Family had married from *Makhdoom* family, thus *Jifri- Makhdoom* relation became strong. *Makhdooms* and *Ulamas*, the ones who follow their leaders have agreed to the spiritual leadership of *Jifri*. Through them, *Jifri's* message has spread across Malabar. After Muhammad Shah's time, the activities of his son Ishtiyahq Shah and followers became strong, the opposition from the scholars too had grown strong to their arguments and some activities. When Tipu Sulthan called the scholars and *Fakir* (the name used to call *Kondotti Thangals*) and had organised a debate. There, *Fakir* has made them understood that he is *Khadiri Sufi*. After building a centre in *Faroke* near *Kozhikodu*, Tipu Sulthan had invited *Ulamas* and Sufis there. Along with them, *Fakir* was also invited. *Fakir* was honoured by Tipu Sulthan by giving

him the title *Inam Dar*. For preaching activities, land and other maintenance were given. Lands given by disciples were also there. He said that Muhyudheen *Shaikh* is his grandfather and had registered all this land in his name. During the time of the British also, the title of *Inam Dar* of *Kondotti Thangals* was retained and devotional respect towards them continued. The devotion towards the British and the *Shiite* practices he continued in his centre had made Shah and followers the enemies of *Ulamas*.

A section of Muslim community in *Ponnani* has condemned the Sufi saint Muhammad Shah and his ways which is a point of indication of customary differences among *Mappilas*: *Ulamas* of *Ponnani* had proclaimed that *Fakir* had his way spoilt. For this reason, their popularity had diminished. Sayyid Jifri was against the *Tariqa* of Muhammad Shah. The allegations against the *Tariqa* of Shah and the religious verdict passed over it are the reasons for the spread of *Kondotti – Ponnani* confusion across Malabar. Before that itself, Sayyid Jifri had visited the *Fakir* of *Kondotti* and had become aware of his religious variation. In his book *Kansul Baraheen*, he alleged that *Kondotti Fakir* is a fake Sufi and he is misleading people and is discouraging *Namaz*, *Hajj*, etc. and is creating a mix of men and women. He has taunted the scholars like Abdul Azeez, Koyamutti, etc. who have supported *Kondotti Tariqa*. They are the ones who gave leadership for *Nerchas* and religious activities in *Kondotti Dargah*. Jifri writes, 'Look at the Fakirs like that are in *Kondotti*, very spoilt are they. They are ecstatic, smoking hashish. They can't be seen without being high like this. If nakedness is shown, it can reach Allah, which is what they seem to preach'. (Cuns,463).

Different *Shiite* like practices followed by *Kondotti Fakir* which was opposed by Sayid Jifri resulting in customary differences among *Mappilas*: The *khali* of the *Taqia* (dargah), Abdul Azeez Musliar has taken pen against Sayyid Jifri. He has found justification in favour of *Kondotti Fakir*. He argues that the scholars of the law of action have no right to tell opinions about realised beings. Sufis and Sufi activities are beyond *Sharia*. But, Jifri repeatedly

proclaimed that the activities of *Fakir* were against *Sharia* and that it was a spoilt path. It is *Shiite* practices that *Fakir* conducted. That is how *Kuthu Ratheeb* practices emerged. The scholars who are not the followers of *Shiite* belief had conducted only *Ratheeb*. In *Ratheeb*, mantra chanting and prayers are only there. No manner of presentation where body mutating is there is in *Ratheeb*. But Muhammad Shah and followers had continuously refused a relationship with *Shiiteism* and during the occasion of *Muharram* festival and *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual; the festival programmes practised in *Dargah* were exactly similar to *Shiites*. On that day, like *Shiites* do, *Thaboos*²⁶ and flags were used and certain special worship acts were practised. A fire altar in the name *Jafroos* was made and by screamingly saying *Ya Ali, Ya Hasan, Ya Hussain*, used to jump into it. Like that, entertainment like *Pulikali* (tiger play), *Kozhiporu* (cockfight) etc. were conducted. A custom in which taking sandal and applying the sandal paste on forehead and leg comes as the main part is *Jookia*. This practice was also celebrated by *Kondotti Fakirs*.

Ponnani section of *Mappilas* restricted *Kondotti* people from various activities because of their customary differences: It is by projecting up these types of practices that *Ponnani* section of scholars opposed *Fakir*. *Mamburam Thangal* had proclaimed that *Fakir* was *Shiite* of *Bohra* section. They are called as *Ravafi I* (in *fatwa* of 1840 December 1265 *Ramzan* 13). In the response written by Kistingantakathu Aboobacker Kunji Haaji to Pullattu Garib Shah, the *Caliph* of *Kondotti Tariqa*, the *Shiite* practice in the *Taqia* (*dargah*) are brought out and has claimed that *Fakir*, like *Majoosis*²⁷ was Devil's representative. The practices in which fire is worshipped, *Chandanakudam* (sandal pot), *Thaboot* etc. are said to be ill practices that are not in accordance with Islam. Even though *Fakir* claimed that he was the representative of *Khadiri-Chisthi Tariqa*, the *Ponnani* section that followed the same *Tariqa* was not ready to accept that.

²⁶. Thaboot states also taking proofs from the general lines of the Quran.

²⁷. A group that worships fire.

Fakir's practices related to *Tariqa* were opposed by them. The one which made the most severe opposition is the act of doing *Sujood* (prostration) by the *Kondotti* people before the *Shaikh*. Famous Sufi saint Veliyankattu Umar Khasi has written a poem describing that doing prostration to created things is leaving of religion, sharing of God (shirk) and a great sin. Certain other allegations were there against *Kondotti* section like man – women mixing, staying away from prayers, using drugs, etc. *Ponnani* people announced a strong ban against *Kondotti* people. *Kondotti* people's entry to mosques and burying of their dead bodies in *Khabarsthan* (burial place) owned by mosque were banned. The meat of the animals cut by them shouldn't be eaten, they had no right on father's property, and marriage relationships with them were prohibited. When such abandonment and avoidance acts that are supposed to be taken on leavers of religion were started to be practiced by the scholars of *Ponnani* section and the people who supported them, it became very difficult to the people of *Kondotti Tariqa*. Making *Kondotti* people as Imam and them giving leadership for ceremonies were prohibited. “Why after being Muslim, you are rejecting *Nombu* (fasting) and *Hajj*?” *Kondotti Fakir* replied that he was a Sufi of *Malmathi* section. Those of *Malamathi* section need not have to follow the external duties of *Sharia*, was his version. These arguments were strongly condemned by *Ponnani* scholars. *Ponnani* Kammukutti Muslair had questioned the *Malamathi* argument by putting forth the statements of the chiefs in Sufi Arena, Abdur Rahman Jami and Shihabudheen Suhra Vardhi.

Imbibing Kerala culture in *Mappila* culture resulting in variations in customary practices among *Mappilas*: These types of debates among Kerala Muslims became the reason for the formation of different *Sharias*. Rituals like *Kuthu Ratheeb* were practised in different ways by different sections. Therefore, major differences are seen in the presentation and motive of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. It is the folk culture that keeps a culture steady. The urban people don't seem

to have an interest in keeping cultural imprints.²⁸ Beliefs and ritual practises play a major role in keeping the folk culture. Even if a new belief is accepted, an effort can be seen among communities to concomitant with the local culture. The *Mappilas* were able to synchronize Kerala's arts and culture with Islamic culture. Peace with everyone, peace for everyone is the great aim Sufi sections of Kerala who propounded Islam had. They didn't show disrespect to the existing culture. Even though Islam and Hindu religion are ideologically deeply different from each other, it did not affect the cultural co-existence of any religion. With the official character of general people, it had problems, but that was not a hindrance for the coexistence. Knowingly and unknowingly, local culture and customs took space in Kerala Muslim culture. *Rifayi Ratheeb* from Iraq is practised by the *Mappilas* as *Kuthu Ratheeb* in Kerala. Favourable conditions for its presentation were in Kerala because of the concomitance of cultures without a difference in opinions. To the culture existed before the advent of Islam, Islamic arts, rituals, and practices were incorporated by the Kerala Muslims. In ceremonies, spiritual activities, practices, *Nercha*, and *Vazhipadu*, Muslim culture has imbibed Kerala culture. In the ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb* itself, we can see cultural blending. The Kerala Muslim culture has culture and practices mixed with Hindu culture because a majority of *Mappilas* are the ones who had converted religion from lower castes. The religious conversion happened in a large scale during the time of the *Mappila* protest (1921 Malabar riot). In the urge of fighting along with *Mappilas*, against feudal lords, a big section of lower caste people has come to Islam. The elite class had indirectly supported lower caste people becoming Islam. Elite Hindus were ready to give the same consideration like that of other Muslims to religious converts. When mass religious conversion happened, sufficient religious learning facilities were not available. So several of those changed their religion had followed older practices. Even the caste laws were

²⁸. Kumaranashan, Aashante Padyakrithikal Padanam, Nitya Chaitanya Yathi, Kottayam 1990, 509.

practised. The steps to refine the new religious people have happened vigorously under the leadership of *Mamburam Thangal*.

Kondotti Dargah exists near to *Swami Madom* (Hindu monastery). The *Swamis* give a silver flag to *Dargah* during the time of the festival. In social life also, *Mappilas* and Hindu communities had retained companionship. Without affecting religious beliefs, several of Kerala practices are received by *Mappilas* and other religious groups. *Marumakkathayam* is major evidence for this. In ceremonies and practices, *Mappilas* have accepted Kerala style. The practice of '*thalikettu*' (ritual tying of knot) during a marriage is found in several *Mappila* communities. In food, dress, etc., for the *Mappilas*, it is completely Kerala style.²⁹

The presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* in Kerala: *Kuthu Ratheeb* is practised in different parts of Kerala. No substantial difference is seen in presentation, but the space where *Kuthu Ratheeb* is conducted, the time and the numbers of believers differ. In the *Kuthu Ratheeb* conducted in *Kondotti Dargah*, the number of believers is more.

The differences in the customs and presentations of *Kuthu Ratheeb*: During *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual in some places, white *mundu* (*dhothi*) is used. Upper garments are generally not worn by people of any land. Some people wear an old type belt around their waist. Some people wear white cloth during the performance. Certain places where *Kuthu Ratheeb* is performed have *Shiite* dress style or they wear black colour cloth in any of their body parts. On top of white *mundu* or check *mundu*, in the waist, a black cloth not with much breadth is tied around the waist. In any part of Kerala where *Kuthu Ratheeb* is performed, generally, the performers do not wear upper cloth. In *Kondotti* regions, in remote areas, black cloth is tied in the head. In places like *Idakkazhiyoor*, *Anchangadi*, and Malabar coastal areas, the performers tie a white cloth around their head. Not only are these types of differences, but in presentation and style also there are differences. In regions like *Ponnani*, *Tirur*, *Perinthalmanna*, etc., other forms of

²⁹. Miller, page 252.

Ratheeb are practiced. Certain communities have followed *Kondotti* sections and certain communities have followed *Ponnani* section. That way, the ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb* had lost and gained many things. Muhammad Shah had come from Bombay to Kerala and via *Perinthalmanna* of Northern Kerala through *Mulliarkurshi* had reached *Kondotti*. For Muhammad Shah who has reached *Kondotti*, a Dargah was built in *Mulliarkurshi* (in *Malappuram* district). In the *Dargah (Taqia)* at *Mulliarkurshi*, about thirty years back, *Nerchas* and festivals were conducted. Due to the invasion of certain other communities and ideologies, now, only prayers are happening in the *Dargah* of *Mulliarkurshi*. No *Nerchas* and festivals are happening.

3.2 History of *Ratheeb* culture

Kharbala war and the different types of *Ratheeb*s in Kerala: *Kharbala war* (October 10, 680/ 10th *Muharram*, *AlHijrah* 61). Yazid 1 who was an *Ummayyad* ruler had sent his troop to the place *Kharbala* and has blockaded the small group of Al- Hussain who was the son of Ali and the grandson of Muhammad (the prophet). It's in the place *Kharbala* that Yazid1 had blockaded Hussain's group. After besieging the retreating group of Hussain, Yazid1 had massacred the ones in the group. This war had come positive for *Umayyad* ruling but *Shiite* Muslims who are the followers of Hussain, once in a year, on *Muharram* 10, celebrate a day of mourning. When Hussain and the group were retreating to *khoofa* as refugees, this massacre happened. A big group including women and children was blockaded in *Kharbala* by Yazid1. *Shiite* Muslims, who are the followers of Hussain, mourns the massacre that happened on *Muharram* 10, by making wounds on their own body to show solidarity with the martyrs. *Muharram* month is known as the month of mourning. Especially among the people of Iran, a ritual *Ta'ziyyah* was practised. It is for Ali's family that *Ta'ziyyah* is practised. The tombs of the martyrs died in *Kharbala war* are treated by them as their holy places. During the 15th and the 16th century, Sufi *Tariqas* were often conducted in Kerala. Among the *Ratheeb*s practised in

Kerala, the most popular is *Muhyudheen Ratheeb*. Each Sufi *Tariqa* has its own *Ratheeb* cultures. A group of people sit together and repeat *Dikrs* about *Shaiks* or *Caliphs*. The places where people group together for this type of *Ratheeb* are known as *Halqa* or *Madrassa*. When *Jalalia Ratheeb*, *Hadad Ratheeb*, *Shadili Ratheeb*, *Rifayi Ratheeb*, etc., start presentations, *Ratheeb* house or *Hadrass* becomes popular. Among the Muslims of Kerala, these different *Ratheeb*s are very popular rituals. In the place where they group for *Ratheeb*, by loudly chanting *Adkar* and repeating it, believers involve in the *Ratheeb*. Each *Majlis* has one leader or *Shaikh*. *Adkar* which are repeatedly sung loudly should be chanted and repeated how many times, in what tempo and volume, when it should be stopped? etc., are directed according to the jurisdiction of the *Shaiks* of each *Majlis*. All these activities take place according to the instructions of the *Shaikh*. There are two types of *Ratheeb*; one *Ratheeb* is conducted only involving *Dikrs*. The Second type of *Ratheeb* has musical instruments in it. In this *Ratheeb*, *Daffu*, *Arabana*, *Ilathalam*, etc. are used. *Daffu Ratheeb* and *Kuthu Ratheeb* are these types of performances. *Daffu Ratheeb* is composed in poetry form. All the *Dikrs* are known as *Baiths*. By chanting *Baiths*, by beating *Daffu* or *Arabana* in swift pace with speedy movements and making the visual experience more and more relishable and beautiful, each participant presents before the viewers *Daffu Ratheeb*. In *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation, sticks, knives, daggers, swords, etc. are used. Using these weapons, as a ritual, the performer pierces on his own body, tongue, ear, cheeks, head, etc. He repeatedly cuts his own stomach. Hymns are known as *Baiths*. The followers of *Rifayi Tariqa* do these types of customs. This popularly exists among the Muslims of Kerala as *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

Reasons for the spread of different types of *Ratheeb*s: During the 17th century, Muhammad Qasim Valiyullahi and Rifayi *Shaikh* had reached Kannur and had stayed as royal guests in the fort of *Arakkal* dynasty. They stayed at *Hydrose* mosque near *Arakkal* palace. Their presence has led to the spread of *Rifayi Tariqa* and the spread of its traditions. Through

this, *Ratheeb* also becomes known to people. From renowned Sufi, *Shaikh* Sayyid Sa'abban Valiyallahu, *Shaikh* Muhammad Qasim Valiyullahu received the special permission to conduct *Daffu Ratheeb* and *Kuthu Ratheeb*. After that, the people of Lakshadweep got permission to lead *Rifayi Ratheeb*. These people came to be known as *Dweepu Thangals* and they have become popular. (The *Thangals* (scholars) from *Dweepu* (island) are known as *Dweepu Thangals*). In *Azhiyoor* near *Mahee* of Northern Malabar, *Ratheebpura* still exists actively. Now it has become a mosque for prayer. In the festivals happening every year, *Rifayi Ratheeb* is conducted here. Repeated calling of the name of Ahmed Kabir Al Rifayi during the *Baith* is the main feature of the presentations of *Daffu Ratheeb* and *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The ones who perform *Kuthu Ratheeb* and all the devotees who stand as part of it extol and praise their *Shaikh's* powers. After that, they will get the blessings of God, believes the devotees. Throughout *Kuthu Ratheeb*, they pray for god's blessings. The devotees believe that the *Shaikhs* will protect them using their powers. When calamities happen in a place, people believes that it is because of the presence of the devil, some believe that to get rid of the calamities from that place, they should get rid of the devil. So, they practice *Kuthu Ratheeb* as a ritual. It is among the Kerala Muslims, the *Kuthu Ratheeb* is practiced in this way. When snake bite happens or when there are problems because of snakes in Muslim houses, *Rifayi Ratheeb* or *Mauluds* are organized. Through this, the people of the house will be safe is what is believed. During the *Ratheeb*, animals are killed as a ritual. Believers pledge that the animals shall be given for *Ratheeb*. These types of pledges are taken to get rid of the calamities happen to the believers. The meat of these animal killings is cooked and is distributed among those who participate in *Kuthu Ratheeb* or *Ratheeb*. All the members of the family, neighbours, and the people of the locality consider this as a celebration and participate in it.

Different *Ratheeb* cultures among Kerala Muslims and the modes of *Kuthu Ratheeb*: *Shadili Tariqa* conducts special *Shadili Ratheeb* in their *Hadras*. Whenever the *Dikr* starts

chanting, all those who participate move in the same way, slowly this movement acquires pace. This continues according to the chant of *Dikr*. Each instruction is given by the *Caliphs*. When the beautiful rhythmic humming of the *Dikr* happens, all the participants hold their hands to the hands of the other and jumps on. This is the main feature of *Shadili Ratheeb*. All these are part of *Ratheeb* culture. Among the Muslims of Kerala, these types of traditions exist as they see the traditions emotionally. Traditions become a land's own. Arab and *Arabimalayalam* are used in households for receiving glorious blessings from the Almighty. Sacred threads and *Alikallu* (machine) are worn for recovery from epidemic and family subjection. People who do witchcrafts called *Asmapani*, magic like *Omam* are known as *Musliars* in the community. In some parts of *Kuthu Ratheeb*, *Daffu* is used and in some parts of *Kuthu Ratheeb*, *Arabana* is used. There are differences in the sound, making, and size of both. In Malabar areas, it is *Arabana* that is used in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. To add beauty to the *Baiths* by its majestic sound and to transport the performer to another level of performance, the majestic sound of *Arabana* helps. There are two types of compilations in Islam, *Shariat*, and *Tariqa*. *Tariqa* is lived Islam. It's the laws for the human' soul/mind. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a big example of it. Worship methods related to the body and its law is what *Shariat* is (textual Islam). Miracles used to happen in all *Ratheeb*s. Like that, if the *Shaiks* of respective *Ratheeb*s give the performers blessing and permission, the performers are used to reaching trance. It's not only in *Kuthu Ratheeb* that the performers reach trance and perform spectacularly, but also in all *Ratheeb*s. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a ritual of hymn recitation, where self-harm is done using weapons. The ritual where there is no weapon is called as *Chollu Ratheeb*. *Ratheeb* is a tradition given birth by Sufi *Tariqas*. Singing certain *Dikrs*, *Duahs*, and some great names of Allah along with certain words which rhyme and are in tune, each *Tariqas* created *Ratheeb*. *Ratheeb* songs are not only in Arabic but also in the south Indian language Tamil as well. In the weekly *Ratheeb* programme of *Erattupetta Noriya Majlis*, these types of Tamil songs are sung. *Ratheeb*s are made to create

devotional intoxication. In Christian Theosophical groups, there are rituals instead or similar to *Ratheeb*. The *Ratheeb*s of Sufi *Tariqas* later became offering festivals and rituals. When *Muharram* is observed, certain *Shiite* groups mourn by jumping into the fire and bleed by tearing face and chest; they self-torture. It is due to devotional mindset towards Hussain that they do this. In certain sacred groves and temples, during festival time, self torture ways like hanging trident by piercing two cheeks, conducting *Garudan Thookkam* (Eagle hanging), grabbing red hot iron chain on their naked bodies, etc. are welcomed. The Muslim version of these self tortures is *Kuthu Ratheeb*. It is to tell the glory of own religion to others that the ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb* was started. Religious propagation was also an aim. Knife, *Daboos* (trident), axe, etc. are the self -torturing weapons of *Ratheeb*. To the wounds made of these weapons, rose water is sprinkled. A coffee decoction prepared of pepper powder and ghee is given to quench the tiredness of the performers. Certain groups check if it's time for the use of a weapon, by observing whether fire sparks comes out when an oil wick is rubbed against a green woollen cloth spread above the head by four people. If sparks are seen, then it is the permission to start. In between cutting, *Vettiamuriye koottithaya ya Muhyudheene* (Let this cut wound be made together, O Muhyudheen), *Iniyum vettukayilla ya Muhyudheene* (Again won't be doing the cut, O Muhyudheen) is a refrain chanted for the healing of the wound. Performances are done in offering places and money is collected from the spectators. The ones who beat *Daffu/Arabana*, chanters of *Maulid – Ratheeb*, the ones who use weapons, like this, the *Kuthu Ratheeb* group is of three types. *Daffu* beating, *Moulid* recitation, *Ratheeb* chanting, weapon application, it is when these four stages end that *Kuthu Ratheeb* ends. The ones, who beat *Daffu* or *Arabana*, in the zenith of ecstasy and devotion, play the instrument forgetting hand and body. The performance of the players involves swinging sideways without shifting position, inclining sideways, bending till the ground, throwing *Daffu* on the air, and creating beats on the *Daffu* and *Arabana* by raising it in the held-up hands. On certain occasions, non- Muslims have also

conducted *Kuthu Ratheeb*. It may be because of the weapon usage that it did not get widespread popularity. In *Kannur*, and *Koyilandy* areas, there exist professional groups and *Ratheeb Khanas (Ratheeb Bhavan)*. This ritual does not have any Islamic backing. As a result of the activities by Islamic reformative movements, these types of customs have shrunk only to certain conservative centres in Kerala.

3.2.1 Different Musical instruments used in *Kuthu Ratheeb*

In the northern parts of Kerala, several elements of native culture have an impact on Islamic rituals such as *Kuthu Ratheeb*. One among the things that came to *Kuthu Ratheeb* is the musical instrument, *Ilathalam*. *Ilathalam*, *Arabana/ Daffu* are the musical instruments used in *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

3.2.1.1 *Arabana*, an Accompanying instrument used in *Kuthu Ratheeb* tradition

The main accompanying instrument which leads in *Kuthu Ratheeb* is *Arabana*. *Arabana Muttu* is a popular native art form in Saudi Arabia. *Arabana* is a territory in ancient *Babylonia*. Maybe it got its name because it started there. It is said that the prayer term *Ya Rabbana* has shrunk to become *Arabana*. To avoid mental suffering and to get mental happiness for the ones attacked by cruel animals till they get medical aid, Arabs used to make rhythm by beating *Arabana*. They also considered *Arabana* beating as a proclamation of war. *Arabana Muttu* has evolved as an art form in which performers split into two groups and, by singing songs, rotate in a circle. *Arabana Muttu* is another version of *Daffu Muttu*. *Daffu* and *Arabana* are called *Daful Arabi* and *Daful Ajami* respectively. *Arabana* is an instrument where jingle (*Jalajil*) is attached. The rhythm of *Baiths* is made to its zenith using *Arabana Muttu*. The praise *Baiths of Khadiriya and Rifahia Tariqas* are the ones that are mainly sung in *Arabana Muttu*.

The beating patterns and directions of use of *Arabana* which is a musical instrument in *Kuthu Ratheeb*: *Arabana* is the musical instrument used in *Ratheeb* and *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The rituals are enhanced by tapping *Arabana*. The rhythm of *Arabana* helps magnify performance and attain trance. The Nabi (prophet) and his allies who reached Kerala before 1400 years were welcomed by a group of people by singing along with *Arabana*, as the history says. Then *Rifayi E Ratheeb* that originated four centuries ago and *Abi Muttu* which is believed to be originated by the end of the 19th century gave way to the growth and development of the musical instrument *Arabana*. *Arabana* is a drum like instrument (*Muttuvadyam*). *Arabana* is a musical instrument consisting of 5 circular wooden pieces with a drumhead made of animal hide and metal jingles (*chilambu*) set into the sides of the frame. In the Arabic songs venerating the holy man Ahamedul Kabeer Rifayi in *Kuthu Ratheeb*, *Achal Muttu*, *Abu Muttu*, and *Kori Muttu* are the beats that are used. The size of the *Arabana* is not very specific in *Ratheeb*. Even though *Arabana Muttu* is a difficult art form, for those who have completed the strict training, the *Ratheeb Muttu* is easy. Small *Arabanas* are used for the sake of easy handling and the bigger ones are used to produce louder sounds to reach distances. But for the ritual *Arabana Kali Muttu* which is based on *Ashtadwani* rhythm, the *Arabanas* are compulsory of the same size. For best sound, the wooden pieces of the *Arabana* are chosen to be strong, and the animal hide is of young calf or goat. Thicker animal hides are not used because thicker ones don't produce good sound. The goat hide is glued over, using *Panichikai* gum. The process of winding the newly glued hide around 4-5 times with a rope (*choodi*) is called *Vattu Irakkal*. After *Vattu Irakkal*, *Arabana* is to be kept or hung for around 4 days. By then the hide would be firmly fixed. Then the rope is unwound. Brass is to be beaten and made into light weighted circular plates of a perimeter around 18 cm and a hole in the centre. Two pieces of these brass plates are to be attached through the jingle holes on the frame using iron nails or rods. This will bang with each other and produce *jiljil* sound when the *Arabana* is tapped according to the

rhythm. The circular wooden pieces are made by carpenters and the jingles and brass plates by blacksmiths. In recent times, people who make *Tabala*, *Mridangam*, etc. also make *Arabana*. *Arabana* is to be held in the left hand. With the thumb inside the hole down the *Arabana* and the other fingers outside, it is to be held in touch with the right leg while sitting in *Athahiyathu* position (in *namaz*). It is from this position the performers are supposed to strike the *Arabana*; this is also the rest position.

While training in the *Muttu* of *Kuthu Ratheeb*, in the first *Achal Muttu*, *Muradiya...muradiya ...muradi...* (Lines of the *Baith* song) the first strike is towards the right. The *Arabana* held in the left hand on the right leg is to be drifted towards the right. The drift is to be made in such a way that the *Arabana* that is held in the left hand can be tapped with the right hand. One is to look up on the left side while tapping the *Arabana*. In the starting it is to be tapped once, then twice. *Muradiya...Muradiya...Muradi Shaik Ahamed Rifayi*. First the *Baith* of the above pattern is taught. By the tune and the rhythm of the *Baith*, *Arabana* is tapped once when *Ra* is being sung after *mu*. The following would all be double taps (*Iratta Muttu*). The first *Iratta Muttu* is in tune with the *mu* of the second *Muradiya* and the next *Iratta Muttu* with the *Ra*. The *Muttu* that starts with drifting towards the right should then be drifted towards left, then right and so on, drifting also the body from one's waist onwards according to the rhythm of *Baith* is there. One should be looking up in the opposite direction of the *Arabana* drift while doing this. This action of looking in different directions is not to observe anything. One shouldn't be seeing other things during *Muttu*. Because, the sights of the tool *Dabbos* of around one-foot long, one finger width and sharp edges in different shapes, of blood shedding from one or more of these tools repeatedly piercing the chest, of *Dabbos* hanging on different parts of the body as ornaments and of dangerously shiny sharp *Soori* knives slitting the fleshy parts of the body would make one lose one's rhythm during the *Muttu*. If the *Arabana Muttu* goes wrong with its rhythm, the performer of tools is also bound to go wrong. In the mystical

harmony of *Muttu* and *Baith*, the performance (*Ayudapani*) takes place. The *Muttu* shouldn't impair the intoxicated feeling of the presence of Shaik Ahemadul Kabeer Rifayi which is felt by the exhilarating eulogies. When the *Muttu* is taught and practiced, the performance with tools will not be present. The performance will only take place during the *Kuthu Ratheeb* ceremony. Performance with tools is taught during the *Ratheeb*. If accepted for the disciples whom *Ustad* proposes to perform with the tools, actions excluding that with the *Dabbos* are taught during the training. The *Arabana* performers shouldn't be watching the performance with tools nor be alert to anything else. The spectacle of the flow of the body and eyes in rhythm is magnificent. The last verses of the *Achal Muttu* will be in haste. The speed of the rhythm accelerates slowly in fervour. The *Ustad* commands *ssayy* when the briskness and zeal of the *Muttu* are found satisfactory. Along with it, *Ustad* might also clap hands loudly. That is a command. *Muttu* should stop by this command. One *Adakkam* is over this way. The next round of *Muttu* is called *Kori Muttu*. *Kori Muttu* is the most difficult among the *Ratheeb Muttu*. *Baiths* about Shaik Ahamed Rifayi like *Shaililaya Abdulkadar* are recited during *Kori Muttu*. Bringing the *Arabana* down to the centre of the crossed legs, it is to be tapped once. Then, *Arabana* is lifted to the head like a hat which is about to be kept in a slanting position while raising oneself from folded legs to the knees. The last few *Baiths* of *Kuthu Ratheeb* is to be chanted in standing position. The protagonists' auxiliary performances take place during the last *Baiths*. Two hours of daily practice at night for six months would be sufficient for the *Ratheeb Muttu* to be committed to memory. The premier of the performance will be held along with the *Ratheeb* ritual. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is held in the vicinity of a mosque or other places with proper facilities under a shed to which dignified persons like *Musalyars*, *Ustads*, and performers already trained in *Ratheeb* etc. are invited. *Kuthu Ratheeb* takes the audience to a different level of experience through its performance. Through movements, light, *Muttu*, and other sounds, performers create a dream like world in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. While singing the verses

in *Kuthu Ratheeb*, *Arabana* is tapped for attaining an ambience of veneration and devotion. While *Achal Muttu*, *Anju Muttu*, *Kori Muttu*, etc. complement the *Baith* songs in *Ratheeb*, *Ratheeb Muttu* is not particularly pleasing. *Ratheeb Muttu* does not stand out and is hence confined to the spheres of the ritual. *Ratheeb* is the reverence towards Almighty Allah and verses of veneration for holy men. *Kuthu* is action performed on the body using tools. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is also called *Vettumkuthum Ratheeb*.

3.2.1.2 *Daffu*, an Instrument from Antiquity into *Ratheeb* culture

Daffu, an instrument which gives rhythmic beauty in *Kuthu Ratheeb*: *Daffu*, a musical instrument that was popular before 2000 BC itself and related to the tribal practices of *Banu Israyiliar*, is used in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. In some places, *Daffu* is used and in some other places, *Arabana*. Between four tree branches, skin is tied on and made the *Daffu* of that time. It is by the sixth century that *Daffu* became popular in Arab lands. New forms and styles were introduced. *Daffu*'s origin is from Persian language. *Daffu* is also known in the names *Athwara*, *Dabbu*, *Tafiq*, *Uduf*, *Dheera*, and *Dahra*. In different lands, *Daffu* is known in different names. In the early times, there were seven types of *Daffu*.

- *Mustadheerul Murabbaah*
- *Mustadheerul Ajras*
- *Mustadheerul Adhavathu Rinana*
- *Mustadheerul Baseet*
- *Mustadheerul Oukkanj*
- *Mustadheerul Sanooj Rinana*
- *Mustadheerul Jalajil*.

Prophet Muhammad, who fled from Mecca, was received by the inmates of Madina using *Mustadheerul Muraba Ah* which sets its rhythm by chanting *Baiths*, says history. In the perimeter, *Daffu* which is covered with skin on one side of the wooden frame has a height of four or five fingers. A group of not less than ten people is required to present *Daffu Muttu*. In the venues of devotional songs of Prophet also, *Daffu Muttu* is used. Like that in *Ratheeb* and *Kuthu Ratheeb*, in other religious gatherings also, *Daffu Muttu* is used.

3.2.1.3 *Ilathalam*, an Accompanying instrument into *Kuthu Ratheeb* from Kerala's Ritual arts

Another accompanying instrument used in *Kuthu Ratheeb* is *Ilathalam* or *Kaimani*. *Ilathalam* is an accompanying instrument used in Kerala's ritual arts. So that in Kerala's Muslim traditional art, *Kuthu Ratheeb* also, *Ilathalam* is used. *Ilathalam* is one of eighteen accompaniments. *Ilathalam* is an accompaniment cast in a circular shape using bronze. It has about two kilograms of weight. Smaller versions of *Ilathalam* are used in Christian ritual art, *Margam Kali*. Through the opening with a ditch in the centre of the *Ilathalam*, a thread is strung and the circular parts are attached to the thread. By holding the thread of both parts of *Ilathalam* strongly using the hand, they are struck each other and sound is made according to the *rhythm*. In many arts and performances *Ilathalam* is used. Like the accompanying instrument *Ilathalam* is received into *Mappila* ritual art *Kuthu Ratheeb*, stand oil lamp is also used in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. *Ilathalam* is an accompanying instrument used for the richness of the ensemble in *Kathakali* like temple arts, *Thayambaka* and other *Chenda* festivals, and *Panchavadyam*. *Ilathalam*, an instrument which is an accompaniment in *Kuthu Ratheeb* is taken from Kerala 's ritual arts. This instrument is small in nature. It has the shape of a lotus leaf, that's why it got its name as *Ilathalam*. It's in Kerala and Tamil Nadu that *Ilathalam* is used. There are 2 pieces to this instrument. It is played by holding a piece each in both hands. One is kept facing upwards in

the left hand and is struck with the other one which is held facing downwards in the right hand. This is how *Ilathalam* is played.

Conclusion

After discussing the various *Mappila* folk forms and sacramental rituals, the history and differences in *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation, in the second chapter, I have explained how folk theatre got manifested in its natural conditions. The history of the *Ratheeb* culture with the reasons for its origination and different forms of *Ratheeb* are discussed in this chapter. Details are given about different musical instruments used in *Kuthu Ratheeb* such as *Daffu*, *Arabana*, and *Ilathalam*. The different modes of *Arabana* are also discussed. A detail has been done about the origination of folk arts in Kerala and the practice of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. In this chapter discussion about relation of folklores of Kerala and Tamil Nadu is done. Arab Tamil's and Tamil Nadu's influence in the generation of *Arabimalayalam* and Muslim culture in Kerala are discussed in this chapter. The *Mappila* culture of Kerala's beginning and growth is discussed in this chapter. Also, the different reasons for the acceptance of Islam religion by the Kerala people and status of religious converts are discussed. Discussions about entry of Sufism, its spread, and Sufi preceptors of Malabar are done in this chapter. Customary differences between the practices of different Muslim communities and tension between *Kondotti* and *Ponnani Tariqas* are described. Detail on the imbibing of Kerala culture by *Mappilas* is seen in this chapter. The social and financial interest of *Kuthu Ratheeb* is discussed in this chapter. Differences in the customs and presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* are also discussed. The coming chapter mainly deals with the nature of *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance, the state of pain in *Kuthu Ratheeb* and medieval times, theoretical descriptions about pain, and the similarity in nature of Artaudian theatre with *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

CHAPTER IV

Muslim Ritual Practice *Kuthu Ratheeb* as a Performance:

Analysing its Method of Trance, Pain and State of Violence in Performance

Sufism is a mystical ascetic form of Islam. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a practise that has evolved from Sufi *Tariqas*. The word *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a mixed form of Malayalam verb *Kuthuka* (which means to stab or to use any weapon upon someone's body) and Arabic verbal noun *Ratheeb* (which means something done repeatedly). In this chapter I aim to investigate how Muslim ritual *Kuthu Ratheeb* becomes a performance in its conditions. I use Performance theory's concepts for doing the same. I intend a study on how belief, time, space, and action used in the performance invigorate performance and performers and how the believers transform a presentation into a ritual. Through this chapter I aim to analyse the states of trance, pain, and violence in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The process of it is by considering different theories regarding pain experience and how consciousness is affected on infliction of pain and how creation of pain using violence can lead the performer to trance states. In this chapter I deliberate to analyse how the theatrical ideas of Antonin Artaud is related with the performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Solar drama concept of Artaud lies close to the ritual *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

4.1 General nature of *Kuthu Ratheeb*

Basic principles of *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual: *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a ritual performed at homes to chase out evil forces. Groups of 10 to 15 participate in the ritual. The date and time of the ritual are decided by discussing with the *Ustad* (leader) of the protagonists. Usually, the ritual is held during night times. It starts after the *Ishaa Namaz* at night. Participants of *Kuthu Ratheeb* are bound to be physically and psychologically clean and follow the fasting and *Namaz* regularly according to tradition. There are no specific stage arrangements for *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Participants sit on two sides on a rug or a carpet opened out on the floor. The site should be

clean. Frankincense or joss sticks are burned for fragrance. The costumes of the protagonists of *Kuthu Ratheeb* are plain and simple. White shirt and *mundu* are worn with a small cap or clothing over the head. Participants sit on two sides after receiving blessings from *Ustad*. Ritual starts with a prayer. After that *Ustad* recites *Baiths* and the participants repeat them. Along with it, *Arabana* is tapped in the same rhythm. After several *Baiths*, performances with tools begin. *Kadir* (a sharp tool with a wooden handle) is pierced through tongue, cheeks, and ears. Blood from the wounds is wiped away. Finally, the *Arabana Muttu* is stopped after chanting *la ilahaillallah*.

4.2 *Kuthu Ratheeb*– A Reflection of the Varied Culture of Kerala Muslims

The performative progression of *Kuthu Ratheeb*: *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a ritual which is a part of one community's cultural tradition. It is the believers and the *Ustad* who talk about *Kuthu Ratheeb* and make an arrangement about the things needed for the performance and the number of performers required. Generally in Malabar areas the contribution of women towards *Kuthu Ratheeb* is minimal during its performance. Only as spectators do they intervene in the performance. Otherwise they intervene in a very passive manner. The ritual *Kuthu Ratheeb* which is popular in Iraq is presented in the *dargah* of Muhyudheen *Shaikh*. During any time of day *Kuthu Ratheeb* can be performed. The belief is that *Shaikh* Faridhudheen the disciple of Hazrat *Shaikh* Khwaja Syed Muhammad Muhyudheen Chisthi had come to Kerala and started the practice of *Kuthu Ratheeb* among Kerala Muslims. Later, the presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* has spread to all parts of Kerala and has also become popular in Lakshadweep and Sri Lanka as well. In *Daffar Jalaini* cave mosque at *Kuragala* near *Balagonda* in Srilanka, Muhyudheen *Shaikh* meditated for eleven years. The people of that place in memory of the *Shaikh* built a *dargah* there and practised a ritual similar to that of or instead of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Here the performers stab with sharp iron weapons into one's own body. The book written by Muslim scholars for the presentation of ritual practice *Kuthu Ratheeb* includes the glories of holy beings

especially of Rifayi *Shaikh*. The books used by all the groups in Kerala are *Kai Pusthakam* (handwritten book). The respective *Ustads* got these handwritten books traditionally. The content of all the books is same. But in the order of the *Baith* and also in its expressions there are small variations. It is *Ustad* Moydu Payyoli and *Ustad* Mahammood Memunda who compiled the handwritten books for the performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The disciples of these *Ustads* are still following this book which is transferred for around seventy years. The performers after taking bath wear traditional dress i.e., white cloth in the lower part and white shirt in the upper part of body. They don't use any intoxicants for performance which are against the religion. It is with complete devotion do these people observe *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Even if the knowledge about the performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb* is gained from any text, each presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* is performed differently from the ones before. None of the performance is similar to the older ones, because, each performance is in its special conditions, manner, and kind. The *Kuthu Ratheeb* which happened in the *Kottakal Iringal* village of *Koyilandi* Taluk of Kerala's Calicut district is very relevant. The stage for the performance is set up by making a shed on top of the house. It was only a temporary shed. It is in this shed that the performance occurred. Including *Ustad*, there were seventeen performers. It has started around six in the evening. Both Muslims and non- Muslims have come to watch this performance. Even before the time of arrival of spectators, the performers occupied the space and the occupied space is split into two sections. They make a rectangular space. By spreading a mat, space is differentiated. Encircling this rectangular space, there is another space. Spectators either sit on the ground or chairs. Space is determined for the *Ustad* to sit (a seat).

The seat for the *Ustad* is arranged facing towards one side of the rectangle. The performers split into two groups and sit on knees along the lengthier sides of the rectangle. The performers who sit along both sides sit as they sit during the prayer. The tradition of lighting *kunthirikkam* (Frankincense) and spreading its smell through smoke is a tradition that could

not be separated from Kerala's own culture. It is also an inseparable part of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. In *Kuthu Ratheeb*, different weapons to stab could be seen in the performance space. Weapons like *Dabbos*, *Khadir*, sword, knife, etc. are used in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Using these weapons performers pierce their body during the performance and torture oneself. In the ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb*, in different parts of the body, injuries are made by stabbing themselves using different weapons. These weapons for performance are placed in front of the *Ustad*, on top of a pillow. With the rhythm of *Daffu*, *Ustad* chants *Dikr* (praises of Allah) and *Salath* (praises of the Prophet) and starts the ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Devotees or spectators repeat this and one by one comes forward and place their hands on top of the *Kithab* in front of the *Ustad*. It is the local religious book created by the scholars of the land for the performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual. It is for the blessings from Allah that they place their hands on the *Kithab*. After that all the performers including the *Ustad* chant the Quran verses of its first chapter, *Surathul Yaseen* (Quran's middle chapter), and *Muhavadathaini* (last three chapters). During this occasion the believers pray to the prophet and chant *Dikr* and repeat the names of various holy beings of Islam. In between the performance at one time the performers keep the *Arabana* (*Daffu*) on the ground and chant the *Dikrs* without the rhythm of *Arabana*. Praises chant so is chanted as *Baiths*. Those which are sung during the performance without the accompaniment of musical instruments, such as *Arabana* and *Daffu*, are *Nasheeda Baith*. *Nasheeda Baith* is the praise songs of religious subjects. When *Nasheeda Baith* is chanted, the performer in *Kuthu Ratheeb* gets to rest. After that the performers again start beating *Daffu/ Arabana* and start singing *Baiths* in the glory of God and the Prophet and his followers. *Baith* again progresses on. During the performance, *Ashraq Baith* is also sung in memory of *Hijra*. It is believed that when Prophet Muhammad and his followers fled from Mecca to Madina the people of Madina welcomed the prophet by chanting *Ashraq Baith*. It is the praises of Allah and the Prophet. It is after these *Baiths* which start with the praises to the Prophet that the performance begins. These chants

describe the holiness and supernatural deeds of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. During this time, the rhythm of *Arabana* becomes swift and the performers and spectators reach a state of ecstasy. This is the point where performers and spectators merge. Here both of them perform in the same manner. Along with these chants which describe the life of these saints and holy beings of Islam, in speed and sound, *Arabana* is beaten. Along with the beat of *Arabana*, performers repeat the chant *Shaikh Shaikh Huvallah*. This time each performer nearly sixteen people one after the other comes and shakes the hands of the *Ustad* as a sign of receiving blessings from the *Ustad*. The performers receive weapons from the *Ustad*. Only those performers who got special mental power during the performance will get weapons from the *Ustad*. Only they will get special permission from the *Ustad*. This permission is known as *Ijazath*. 'Power to transmit' is the meaning of the word *Ijazath*. Before coming to the ritual performance, the performers learn how to use the weapons. When the ritual starts with the sounds of the praises and chants in the name of Allah, the Prophet, and other saints, during when *Arabana* is beaten, the performers reach trance and by themselves approach the *Ustad*. When the *Baith*, *Allahu, Allahu, Allahu....Allah...Ya Maula* starts, he takes weapons from the *Ustad* and gives it back to the *Ustad*. After blessing the weapons, the *Ustad* gives back all these weapons to the performer. It is believed that this blessing of the *Ustad* protects the performers from pain during the performance. When *Baiths* are repeatedly chanted along with the beat of the drum, the ambience created thus are echoed on and the performers strike their stomach and pierce their cheeks with *Khadir* (weapon) and pierce their hands in rhythm. By raising knives, the performer loudly repeats the word *ya... Shaikh...Raliyallah*. The performer who bends backward through movements according to the rhythm of the beat of *Arabana* loudly calls on *Shaikh* and *Allah*. "Oh...holy being, *Allah*, be merciful on him" is what is loudly said by the performer. With swift movements the performer beats in his stomach and makes fearful gestures and makes parallel wounds and strikes on the stomach. After that, the performer

approaches the *Ustad* with blood shedding stomach and gives him back the knife and other weapons. Usually, using a new white cloth the blood is wiped off in order not to show it off in a big manner or not to make it appear as cruel and violent. Afterwards, *Ustad* will chant some verses and keep his hands-on top of the wound and wipes the wounds three times. After that, the performer is given some water by the *Ustad*. After that, he goes and sits with other performers who are chanting *Baiths* by squatting. Some performers may be waiting for their turn. They might be ready with their weapons. The performance of performers transcends their body and the number and depth of the wounds increases. These types of them lose their consciousness and fall into the mat on the ground. At this time in the manner of healing, the *Ustad* by chanting some verses rub the bodies of those who are lying down. The performers receive it as healing and they stand up and go back to the squatting position. After that, all performers say *Salam* (Salutation) and pay homage to holy beings and the Prophet. After these chants the performers start chanting *Duah* (combined prayer) under the leadership of *Ustad*; bring to an end the ritual performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. After the ritual performance, the performers who used weapons are congratulated by the spectators. On the request of the spectators, the performers go to their houses and pray for the people of that house. It is to get blessings and goodness for the people of the house that the performers pray. The performers refuse the acknowledgments from others and acknowledge that they could do this ritual with the blessings and help of the holy beings and the *Ustad*. During the performance or before, if the performer makes any mistakes, *Ustad* rectifies the mistake and also does not congratulate the performers after the performance. All the performers who practice *Kuthu Ratheeb* must pray five times every day. Also, they should be following an Islamic way of life. The performers seek blessings and help of God through the mediation of holy beings. This mediated prayer is known as *Thawasul Duah*. Other than some Muslim groups, all Muslims (*Sunni* Muslims)

believe in rituals and traditions like *Nercha*, *Uroos*, *Moulid*, *Malapattu*, *Ratheeb*, and *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

Contrasting, the nature and reach of *Kuthu Ratheeb* practice in olden and current times: Today, Muslims conduct *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual for wellbeing, safe and comfortable delivery, mental calmness, etc. But in olden times it was for relief from communicable diseases like smallpox, tuberculosis, etc. that *Kuthu Ratheeb* was practised. In early times each village had 50-60 *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual performances, that too within a year. But nowadays this range has gone down to 20-25. To the new generation who are not interested to follow ritual traditions *Ustads* are not able to teach *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Some of the Muslim communities of these times opposes *Kuthu Ratheeb* and argue that this ritual is 'making a share in God'. Some progressive Muslim people consider *Kuthu Ratheeb* as a ritual where God is worshipped in ways other than that is prescribed by God. So *Kuthu Ratheeb* is considered un-Islamic by them. Their argument is that there is nobody in between God and man (mediator). So, to conduct these kinds of rituals in Islam is meaningless. The Sunni ideologies of Islam are opposed by them. For Sunni Muslims, Prophet Muhammad is a mediator between God and Man. Based on this *Kuthu Ratheeb* is not against the way of the Quran, say the Sunni Muslims.

Different sections of the Sunni Muslims where performative differences of practices exist: The debates among Sunni Muslims are related to three matters, *Istigaza* (to pray for me), *Tawasul*, and *Taqlid*. *Istigaza* means praying and seeking for help or protection to holy beings that are either dead or alive. *Tawasul* means to look upon these prophets (holy beings) as mediators between God and devotees. Using these mediators they seek for the blessings of God. *Sunni* Muslims are the largest section of Islam. The word *Sunni* means those who follow the words and deeds (way) of Prophet Mohammad. *Madhabs* are of four types. *Madhab* also has a meaning as a branch. In Islam, these four *Madhabs* are interpreted by four *Imamas* (leaders). One is Abu Hanifa's *Hanafi Madhab*. The Muslims of Bangladesh, Pakistan, India,

Afghanistan, Iraq, and Turkey follow *Hanafi Madhab*. The second one is *Maliqi Madhab*. Malik Ibnu Anas is its spokesman. Malik Binu Anas has spread his ideas in Madina. All African Muslims other than Lower Egypt and South Africa follow this branch of belief. The third *Madhab* is introduced by Muhammad Binu Idris Al Shafi. The Muslims of Indonesia, Lower Egypt, Malaysia, Singapore, Somalia, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, India (Kerala), Sri Lanka, Palestine, Yemen, Kurd Muslims of the place Kurdish, etc. are followers of *Shafi Madhab*. The fourth *Madhab* (school) is *Hambali Madhab*. *Ahmad Binu Hambal* is its spokesman. It is the people in Arabian sub islands who acknowledge the laws of this school. Even though these four schools practice same belief systems, in some other things like the culture of traditions, in its practices, and in its lawful interpretation of divine judgments (*Shariat*), they stand differently. But still *Sunni* Muslims consider all these as valid. Kerala Muslims follow the school of *Shafi Madhab* has a meaning, of the law. Dynasty or sect based on these transactions (lived Islam) is what has led to the interpretation of textual Islam. In lived Islam the code of conduct and also cultural practices of local surroundings are also included.

The textual and lived natures of Islam where law based, and performative practices of Muslims happen: The study of *Kuthu Ratheeb* adopts another model. Islam is made of two realms, lived and textual. They are inseparable and in unison. For example, the Quran and *Hadeeth* (deeds of the prophet) are practices to be followed by an Islamic devotee. Five times prayer (*Namaz*) is codified in the Quran. Even then it is the conversation between Allah and the Prophet which is the basis for all these traditions. Thus, practising becomes an inevitable part of the word. There is no difference in the idea of textual Islam and lived Islam. Most of the Islam of the Middle East is believed to have spread, like in India, through the followers of the Prophet (*Shahabas*) or holy beings (*Shaikhs, Auliyas, Peer*). In early times, rituals and customs were started and maintained for the propagation of religion. To express the superhuman powers of saints, they used these rituals. Some customs, miracles, casting away

the evil spirit, etc. which were done by saints are incorporated into the religion as part of Islam. These kinds of evidences show us that there is no difference between textual Islam and lived Islam. Almost all *Auliyas* and saints lived a simple life that of a *Fakir* (poor). On top of the tombs of these holy beings, *Mappilas* (Kerala Muslims) had built structures and maintained it. All these holy beings are believed to be capable of carrying out miraculous deeds. Devotees give offerings as money, things, or worship. *Nerchas* (offerings) are there in worship culture. Quran recitation is there in *Nerchas*. The presentation of rituals happens in mosques, *dargahs*, the house of believers, and other public places.

The leadership among Kerala Muslims, stating the complementary nature of Islam by focusing on the performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb*: The main *Nerchas* of the Malabar region are *Malappuram Nercha*, *Kondotti Nercha*, *Mamburam Nercha*, *Ponnani Nercha*, *Koottayi Nercha*, *Pattambi Nercha*, etc. After the death of holy people their tombs are worshipped as *dargahs* and annual festivals like *Uroos* and *Nercha* are practiced as a sign of respect towards them. Devotees reach *dargahs* for fulfilling their wishes. If we closely observe performances related to holy beings, we could see ones like that of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. These rituals do not tell us the difference between textual Islam and lived Islam but prove that all is one. It exists as complementary. There are two types of religious leadership among *Mappila* Muslims. The first one is having divine powers of healing they are called *Mullas*. The second group is *Maulavis* and *Qasis*. *Mullas* do their work by being in houses or *dargahs*. They can do miracles, believe the believers. Casting off evil spirits is their main healing process. They got this power from holy beings is what is believed. The second group i.e., *Maulavis* and *Qasis* are appointed based on religious education and schooling. They are the group who carry out worship traditions and educational institutions. The scholars who got training are called *Ulamas*. This means 'One who knows'. Rituals like *Kuthu Ratheeb* produced a new line of leadership. That line of leadership is *Ustads*. Either through lineage or as delegation, they could be the leader of *Kuthu*

Ratheeb. *Ustads* are believed to have received powers to traverse between heaven and earth. We could see the relation between these two worlds in rituals like *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The body of the Rifayi *Shaikh* is buried in Iraq. It is believed that through prayer the priest could call upon that spirit to the performance space. After when the spirit comes, even though the performers hurt their body using weapons, they don't feel pain. This is the time when the believers reach trance because of their belief. The performers are helped to injure their bodies without feeling pain is by this belief and the trance they get out of it. Sounds, Light, dressing style, the presence of spectators (believers), the place where performance happens, all these help the performer to reach trance. At this time, performers and spectators are not experiencing pain in the same manner. The belief is that the pain of the performer is in the body of the saint. The critical situations arise out of the usage of weapons by the performers are controlled by *Ustads*. *Kuthu Ratheeb* includes the presentation of the verses of holy text (Quran) and the ritualistic actions formed out of rhythmic body movements in accordance with the tune of textual presentation in singing form and are done in their stomachs. So it is impossible to maintain the differentiations between textual Islam and lived Islam. One affirms the other. If the textual presentation during *Namaz* (prayer) and the textual presentation during *Kuthu Ratheeb* are clearly examined, we could see many similarities. Without prayer (*Namaz*) a believer can conduct *Kuthu Ratheeb* as a *Nercha* (offering). But that won't be instead of *Namaz*. *Namaz* rely more on textual Islam. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is related to lived Islam. Thus, lived Islam is a continuation of textual Islam.

Iconotypification of Islamic practices resulting in variations in Islamic society: The complementary nature of *Mappila* Muslims is not only between lived Islam and textual Islam but also among Muslims and non - Muslim communities in a specific landscape and cultural sphere. After all, India is a non-Muslim nation where Muslims are considered an inevitable part of the nation due to various political and historical reasons. So the cultural practices of other communities have also influenced the *Mappila* community. The term used in folklore studies

for the process of localizing traditions of folk manifestation is 'icotype'. The factors which cause icotypification are mostly historical or cultural facts. Most of the Islamic practices of Kerala do not stay away from localness. It is Karl Wilhelm Von Sydow (217 - 42) who coined the term icotype. Icotype is a local folk narrative form. In that there are the peculiar features of the country and place. In the pressure of local surroundings to find the differences in narration is the main aim of icotype studies. The term "Muslim" to address the Islam followers of Kerala was changed to *Mappila* because of historical reasons. Even before the Islamic conquest of northern India during the eleventh century, there was a large Muslim population in Kerala. Indian Muslims have their local, language based, and cultural peculiarities. In Islam also there are inter-communal differences. North Indian Islam is introduced by central Asian intruders. South Indian Islam is introduced here by the Arab traders. In Kerala, the term *Mappila* was a generic term for non - Hindu occupiers. Kerala Muslims were known as *Jonaka Mappilas*, Kerala Christians as *Nasrani Mappilas*, and Kerala Jews as *Jootha Mappilas*. Later, only Kerala Muslims came to be known as *Mappilas*. It is a terminology used in reverence.

The development of *Mappila* literature and customary differences in Islamic societies of *Kondotti* and *Ponnani*: Indian Islam is a cultural product. The Muslims of Malabar are based on the *Shafi* School. In Sufism they follow the *Badri* way established by *Shaikh* Abdul Khadir Jeelani. It is in *Ponnani* that its leadership is given. Leadership was offered by *Makhdooms*. The nineteenth century was the springtime of *Mappila* literature. *Malappattu*, *Kissapattu*, *Baiths*, mourning songs, Sufi songs, *Padapattu*, *Maduh* songs, *Kalyanapattu* (marriage songs) like these, in poetic literature arena *Mappila* literature has evolved much. The great poet Moyinkutti Vaidyar is the champion of poetic literature. It is *Shaikh* Sayid Jifri who came forward for the cultural activities in the eighteenth century. The criticisms he had raised against the ill practices in the name of *Tariqas*, the religious practices of *Kondotti*, made the society resist Sufi *Tariqas*. All the scholars of *Ponnani* had taken up this mission and made the

awareness about *Tariqas*. They made possible the awareness about *Ba Alavi Tariqa*. Because of the propagation of *Ba Alavi Tariqa*, it was able to keep *Qamiri Tariqa* solemnly. For spiritual refinement this became an inspiration. Devotional songs of God like *Hadhadh Ratheeb* and *Qutubiyath*, offerings like *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Muhyudheen Malas* became active during these days and the new believers were kept away from local and un-Islamic beliefs. Also, Muslim styles and arts were bred.

Kuthu Ratheeb and *Nerchas*, unison of people of various cultures: The *Mappila* culture is more expressed in practices and customs related to *dargahs* of Sufis. The custom of seeking blessings by visiting holy beings is there in all Muslims of the world. After death, the tomb of these greats become pilgrim centres. By visiting the *dargahs*, praying to Allah in the presence of the holy men who rest in peace there is done as a holy act. *Kuthu Ratheeb* that happens in the *dargahs* and other offerings are related to the native agricultural and trade conditions. In many places, *Nerchas* are local festivals. It is by neglecting religious restrictions, arts and sports entertainment and *Kuthu Ratheeb* are conducted in these types of festivals. Believers of the Hindu faith also practice *Kuthu Ratheeb* as an offering. When analysed as a cultural commune, *Kuthu Ratheeb* can be seen as a union of villagers or urban people beyond the differences in faith. By keeping the differences in faith itself, these festivals are useful in creating humanitarian communes. The *dargahs* of each land are the wish and hope of the people of the respective land. To get rain and for good yield, farmers by forgetting the religious faiths vow *Kuthu Ratheeb* or other similar offerings in *dargahs*. The *dargahs* of towns are the wish centres of traders. By visiting these *dargahs*, traders vow offerings for desired effects. By expecting alms offered as food during the *Kuthu Ratheeb* offering and also alms by the pilgrims to the *dargahs*, many poor people rely on the *Dargas*.³⁰ From earlier times itself, rituals like *Kuthu Ratheeb* were used for religious awakening. By collecting money from the rich, the poor were

³⁰. Trimming ham, Sufi orders in Islam, Oxford 1986, 31.

given alms and food during *Nerchas*. People of different castes and religious practices vow *Kuthu Ratheeb* as an offering for fulfilling their wishes. In *Mappila* art forms, rituals, and sculptures, the union of it with Kerala styles are seen. Kerala art forms with little variations have been accepted by the Muslim community here. In *Kuthu Ratheeb*, *Ilathalam*, oil lamp, and incense sticks have come from Kerala's art forms and traditions. The *Kolkali* of *Mappilas* is another version of *Kolaattam* and *Koladi* song that existed among the *Keralites*.³¹ During *Puranic* time, this was an art form of Nair women.

4.3 Sufi culture and the ritualistic practice of *Kuthu Ratheeb*

Entry of Sufism in Kerala and the peculiarities of *Kuthu Ratheeb*: *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a common performance among the Muslims of Kerala. This ritual performance originated in the Middle East, later came to Kerala and became an accepted form encompassing several local customs and traditions. Even then ritual performances like *Kuthu Ratheeb* are usually held in the premises of a mosque or other holy places like *Dargahs*. If studied properly, it is understood that *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a practice that is textual as well as lived. These are inseparable, unified, and embodied in the Islam of the locals. Following the entrance in several parts of India in the 17th century, Sufism gained popularity in Kerala also. Sufism influenced both the sections of Islam, *Sunnis* and *Shiites* in a similar fashion. But one cannot claim that the *Sunnis* of Kerala are all Sufis. Sufism is a mystical ascetic form of Islam. Sufis focus more on religious spirituality. They create their own rules by taking their paths. The Sufis usually consider Sufism to be complementary to orthodox Islam. A Sufi starts with *Sharia* (Islamic law) of Islam and later on, initiated into the mystical path of a *Tariqa* (Sufi order). For centuries, the Malabar Muslims followed the *Tariqa* of *Shaik Abdul Khadir*; popularly known as *Muhyudheen* and *Shaik Sulthanul Arifeen Al Syed Ahmed Al Kabeer Hussanur Rifayi* also recognized well as *Rifayi* order of Sufism. Both holy men are believed to have been sent as leaders of the Muslim

³¹. S. Mohana Chandran, *Koladipattukal oru Padanam*, 1987, 47.

community. They are venerated on multiple grounds such as bearers of spiritual powers, workers of miracles, transmitters of magical cures, and sources of spiritual wisdom and guidance. As part of worship, the content of the *Mappila* literature of the Seventeenth century, known as *Muhyudheen Mala* and *Rifayi Mala* narrates the glorious and miraculous life of Muhyudheen and Rifayi. *Rifayi Ratheeb* or *Kuthu Ratheeb* is related to Iran (*Bhathahiya*) born *Shaik* Sulthanul Arifeen Al Syed Ahmed Al Kabeer Hussanur Rifayi. Singing songs with the accompaniment of *Daffu*, displaying superhuman acts, *Kuthu Ratheeb* is performed for curing diseases. This is popular amongst Sunni Muslims of Iran as *Rifayi Ratheeb*. In Kerala, this performance is called *Kuthu Ratheeb*. A Specialist person, who has got ample instructions and practice from the *Ustad*, does *Kuthu Ratheeb*. *Ustad* acts as the mediating power between the saints and the performers, controlling all the rituals and acts of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. *Ustad* is an Arabicised word for a person and is a title given with respect to a Muslim man in South Asia. This name is a denotation of teachers with high knowledge and artists especially musicians. It is used via informal social agreement, so *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a folk Theatre. *Ustads* of *Kuthu Ratheeb* have mysterious powers and the power to lead the presentation. These beliefs exist as part of a cult. This belief makes the performer closer to the performance. The sound, light, ambience, and the belief of the performer together enable him to enter into superhuman performances. When inflicted with injuries on the performer's body, he will reach the state of trance through his performance. Only *Ustads* who have inherited the right, or the elected ones have the right to permit the performance. *Ustad* needs to be given money by the followers depending on their status for conducting the ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. By this ritual, the followers seek and search for blessings.

4.4 Analysis of *Kuthu Ratheeb* based on Performance studies with an emphasis on various models of Islamic society

Performance theory's ideation of Performance: What is Performance theory? Based on performance studies, performance is the communication of art. Most rituals like *Kuthu Ratheeb* are expressed through words. From these words, action is derived subsequently. Performance study means to study all the dimensions of performance. Whichever performance is before us, performance study aims to study all the dimensions of that performance. The preparations and setting of a presentation, the social context of a presentation, cultural context, history, the study of the audience who come to watch the performance, all these comes in the purview of performance studies. The written text of a presentation could be used only when a researcher demands the text to be used. Every performance art has its levels and differences. It is to study all these levels and differences completely are performance study. More than a theory, performance theory is an approach to understand a cultural situation, an action, an affair involving a performer, an art form, and audience. These kinds of studies give new possibilities for performance theory. By taking a vision from sociolinguistics and communication cultural ethnographers, there arose an argument to have a background of a communication system based on culture for text analysis. It is the scholars, Dell Hymnes and Dennis Tedlock, who acted as a major energy source for this 'ethnography of speaking' method. As an art form of communication as well, performance is viewed by performance studies. Most performance cultures are verbal manifestations and are placed in action. When a researcher wants to speak, he approaches texts, but we can't perceive a performance instead of in the same way. Because each performance is formed on special conditions, in its versions and differences, so each performance is important.

Various models of Islamic society: When *Kuthu Ratheeb* starts, the first chanting (*Baiths*) of *Kuthu Ratheeb* are *Baiths* in the remembrance of Muhammad Nabi (the prophet). Then after,

it is the expressions of the glorious and magical deeds of Sufi saints who are considered to have superhuman powers. This time, the beat of the *Daffu* or the *Arabana* becomes swift and performers and audience reach a state of extreme elation. This part is the point that keeps the audience and performers together. At this time, the audience and performers become part of the ritual performance, *Kuthu Ratheeb*. In *Kuthu Ratheeb*, the pain that is caused when the performers torture their own body using weapons is experienced by the audience on a different level. Audience unknowingly, along with the performers, by swinging and chanting *Baiths*, and by moving hands and legs according to the rhythm of the beat of the *Arabana*, becomes the part of *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance. To study Islamic society and its development, scholars have adopted various approaches. 'Equilibrium model' is a model adopted by Imtiaz Ahmed. According to this, there are two factors in Islam. One derived from the sacred text of Islam, this is ultimate and formal as well. Second is the Islam that has formed from customs, rituals, and practices (lived Islam). Islam has come from Middle East culture but has placed itself in local cultural traditions. Thus, traditions like *Kuthu Ratheeb* came to Islam. When the Islam religion comes to a land, that land keeps its culture. By keeping some practices of the land's culture, under the religious culture of Islam, *Kuthu Ratheeb* is practised. Here, we could see lived Islam. According to Imtiaz Ahmed, Islam derived from the text and the lived Islam co-exists following the 'equilibrium principle'. Islam has spread to different parts of the world, has learned the local practices of those lands and has placed the superiority of Islam over the local traditions. But in rituals like *Kuthu Ratheeb*, it was not able to impose Islam's authority over it. According to Veena Das, Islamic scripture elaborated through local beliefs and traditions is to give another depth and definition to Islamic perfection. This could be more than what Ahmed could receive (293- 300). Quran is continuously subjected to interpretations. A final meaning or interpretation is not inferred ultimately. Between folk Islam and textual Islam, the mediating term used by Veena Das is 'folk theology' or 'theological anthropology'. When Ernest Gellner

did a study on the Muslims of Morocco, he has talked about two types of religious practices happening there. One is textual and is based on equality. The other is hierarchical and saintly. The first one had originated from textual Islam and is present in the urban and industrialized Muslim community. The other one is found in the rural areas and is based on Sufi kinship tradition. He considers the first one as 'high culture' and the second one as 'low culture'. T.N. Madhavan views Gellner's Islamic notion as a 'Cyclical model'. The idea proposed by Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger is called 'Vernacular Islam'. 'Vernacular' means the language or language variant of a social or geographical land (2).

4.5 The belief and presentation of performers and audience of rituals

Existence of belief in the ritual presentation and differences in its styles: When analysing a performer based on the ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb*, all the rituals and customs he practices together makes his performance style interesting. For his performance, the performer takes up all the incentive invigorating states from the audience that give energy to the presentation. Most of the rituals that exist in Kerala exist and previously existed based on beliefs. For each presentation, belief and ritual practices give positive atmosphere. In the presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual, we could see differences in beliefs. A performer who believes in *Rifayi Tariqa*, in his presentation using knife and other weapons, injure and let the blood springs out. In this ritual conducted in the name of *Rifayi Shaikh*, it is the belief of the performer that blood should come. But in the *Kuthu Ratheeb* in the name of *Hydrose Shaikh*, it is not necessary that blood should come out. If the blood springs out, there is belief that it should be wiped off. In Kerala's northern part that is Malabar, it is in two types that it is conducted based on belief. The presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* in Kerala is entirely different from the practices such as *Marthamchollal* of *Shiites* which is conducted by Muslims outside of Kerala. Not only the presentation but also the beliefs behind these practices are also different. Because of the differences in beliefs, the style and nature of presentation, the place, and time

of presentation have differences. Even if any belief is followed by the performer, for the performer to present, the star nimbus and superhuman position the audience give is also a reason. When ritual arts, traditional arts, or folk arts are presented in Kerala, all these have its own belief philosophies and perspectives which exist as basic elements for that presentation. All the stories behind these rituals say to audiences, tragedies. The reinterpretation of stories like these happens based on beliefs and cultural practices of a land. If any ritual is taken, belief exists as a part of it and makes every ritual diverse.

Impact of belief in the invigoration of performance: When a ritual based on certain belief happens, it is the audience who come to communicate that gives the performer the support of the belief before the performance, during the performance, and after the performance. This support of the belief enables the performer who is a believer to reach the peak of level of the performance. In that level, a performer achieves the state of trance. When the performative majesty of a performer who attains trance is demonstrated, the audience can see a superhuman performance and is possible to see, believe, and worship him. Rituals show the strength of their own beliefs and customs and communicate that to the audience. Performance takes form when a belief is communicated by a ritual to the audience. According to the belief of the spectators, they transform that event or presentation to a ritual. A performer who is a believer is easily able to perform rituals based on beliefs. Belief is just a factor that connects performers and spectators. There exist many factors otherwise as well. Other than belief, elements that invigorate performance and performer are the time, space, and action used in the performance. When rituals are derived from myths and beliefs, it connects the performer who is a believer, the spectators, and the performance in the name of the belief. But all the rituals like *Kuthu Ratheeb* are also enjoyed and experienced without including beliefs. The action of experience is generated in the spectators is also because of elements like the time of presentation, space of presentation, and the characteristic variety of actions of these rituals.

Ritual exists based on the cultures such as belief, group, land, etc. How does a belief affect a performer if we examine the beliefs upon which *Kuthu Ratheeb* is based? The performers in *Kondotti* and places like *Omanur*, *Arippra* which are near to *Kondotti* say that their belief strengthens them for the performance. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a ritual of just a single section of Muslims of Kerala's Northern Malabar. This ritual is conducted based only on this section's beliefs. A performer of these beliefs performs the ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb*, before and after does he get the support, respect, and backing up of believers. Staying away from other believers, the performer comes to the stage as superhuman or divine one.

Belief's role in facilitating *Kuthu Ratheeb* performers reach trance: Spectators of different types based on the element of belief become one and respect the performer. Based on the belief, the one who does the performance is not considered as a performer. But on any ground, a performer is a performer itself and what he presents is performances itself, all the elements that can communicate the experiences of the performer affect a performer, performance, and the audience. If a performer who is getting ready for the performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual is a believer, then the support the belief gives, when the presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* based on belief is conducted, helps him unite his body, mind, and situation and reach a state of trance by creating pain using violence. The performer who has reached the state of trance creates some superhuman movements and images. Because of these extra ordinary actions, the spectators give the performer a high position (divine position). Based on the belief of the spectators, performer is seen as God and prays to him. For the spectators to watch *Kuthu Ratheeb*, the performers to perform and the performance to be complete, what all is needed and also to investigate whether the ritual concept of Artaud comes between the spectators and performers does this study meant to. In Kerala's southern part also *Kuthu Ratheeb* is presented. In places like *Kaniyapuram*, *Beemapalli*, etc. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is performed. In these regions, the natives call *Kuthu Ratheeb* as *Kathi Kuthu Ratheeb*. In the northern part of Kerala, the

majority of the *Kuthu Ratheeb* tradition is based on the belief system of Muhyudheen *Shaikh*. But in southern parts, it is based on Rifayi *Shaikh's Tariqa*. Presentation and skills exhibited by *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer, body torture with weapons, and the customs and traditions, etc. are same.

4.6 Analysing *Kuthu Ratheeb* with Pain, based on *Performing Bodies in Pain* (Medieval and Postmodern Martyrs, Mystics and Artists)

The experience of pain also creates cultural formation. By performing pain, the Muslim ritual *Kuthu Ratheeb* attracts the attention of the audience and presents a variety performance among them. When these types of performances are presented in *Kuthu Ratheeb*, this presentation style gains a speciality. It is like this that, among the Muslim community of Kerala, *Kuthu Ratheeb* has been able to create a religious folk culture using violence and the pain generated of it. The time, music, and performance style used for the presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* aid the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer to reach trance. After, it is by communicating the state of pain that the presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* improves. To communicate pain, the performers hurt their body themselves and experience it. In these types of ritual performances which proclaim solidarity to martyrs and to the greats who did miracles, pain through self torture is kept as a medium of communication for the audience.

Performing pain in *Performing Bodies in Pain*: What Melzack and Wall say is that, it is not because there are no words to describe pain that language gets dried, but one gets only little chance to use them. More than that, words often seem absurd. The medieval people had more interaction with death and bodily sufferings. There is no reason to think that they had little sensation towards pain or that their spiritual understanding has made them be able to receive it calmly. Suffering was part of their day-to-day life. But they perceived it with fear. On examining pain, from Hippocratic corpus to hitherto, to the "silence and discard for pain" in

the medieval ages, Roselyne Rey attributes Stoics³² as the reason. Stoics considered moral virtue to be the highest good, and thus devalued the body. Aristotle, like Plato, has considered pain and pleasure as the passions of the soul. But Aristotle had acknowledged the relation between passions and sense of touch. Central to his concepts of mind, and sensation, were blood and heart with waves of pain and pleasure travel to the heart through blood vessels. Hot blood or soft heart can create pain. Galen, like Aristotle had believed that external objects create impressions on the soft stuff of the body and stimulation above saturation creates pain. But he had shifted the centre of control and perception to nerves and brain. The late medieval social life had weaved the commemoration of martyrdom along with public execution and private torture. It was as part of practical spirituality that pain was portrayed by medieval performing arts. Pain is used in *Kuthu Ratheeb* as a part of spirituality. By self forgetting the body through self torture, pain is made as a part of spirituality.

How does pain affects the consciousness during *Kuthu Ratheeb* gives rise to trance state, based on *Performing bodies in pain*: During *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance, when the performer reaches the state of trance, his consciousness is different from that of normal state. Jerome Krool and Bernard Bachach argue that the ability to experience varied states of consciousness differs according to individuals and this can be developed. Ariel Glucklich defines the mechanics of this process as, if one applies more irritation in body in the form of pain, the central nervous system produces only less output from the centres which regulate signals on which a sense of self is dependent on. Modulated pain diminishes the individual's experience as a 'discrete agent'. It makes 'body-self' transparent and helps in the emergence of a new identity. Metaphorically, pain generates an embodied "absence" and leads to a new, bigger "presence".³³ To an extent, it is the performer's pain that helps the performer to attain trance in

³². The ancient Greek philosophy which envisioned goodness towards the other to be self constraint, moral conduct and high tolerance.

³³.Ariel Glucklich, *Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul* (New York:

Kuthu Ratheeb. Neuroscience says that trance has a major role in pain experience. In this book, it is said that through pain, mystics empty themselves and pave way for a new emergence. When passed through this absence, what they generally find is what they seek to find out, that is determined by their system of belief.

Affective spiritual ecstasy also guides the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer to trance states. Some performers sometimes slip into it. In other times or for others, it is very difficult to attain transcendent states. Body art's capacity to engage audience actively in the performance is explained in *Performing bodies in pain*. Amelia Jones says that body art creates such difficulty in allowing a historian or a critic to produce judgement from a "disinterested" position about the meaning and value of the work. Because of that, body art has the capacity to "destabilize the structures of conventional art history and criticisms".³⁴

The difference of aim of the pain staged by medieval theatre and postmodern theatre: Depending upon the concepts of mind and sensation during each period, Marla Carlson argues for the use of different ethical and emotional structures to see pre- modern and post-modern pain. Post-modern theatre stages plays in order to raise human rights issues. By ideally actualising what Luc Boltanski calls a 'politics of pity' which is capable to bring social change, the spectators respond with empathy. Opposite to it, the medieval theatre staged pain as a component of affective spirituality. In the pre- modern sense of co-suffering, the spectators responded with sympathy. In both these times, theatrical pain reveals a moral obligation. But the nature of the obligation differs.

Oxford University Press, 2001), 207

³⁴. Jones, *Body Art*, 14, italics original.

4.7 *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer – A mediator of trance state through sacramental performance

The role of performer in *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation: From a normal person, transference to a divine nimbus that the society worship and pray is what the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer does. By keeping one's own body as energy centre, submitting to one action is what *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer does. The entire energy of one's self is transferred to the self of the character and thus the performer in the stage experiences trance. *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer staying firm in his personality changes to another person. This is the time when the performer reaches a state of trance. Even in theatre, it is the change to trance is what happens in the performer. We could say that *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer or a performer is a personality with a good intent. Existentially, each performer becomes a mediator in front of audience. In costumes, dyestuffs, and dance systems, there are differences, like wise in musical instruments also there are differences. The class legacy of each religion or community is the reason for it. Same time, there are similarities which consider the ritual art execution of different communities as one. The symbol of each section is done through their art execution. The performer is the one who has direct relation with many things such as expressions of presentation, progress of presentation, etc.

4.8 A comparative study of *Kuthu Ratheeb* with Artaudian Idea of Theatre

The use of language of body than verbal language: A Comparison of *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance and Artaudian theatre style: In *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation same *Baiths* (hymns) are repeatedly chanted in Arabic language or *Arabimalayalam*. The spectators who do not know the language will get this as more than a sentence but as a sound (music). *Kuthu Ratheeb* exists as a performative art where there is no phonal importance. The repeated sentences give same emotions to the audience in every presentation. The ritual arts like *Kuthu Ratheeb* that give importance to body is close to the ideas of Artaud. Till when own language is not recaptured,

the stage cannot use its creative power is the position of Artaud. Language is a retaking not an invention. Hymns and praise songs are composed in a language, ages ago. These types of composed hymns come as praise songs of the greats of ancient period. No new language or dispositions are invented by *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation. If words, gestures, and extra physical exhibitions are created, then only the stage can be relieved from its current inverted position says Artaud. The great genius' and theatre activists like Grotowski, Peter Brook, etc. acknowledge the Artaudian ideas. An actor who can express the possibilities of body in its maximum extent was what Artaud needed. The actor seeks the maximum performance of body in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Injuring the body by stabbing, the conscious and sub conscious minds are captured by the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer. Like a sports person who captures the heart is how the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performers makes the *Kuthu Ratheeb* reach audience. Like a sports person who captures the heart is how Artaud sees and values an actor. The emotions of an actor are related to the muscles of a boxer. For an actor who performs ritual arts like *Kuthu Ratheeb*, he needs mental and physical purity that is to make performance convenient and to reach the peak. For that *Theyyam* performers undertake penance before the performance. To purify the mind and body and to ease the body movements, Artaud says that they should be trained in *Yoga*. In *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance, no dialogues or written vocalisations come from an actor (performer). Performer uses the body to do the presentation, such a structure and method of an actor is acknowledged by Artaud. He argues that written or pronounced dialogues are not for the stage but for books. Stage is a physical space that we can touch and know. The stage should be filled with the language of the stage. Only that language should be allowed there. That should be a concretized language. This embodied language which is directed towards senses is different from oration. Language in the first place should satisfy the senses. He thought that this embodied theatre language generated should go beyond spoken language. The position of the poetry written in language should be given to stage performance is what Artaud says. To

the zenith of performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb* the performer reaches using body is how a performer produces a spectacle. The space where words become insufficient should be filled with this language of the stage is the statement of Artaud. This language of the stage should have the ability to invoke and present strong images. Thus the spectacle which got free from the words makes us understand that how it will be useful to the stage. He further argues that with the medium of the language of the stage also, the normal limits of emotional expressions should be overruled. Based on this is how the theatre arena of Theatre of Cruelty is put forward by Artaud. He gives importance only to body and his ideas lie close to the Muslim ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

The theatre and rituals which interests Artaud comes in two sections. They are classified as solar drama and lunar drama. The one which is characterized by movement, agitation, male, and self-assertion is called solar drama. But those which are characterized by movementlessness, female, and submission, Artaud calls lunar drama. The theatre of both sections had amused Artaud. But in the theoretical writings of Artaud, we could see an inclination towards solar dramas. Likewise, we could determine his imaginary complete ideal. Solar drama takes many forms. But it must be anyway following a small degree of gesticulation of antagonism or atrocity. Artaud had more inclination towards solar dramas. Denying of God is not evil. Evading the prejudiced viewpoint of an ascetic or followers of a particular religion, the practicalizing of that agitation in a murder is globally called as evil. The nature of lunar drama is unclear like snow covering, deep and dark. We can see stillness and uselessness like that of Samuel Beckett's play in lunar drama, says him. But solar drama is made up of light, action, and explosiveness. The ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb* lies directly related to the idea of solar drama. In lunar drama, darkness, stillness, and silence are what are formed. In Artaud's theatre, two things which influenced more is the ancient Mexican culture and Oriental theatre (one is solar, other is lunar). Artaud went to visit a tribe called Tarahumara (an indigenous group in Mexico).

It was to search for the successors of those who were there when there was a culture for world which was one with life. To compile a culture like this and later to reflect it with its rites and documents of antiquity did Artaud work for. Artaud reflected more on the accustomed ones. By researching the rituals and the ideas in its elements is how Artaud framed the forward-looking theatre concept. All the Mesoamericans are originated from a mythical hero. It is mythical heroes that *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation alludes to. Many myths are indirectly one or the offspring of a fundamental pair. This creates uncertainty in its origin. *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance stays very much close to the Artaudian concept of solar drama.

The impact of pain in relation with rituals of purification: ‘There is no festivity without sacrifice’ says philosopher Nietzsche when examining the origin of tragedies. Certain general methods like beating that which controls the pain of sage’s life is every time related with purifying rituals. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is a good example. To the society which does not know about this, the secretes of experience and life of the sages (*Shaikhs*), is made to understand. In this sense, they served as mirrors of geographical, historical, and ethical knowledge. It created the representation of theatre also. Through a ritual act, it allows for remembrance of an experience. In the relation of pain and memory, three different visual symbols are closely present. The pictures and things of religious devotion, the carvings of religious wars, and the picturizations which are body structure-wise are the visual symbols. In all the three, the body stands important whether it is a criminal ‘s body or a incised martyr’s body.

Conclusion

An explanation on general nature of the presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual is done in this chapter. Discussions about Sufi culture in Kerala and ritual nature of *Kuthu Ratheeb* practice is done. How Performance theory places performance is discussed in this chapter. Various models of Islamic societies termed by different scholars and its nature are described in this chapter. How does the performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb* progress is described in this

chapter. Contrasting the nature of *Kuthu Ratheeb* in older and recent times is done in this chapter. About the different sections of *Sunni* Muslims and the differences in their performative practices are given. Classification of Islam into textual and lived is done in this chapter where law based and performative practices of Islam are discussed. The leadership among Kerala Muslims is detailed and the complementary nature of Islam is discussed by focusing on *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Icotype studies of Islamic practices are explained in the chapter. The development of *Mappila* literature is discussed and also the customary differences of Muslims of *Kondotti* and *Ponnani* as well. A description of *Nerchas* is given in this chapter. *Kuthu Ratheeb* was analysed focusing on pain based on *Performing Bodies in Pain* by Marla Carlson in this chapter. The performance of pain, experience of pain in *Kuthu Ratheeb*, pain's affecting of consciousness, and rapture of medieval saints is discussed in this chapter along with the role of body art and staging of pain by medieval and postmodern theatre. Discussion on usage of pain in medieval times is done. Discussion on the state of trance in the sacramental performance *Kuthu Ratheeb* is done. The similarities in the presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and Artaud's theatre ideas are brought out in this chapter. In the coming chapters, ethnographical studies on the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performers are done and a theatrical research production *Repetition* is taken and the states of pain, violence, and trance experienced by the performer and the communication of that to the audience is investigated.

CHAPTER V

Field study on the performance experience of the performers of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and Audience of research production *Repetition* based on Artaud's ritual concept

A detail on the beliefs and presentation styles of performers and audience of *Kuthu Ratheeb* happens in different parts of Kerala, an ethnographical study about *Kuthu Ratheeb* performers and a field work study about the research production *Repetition* with elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and Artaudian theatre elements implementing in it and descriptions of its performative aspects, making process, storyline, presentation style, and method of study involving feedback collection in the form of interviews which investigates how pain, violence, and trance occurring in the performance is communicated to the audience.

Part 1

5.1.1 The peculiarities of *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation happens in the *Uroos* of *Bheema Palli*

Bheema Palli is in Thiruvananthapuram, the southern district of Kerala. Ten-day festival of *Bheema Palli Uroos*'s biggest peculiarity is *Kathi Kuthu Ratheeb* or *Kuthu Ratheeb*. In all ten days, *Kuthu Ratheeb* is been presented. As different from spectators of northern parts, spectators comprise of women, children, and men in *Bheema Palli*. In most of other parts of Kerala, It is not permissible for the women to watch *Kuthu Ratheeb*. It is in front of Masthan Bhava's *Makbara*, facing *Dargah Sheriff* is how the performers do *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The biggest peculiarity of *Bheema palli* is that it is a *dargah* in the name of a woman called Sayid Bhemabeevi Raliyullahu. It is in the capital of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram that *Bheema Palli* exists. *Juma* prayers on Friday were started for the first time in India by *Bheema palli*. This mosque houses the tomb of Sayyidunneesa Bhemabeevi who was a Muslim lady with divine powers and her son Syedushuhada Maheen Abubacker. It is one of the most important

Muslim places of worship in Kerala. The *Dargah Sheriff* is situated next to the mosque. This memorial is visited and worshipped by pilgrims belonging to all religions. The *Chandanakudam mahotsavam* or *Bheema Palli Uroos* is one of the most colourful Muslim festivals in Trivandrum. *Bheema Palli* mosque got its name from the name of *Bheemabeevi*, a member of the Prophet's family; she is also believed to be a woman with extra ordinary spiritual powers. A festival to commemorate *Bheemabeevi* is conducted annually at *Bheema Palli*. The most important festival celebrated here is the *Chandanakudam* festival which begins on the first of *Jamadol Akbar* (*Arab month*). In English calendar this comes in the last days of January. The purpose of celebrating this festival is to mark the death anniversary of *Bheemabeevi*. The celebration starts with hoisting the traditional flag of the mosque in front of elders and other devotees. The devotees carry money in pots which are decorated with flowers and incense sticks. Sandal paste is also smeared on the pots; hence, it is called *Chandanakudam*. The opening of the pot is covered with white cloth, and garland is tied around the neck of the pot. To *Bheema Palli* mosque to perform *Kuthu Ratheeb*, people come in groups. They come from a region near to *Alappuzha*.

Many people come from outside of Kerala as well to see *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance and to pray. Among them, women and children are included. The *Kuthu Ratheeb* is presented using weapons, such as *Duboozz*, lance, metal rods, knives, big swords, etc. With these metal rods pierced in the body, the performers come besides the audience and collect money. This time blood might be flowing from performer's body. By being in close contact with the spectators, the clarity of violence is increased and decreased, the performance continues. After the performance, each performer goes to the audience in order to collect money and to give blessings. By touching the smoke formed of lighting fragrance items in an iron bowl is how praying and seeking of blessings are done. From the middle region of Kerala to its northern end, *Kuthu Ratheeb* is presented in *Nerchas* and otherwise as well. In this *Nercha* festival, for

every believer and for the ones who come to watch the *Kuthu Ratheeb*, offering food is given. But for the *Kuthu Ratheeb* in *Bheema Palli*, custom of giving food is not there. At a time, *Kuthu Ratheeb* is done by five performers. During the end time of *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance, from the audience, elderly people and children come one by one and lie on the middle of the performance space. After that they become half nude (above-waist). After that a talented and experienced performer makes cut on the ones who are lying down. After that a sword is pressed on to the stomach. By placing a cloth above the sword, stomach and sword are kept closed to perception. After some time, the sword is taken out.

For the propagation of Islam after reaching Kodungaloor, Kasaragodu, etc. from Mecca, Sayyidunneesa Beevi and her son Maheen Abubackar Raliyallahu had reached Kerala's south region i.e., Thiruvananthapuram. Taking photography or video of the *Uroos* is prohibited. It is from *Rabee Ul Ahir 1* to *Rabee Ul Ahir 10* that *Uroos* festival and *Kuthu Ratheeb* is presented in *Bheema Palli*. Other than *Kuthu Ratheeb*, Quran recitation, *moulid*, etc. are organised. In *Bheema Palli*, the *Makbara* of Bhava Mastan also is situated. He was known as *Kalladi Mastan*. In the first day of *Uroos*, along with procession, *Kuthu Ratheeb* is presented. It is along with differences in variety that *Kuthu Ratheeb* is conducted in *Bheema Palli*. Irrespective of religion, everyone watches and enjoys *Kuthu Ratheeb* with belief and reverence.

5. 1.2 Ethnographic study of *Kuthu Ratheeb* performers

Reasons for decrease in the practise of *Kuthu Ratheeb*: *Omannur* is a place in northern Kerala, in Malappuram district, near to *Kondotti*. The *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual used to be conducted regularly in the past, but it is very rare now. This tradition of folk manner, as time passed had diminished among the Muslims of Kerala in the name of faith (Islam) around 19th century or the end phase of 19th century. According to the laws of new religious groups which emerged among Kerala Muslims, *Kuthu Ratheeb* exists as a blind belief. In the *Kuthu Ratheeb*

which is a social tradition, there exists complete peculiarity of ritual art of cultural and traditional actions related to Kerala's indigenous culture.

Kuthu Ratheeb is related with body. When the performer of *Kuthu Ratheeb* self injures the body, other bodies are giving the performer strength. It is both physical strength and mental strength that a performer of *Kuthu Ratheeb* gives to its spectators. This ritual form which refused the presence of women is also presented now in the coastal regions of Thrissur such as *Anchangadi* and *Chavakkadu*.

Because of differences among beliefs (*Tariqa*), different sections present *Kuthu Ratheeb* in different ways. It is the main difference in presentation styles that is given below:

1. Presentation style by striking the body with weapon and blood shedding.
2. Presentation style without producing even single drop of blood from the body.

Contrasting features of *Kuthu Ratheeb* practised by *Tariqa* of Muhyudheen *Shaikh* and *Tariqa* of Hydrose: The believers of Muhyudheen *Shaikh*'s law of practice insist that not even a single blood drop should be spilled. Even if is stricken by using weapons, blood should not come is what the belief of Muhyudheen and his followers. It is in *Ponnani* and *Kondotti* regions that *Kuthu Ratheeb* of this form is mostly presented. Those who believe in *Hydrose Tariqa* do *Kuthu Ratheeb* by blood shedding. It is in the coastal areas of *Thrissur*, such as *Chavakad* and *Anchangadi*, the performance of this type is seen. In order to make more blood to come during *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance, they start eating fruits and other food items which are believed to produce more blood several months before the performance. They who believe in the *Tariqa* of Hydrose, by shedding blood have raised violence in another way and the trance of the performers is shown to the spectators.

Ethnographical study about Muhammad Haji, his initiation into *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance: *Omannur* is a place near to *Kondotti*. *Omannur* is famous for *Shuhadas* (martyrs) and *Nerchas* (offering festivals) in their names. Most of the inhabitants of *Omannur* are

followers of Muhyudheen *Shaik's Tariqa*. Muhammad Haji is a senior most performer in *Omannur*. Muhammad Haji follows *Muhyudheen Tariqa's* laws and customs in the performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Muhammad Haji was born in 1938. Now Muhammad Haji is in the age of 82. Even at this age in every tenth day of Arabic month, he conducts *Ratheeb*. He conducts *Ratheeb* in every month and *Kuthu Ratheeb* once a year. Special *Majlis* (place) for presentation and accompaniment is there for him in *Omannur*. It is by family heritage that Muhammad Haji became a *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer. It is when he was thirteen years old that Muhammad Haji came to *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation for the first time. With the background of family inheritance, it is not because of somebody's pressure that he started *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance. Before six years from Muhammad Haji came to *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation, his mother died when he was seven. In the ritual *Kuthu Ratheeb*, performers are made by giving *Baiath*. *Baiath* is an Arabic word. It means to give and to hand over the right. It is when he was 13 years of age that Muhammad Haji got *Baiath* to do *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance. His paternal uncle's son Modhi Haji was also a *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer. Modhi Haji also took *Baiath* in his childhood. Muhammad Haji entered *Kuthu Ratheeb* by beating *Arabana*. After three years, when he was sixteen years old, he took weapons to injure his body. The first weapon he took was *Dubbooz*.

The main weapons used in *Kuthu Ratheeb* are of three types.

1. *Kathiru*

2. *Dubbooz*

3. Knife

According to Muhammad Haji, striking on body without blood shedding is called *Karamath*. Muhammad Haji reveals that a performer starts to perform using weapons only after reaching trance. It is after *haal* changes that the performance occurs. When the condition

changes, a performer reaches trance and starts to perform with weapons. Muhammad Haji opines that hymns help the performer to reach trance or to change the condition of performance.

In the family of Muhammad Haji, *Kuthu Ratheeb* is performed and conducted for one hundred and fifty years. When he was in Bombay, he witnessed a Shiite ritual (*Martham Chollal*) that was similar to *Kuthu Ratheeb*, but with women audience.

In a year, eleven months in private *Majlis* Muhammad Haji does *Ratheeb* in the 10th day of Arabic month. And on the 12th month, he does it in public. It's only in the *Ratheeb* which is public does *Kuthu Ratheeb* is performed. Two or three months before this *Kuthu Ratheeb*, children visit houses by beating *Arabana* and collect money, rice items, and other food items. It is by using this collected money and food items that the food and other expenses of the day of *Kuthu Ratheeb* are met. For the spectators of *Kuthu Ratheeb*, it is the food prepared from the collected rice items that is given as *Nerchachoru*. After the performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb*, prayer is conducted for the believers. The event that starts at nine o'clock will end after two or three days.

Another form of *Kuthu Ratheeb* is *Hadhadh Ratheeb*. In *Hadhadh Ratheeb*, there is no scene of injuring the body. After performing *Hadhadh Ratheeb* which has only hymns, performance is shifted to *Kuthu Ratheeb* only after reaching trance. This time, violence comes as a major factor in performance methods. The believers consider Muhammad Haji himself as a *Shaikh*. After *Hadhath*, weapon is given by *Shaikh* in *Kuthu Ratheeb* for injuring the body. It is during the time when the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer is given *Baiath* (divine permission). It is from *Thangals* (scholars) of the lineage of Muhammad Nabi that Muhammad Haji received *Baiath*. It is from *Jifri* house of Calicut which belongs to Malabar region that Muhammad Haji received *Baiath* in his childhood. During his childhood, *Kuthu Ratheeb* was conducted in *Kondotti*, *Kattupara*, and *Mulliakurushi*. In the places of Muhammad Shah, the seat where Muhammad Shah sat is known as *Taqia*. They had spread this ritual without any imitation. In

olden times for conducting *Kuthu Ratheeb* the remuneration Muhammad Haji got were five rupees and five *idangazhi* (a measurement) rice. Using this, Muhammad Haji and family conducted the *Nerchas* every year.

Ethnographical study about Muhammad Haji, the style and pattern of *Kuthu Ratheeb* conducted by Muhammad Haji's group: Kunjahmad was a *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer contemporary to Muhammad Haji. Through *Ratheeb*, *Kuthu Ratheeb*, and *Dikrs* present in it, he used to take out the poison of snake bite from people. Kunjahmad Haji was a famous person in those times in removing venom. He who belongs to *Vadakkum Thodi* has lived in places of *Mangattamburam – kokrammoochi*.

Muhammad Haji's nephew has taken up his inheritance and is now the *Mudheer* (leader). For his livelihood, the major job he undertakes is that of a porter. There are about thirty members in Muhammad Haji's group. *Ratheeb* ritual is what is mainly conducted by this group which is located at *Omannur*. Physical and mental trance and violence are experienced by the performers during *Ratheeb*. The members about thirty in number perform are a peculiar feature of this. Just before *Ratheeb*, Muhammad Haji's son reaches the private *majlis* around 9 'o clock and cleans the *majlis* and spread mat and *musalla* (prayer rug). By this time, people, one by one enter into the *majlis*. Muhammad Haji's group is one that consists of children, young men, middle aged ones, and older ones. The group sees *Kuthu Ratheeb* as a belief act which is very highly divine. So that none among the group wants to disclose their presentation style and method. Muhammad Haji's group which has a performance history of one fifty years does not need advertisement, income receiving from it, and fame. So that for this long they are doing the presentation but we won't be able to get photos or videos of their performances. Everyone comes to the *majlis* squat along the two sides facing each other. Then they practice by beating *Arabana*. About two to three hours they practice. This is not done as part of the *Ratheeb*. But every Arabic month before *Ratheeb* they practice *Arabana*. They practice *Arabana* in this

manner for *Kuthu Ratheeb* also which happens only once a year. When *Dikrs* and *Malas* begin to be sung in *Ratheeb*, *Arabana* is taken out. Everybody by sitting swings the body parts above waist and starts to chant *Dikrs*. Each *Dikr* is repeatedly chanted by the performers by swinging their bodies. With the increase in repetition of *Dikrs*, the sway of the body, the speed of chanting, and the sound of *Dikrs* are increased. In the zenith of swaying and chanting, one person stops the chanting of the *Dikr*. That time, a person who is the leader of the group (the sister's son of Muhammad Haji) changes the *Dikr* which is chanted and made to trance and starts to slowly chant the next *Dikr*. By repeating, the speed of *Dikr* chanting and the tempo of movement rhythm is increased and every person again reaches trance together. The shoulder region, neck region, head, hand, and body are used by each performer. Each *Dikr* is repeatedly chanted and after attaining trance, this trance is broken and goes to the next *Dikr*. Each *Dikr* is repeatedly chanted and becomes trance. Sometimes by standing up and swinging, *Dikrs* are repeated and becomes trance. Sometimes performance is done by standing on knees. Certain times, *Dikrs* are chanted by forming a circle. *Ratheeb* starts at night nine o'clock will extend up to three o'clock in the morning. Even after *Ratheeb* gets over people practice *Arabana*. This practice leads up to six o'clock to seven o'clock. With repeated use of *Arabana* beating, they reach trance. After the *Ratheeb*, Muhammad Haji gives food to everyone. After food, around dawn everyone disperses to their own places. At night times, by hearing *Dikrs* and rhythm of *Arabana* beatings for hours, each performer gets fully immersed in trance. In the big *Nercha* which happens once in a year, *Kuthu Ratheeb* is presented in a big manner. It is as a ritual that *Kuthu Ratheeb* is conducted by *Omannur* Muhammad Haji and his group. Like that till before six years, *pettivaravu* (carrying of boxes) was carried to *Kondotti* from *Omannur*. That time in *pettivaravu* rally (rally was from *Omannur* to *Kondotti* Muhammad Shah's *dargah*) which is in Muhammad Haji's memory in this age, the *Kondotti Nercha* and *Kuthu Ratheeb* had many

peculiarities and religious harmony was filled in it. Muhammad Haji's *Kuthu Ratheeb* inheritance is now upheld by his sister's son Hamsa Haji.

5.1.3 *Kuthu Ratheeb* performers of Malabar

Experiences of *Kondotti Nercha* and its ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb* in Muhammad Haji's memory: A time when lot of people from Malappuram, Kozhikodu, and Palakkad come enthusiastically to take part in *Kondotti Nercha* fills Muhammad Haji's memory of *Nercha* experiences. *Kondotti Nercha* was started during the time of *Shaikh* Muhammad Shah *Thangal*. In the name of Muhammad Shah's preceptors Muhyudheen Abdul Khadir Jeelani and Mu I Nudhin Chisthi Al Ajmiri, it was Muhammad Shah himself who started the *Nercha*. During the *Nercha* time, flags where the names of these two holy men are written are raised and thus the customs start. Those who are of nearby region and those who are of far off regions come to participate in the *Nercha*. On a special day with *pettivaravu* as a rally do they present *Kuthu Ratheeb* and reach *Kondotti Dargah*. The flagpole where flag raising is done still exists there. When the flag is raised, from then on Quran recitation happens. In the name of Muhyudheen *Shaikh* and Mu I Nudhin Chisthi, the *Mullas* under the *Taqia* in one month recite the entire Quran forty times and as a conclusion for that the *Mureedhs* (leaders) of the *Shaikhs* are invited and *Khatam Duah* convention (prayer convention) is done. In earlier days, it was in big Teak's wood that *Kodimaram* (flagpole) was. The location is now known as *Kodimarathingal*. In *Mulliakurushi* of Malappuram district also, *Taqia (dargah)* of Muhammad Shah's lineage is found. Because of the *Kodimaram* (flagpole) in this *dargah*, in *Mulliakurishi* also a place called *Kodimarathingal* was originated and is now also sustained in the same name. *Kondotti* flagpole has both the big tree and the young tree. When flags are newly raised, the younger tree is brought down and in that three flags are tied and are raised up. These flags which have size differences are tied up in the name of Muhyudheen *Shaikh*, Khwaja Mu I Nudhin Chisthi, and

Karam Ali Shah. If this can be called main *Kodimaram* (flagpole), there are flag poles as subbranches.

On the second day of *Nercha*, in the flagpole which is in the back side of *Dargah* (*Kondotti* people called the place where *Dargah* is situated and the *Dargah* as *Kubbah*), and in places such as *Melangadi* and *Kanjiraparamabu* also flag raising ceremony is done in the flag poles. After raising the flag, people of all regions are invited to the practices of the *Nercha*. After the death of Muhammad Shah, Ishtiaq Shah came as the leader. During his time, festival of *Uroos* which is seen in *dargahs* of northern India came. In order to proclaim the *Nercha* which extends for four days, the practice of firing of gun was also started in the time of Ishtiaq Shah. The *Thangal* family holds the cannon. *Madah* songs where poets and singers of southern India take part and the question- answer games of language scholars from Tamil Nadu were also staged. With time, luxury came into *Nerchas* and cracks started happening to the belief system of the *Nerchas*. In the *Thangal* family, in Muhammad Shah's lineage, the ones who are selected as leaders are called *Sthanimar*. When *Sthanimar* encouraged the luxury and so on of the *Nerchas*, *Kondotti* people were drawn in for *Nerchas*. With merchants with different types of home machineries, advertising companies with comedians, singers in vehicles illuminated with electricity, circus, zoo, magic, swinging machine, etc., the *Kondotti Nercha* has become a carnival. The festival later came to be known as harvest festival, farming festival, religious companionship festival, etc. also. It is with the *pettivaravu* from *Vellaratta*, which is a nearby place of *Kondotti* that the events of second day end. In the *pettivaravu* of nearby places, *Kuthu Ratheeb* is presented. Along with the rally, *Kuthu Ratheeb* is conducted and goes till *Kondotti Dargah (Kubbah)*. In rallies, *Kuthu Ratheeb* where many people stab using knives happen. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is presented even after reaching the *Nercha* place. In the third or fourth day, the *pettivaravu* from *Omannur* comes. That time Muhammad Haji and group had presented *Kuthu Ratheeb*. *Pettivaravu* comes from places like *Podiyattu*, *Pullara*, *Ettthara*, *Valluvasthram*,

Mongum, Morayur, Musliarangadi, Nediirippu, Peravanna, Kadungalloor, Kuzhimanna, Valyaparambu, Kottappuram, Kolathur, Velloru, Kumminiparambu, and Puliyannparambu. *Kuthu Ratheeb* and other feats which make people wonder gets together at *Kattakuthipadam* (a place near *Kondotti*). In order to inform that they have come, people are sent to *Taqia*. When information is received, the representative of *Thangal* gets on top of a horse and with the accompaniment of *chenda* (a percussion instrument) invites each *Nerchavaravu* in to the *Kubbah (dargah)*. People of each land give rice, money, and other stuffs they have collected to *Thangal* or the representative of *Thangal*. The place where rice is given is called *Bandarakudil*. Starting from 13th of Arabic month Muharram, on 17th morning ten o'clock from Swami *Madom* (*Chunkam*- name of the place) when the *varavu* comes, it marks the end of *Nerchavaravu*. The last rite of *Nercha* is taking the sandal. *Mureedhs* (leaders) grind the sandal on the floor of the *Kubbah* inside the *Taqia*, rose water is sprinkled in it and the sandal is poured into plates and the vessel is closed and is given to the representatives. The clothes for covering the *Makhbara* (tomb) of Muhammad Shah are sprayed with scents and are kept safe in a plate and *Thangal's* representatives bring them to *Valya Maliyekkal* house. After that, *Thangal* and the representatives of the *Mureedhs* of *Thangal's* family conduct a prayer in the *Taqia* and start to *Valiya Maliyekkal* house. Sandal, sugar, and *Muridha* (1) which is made ready, are taken on head by *Thangal* and followers by chanting *Dikrs* and *Swalath* reaches the flagpole and does a small prayer there and moves with devotion to the *dargah*. In the *dargah*, prayers are done near the *Makbara* (tomb) of *Shaikh* Muhammad Shah *Thangal*. The old cover of *Makbara* is taken off and new blanket which is anointed with good scent is spread over. After that rose water is sprinkled upon those who are gathered there. When *Cheerani* (2) is distributed, *Nercha* comes to an end. As part of it, firing of three canons happens. The *pettivaravu* of *Harijans* is also very interesting one. The *Chavittukali* and so on of *Harijans* happen during *Nercha* days. In the leadership of Muslim old people, this *varavu* which happens with the complete cooperation of

Thattan (goldsmith) community is called *Thattan's pettivaravu*. Presently, however, because of inheritance conflicts between *Sthanidars*, over seven years did *Kondotti Nercha* and the *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation in *pettivaravu* during these times become rare. In the *aandunercha* (yearly *Nercha*) of Muhammad Shah, people of some locality may conduct *Kuthu Ratheeb* otherwise as well in these times; the presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* is becoming extinct. It is in Arabic month Rabee Ul Avul 14th that the *aandunercha* of Muhammad Shah happens.

1. A dish made of powdered fried wheat *pathiri* (a dish) and mixed with certain ingredients.
2. Sweet pastry and food items are *Cheerani*.

The pattern of *Kuthu Ratheeb* conducted by *Arimbra* Muhammad Shah: Another *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer is *Arimbra* Muhammad Shah. *Arimbra* which is a place near *Kondotti* is the place of stay of Muhammad Shah. Muhammad Shah is known in Kerala as Mammaisa. *Arimbra* Mammaisa is a believer based on the *Tariqa* of Rifayi *Shaikh*. *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual is practised in one's own house, his name is Muhammad Shah. Other than believing in god men, *Arimbra* Muhammad Shah respects the gods of all other groups. It's on the death day of Rifayi *Shaikh* that *Arimbra* Muhammad Shah does *Kuthu Ratheeb*. A black cloth which could be related to *Shiite* practices was worn by him. On top of check *mundu*, it was tied on the waist. The date and time *Arimbra* Muhammad Shah chose for the practice and performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb* was not the date and time of *Kuthu Ratheeb* happens in *Kondotti Dargah*. Like that, there are differences in the presentation, methods, and types of *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual in different regions. The motives of believers also change. Based on these community beliefs, various forms of change happened in the presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

Muhammad Shah of *Arimbra* chose the death day of Rifayi *Shaikh*. Like that, every *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual practice has one holy day. To witness the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance of Muhammad Shah, people of *Arimbra* and other places gather at night in Muhammad Shah's house. After *Kuthu Ratheeb*, the performance of Muhammad Shah starts. It is *Arabana* that

Muhammad Shah used. It is elderly people about ten to twelve in number who were doing *Arabana Muttu* (beating of *Arabana*) with *Arabana*. Incense sticks are lit. Though there were people singing *Baiths*, it's by self chanting that Muhammad Shah reached the zenith of the performance. All the ones who come on *Kuthu Ratheeb* day are given *Nerchachoru* (cooked rice) by Muhammad Shah.

Ethnographical detail about the ancestors of *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer Koya Kappadu: During the 1970s, Koya Kappadu grew up as the son and disciple of the *Daffu Muttu* preceptor Ahmad Kutti Musliyar who had presented the art form of *Daffu Muttu* in public spaces. Koya Kappadu was born in historically famous Kappadu village, in *Alasam Vettil Tharavadu* (ancestral home). *Alasam Vettil Tharavadu* is a *tharavadu* where for one thirty-six years *Daffu Muttu* (another form of *Arabana*) and *Kuthu Ratheeb* are practised. It is the ancestor of Koya Kappadu, Syed Ahmad Musliar who started the class of *Daffu* and *Kuthu Ratheeb* in Hijra: 1303. After his death, his son Imbichi Ahmad Musliar took up the classes. He was a great expert in toxicology also. Treatment without expecting any reward is what was done by Imbichi Ahmed Musliar. In 1954, after the death of Imbichi Ahmad Musliar, Ahmad Kutti Musliar, the father of Koya Kappadu took the responsibility of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Daffu Muttu*.

The style of *Kuthu Ratheeb* by Koya Kappadu: It is not the ways of other performers that Koya Kappadu used to spread *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Social media, other news media, and other ways are used in good manner for publicity. Koya Kappadu, while performing *Kuthu Ratheeb* sits in the position of *Shaikh*. In certain times, in venues Koya Kappadu has done tricks with fire. Koya Kappadu is a trainer and performer of *Ratheeb*, *Kuthu Ratheeb*, and *Daffu Muttu*. In between performance, in the body of believers, Koya Kappadu pierce in lance and is taken out without pain. Blood coming from the wounds are covered with white cloth and is sorted out in between the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance itself. Even at this age, Koya Kappadu is a performer who conducts *Kuthu Ratheeb*. When an action has a reaction is the only time body gets affected,

says Koya *Kappadu*. The *Baith* which is chanted in between *Kuthu Ratheeb* should be sung by increasing and decreasing the volume, insists him. This type of sound execution, in his opinion, helps the performer reach trance.

Various *Kuthu Ratheeb* performers of Kerala in recent times: *Omannur* Muhammad Haji, *Arimbra* Muhammad Shah (Mammaisa), *Mundakulam* Vappu Haji, *Kappadu* Koya- all of them conduct and present *Kuthu Ratheeb* in their old age. By alleviating questions and doubts of modern type is how Koya *Kappadu* sustains his *Kuthu Ratheeb* practice. In Kerala's coastal areas also, *Kuthu Ratheeb* exists. In places near Thrissur region, that is *Chavakadu*, *Anchangadi* areas, *Kuthu Ratheeb* is conducted well. These coastal areas had Persian relations. Latheef is one who is conducting *Kuthu Ratheeb* here.

Conclusion

The existence of belief, the differences in presentation style of *Kuthu Ratheeb* based on belief, role of belief in the invigoration of performance and to make performers reach trance is discussed in the chapter. The peculiarities of *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation happening in the *Uroos* of *Bheema Palli* is discussed in this chapter. Reasons for the decrease in practice of *Kuthu Ratheeb* in the recent times and the contrasting features of *Kuthu Ratheeb* practiced by *Tariqa* of Muhyudheen *Shaikh* and *Tariqa* of Hydrose is discussed in this chapter. Ethnographical study about *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer Muhammad Haji and his group where his initiation to *Kuthu Ratheeb*, his way of conducting *Kuthu Ratheeb*, his life history etc. are discussed. Muhammad Haji states the necessity of trance that should happen to the performer before weapon usage. The experiences of *Kondotti Nercha* and its ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb* in the memory of Muhammad Haji based on interview with him are explained in this chapter. Patterns of *Kuthu Ratheeb* conducted by *Arimbra* Muhammad Shah, *Mundakkulam* Vappu Haji, Koya *Kappadu* and Abdul Latheef were discussed.

Part II

5.2 *Repetition*: A theatrical experience based on Artaudian styles in *Kuthu Ratheeb*

5.2.1 The performance aspects of theatre research production *Repetition*

Performance set up of research production *Repetition*: The research production of *Repetition* was staged in 2016 at *Natyashastra*, a famous theatre research centre in Kerala. *Natyashastra* is a theatre group which has become famous by presenting political plays both in Kerala and outside. It was on June 26, 2016 that *Repetition* came to stage. Before the entry of performer on stage, by burning frankincense the smoke and smell of it are being allowed to spread from the performance space into the audience who were sitting in four sections. In the centre of the stage, using rods, a transparent level is used. It is from beneath the level that smoke and smell enter. In that level a big cross is placed. From one part of the cross, a hang rope is hung. Also there was a stool in the stage and in the floor a chess board was drawn in a mirror with threads. Around the rectangular level which is in the centre, a rectangular frame is made. In the four directions, there were paths in saffron colour. The stage was in rectangular shape. In the audience who were sitting on the four sides of the stage in each one's neck hang rope was hung. The hang ropes were set sufficient for the ones who wanted to wear that. Electric lights were not there in the beginning of the play but only light from candle was there. Such an effect was given to the audience. Into the stage, actor enters through one path among four which were set in the four sides of the stage. The performer comes as a peaceful character through that path. Holding a candle in a hand and very peacefully entering, the performer lights the things which were hung in the rectangular frame arranged in the stage. The ember and ash of the things which are burnt falls on the body of the performer. Later, the performer very slowly lies down with his anterior part placed on the stool which is placed so close to the frame. That time, so close to the body of the performer candles too are lit on the two sides on the top of the stool. It's the performer who lights up the candle which is on the two sides of the

performer and he lie in between the candles. It's by bearing the heat of the wax which drips down and fire that the performer plays chess in the first stage of presentation. When the unit of chess playing starts, the presentation of music also starts. A special type of music which is related to the Arabic type is used from the beginning to end in the *Repetition* presentation. In the unit where chess is played, the performer lies with anterior part down on the stool and play chess by looking into his face in the mirror which is placed in the ground. In the ground, in the two sides of the mirror, candles are lighted. From the candles lit in the ground, into the face of the performer heat is stricken.

The performer travels through the story line by becoming many different characters and by receiving their bodies. But the presentation as a whole is not taken forward by the characters or the bodies of the characters specified in the story line. After the completion of story line, in the presentation comes a body which represent all the bodies mentioned in the story line. All the characters mentioned in the story line are hanged in this presentation. For each body there is a state of transformation by conquering its mental states. In such a transformation, the performer follows certain elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual and beats on the chest repeatedly for long time. The self torture, which continues for a long time, makes the performer reach a state of trance. It is by hurting one's own body the elements of performance are communicated to the audience. All the freedom to interfere in between the presentation for the audience is given by the performer through upset and irritation. It is through the naked presentation of body parts and self torturing that the performer makes the audience more irritated. Movements and properties which are not feasible for native culture are shown (showing condom in between the performance and actions relating to that is manipulated by performer's body and in the end aiming any one audience, the condom is thrown to his front is also done).

Will these types of presentation irritate the culture of one land was also experimented in the presentation of *Repetition*? There is a paradox while the self torturing elements of *Kuthu*

Ratheeb are re-presented through the *Repetition* presentation. On the one side, audience don't know all of its historical elements. This separates out spectators from performers and their experience is covered on just a documentary paper. On the other side (those who know), the same emotional reactions of myths and *Kuthu Ratheeb* are presented by *Repetition*. Self beating and incising one's own flesh generate emotional reactions in the audience. If actions of these types are repeated, while recalling, what happens to the perspective of pain of performer is also communicated by *Repetition*. By staying away from body art representations, by fixing attention on performer's body organs, in the awakening of body art, theorists start to write about concrete body's meaning and importance. That concrete body is not a carrier of symbol and that body itself does the presentation of the flesh.

In *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Repetition*, flesh is used as a material. But on it, societal values and structures are imprinted. A litigation covered with flesh is body. They create levels of their own importance. The formation of art theory starts and ends with and in living flesh. This differs from semiotic and phenomenological traditions. In body art, mostly the artist itself is the performer. In the performance, customs and physical acting are introduced and the customs are re-enacted. The *Repetition* performance is made as an ideal space for immediate sensual experience of staged action. Performer is the one who experiences body, its flesh, and pain. To experience all the emotions of the performer, spectators also can reach this position. Otherwise the spectator cannot be thought to be in the position of ideal recipient. In the beginning, spectators are separated from the stage. They hermeneutically receive the actions of the performer and reflect on it. In *Repetition*, the performer makes the audience realise his sensual experiences as symbols. Through sensual experiences, the complex and constricted language is communicated to the audience. In his book *Art and Agency*, Alfred Gell has given the position of performer and recipient as agent and patient respectively. It prejudices the western concept

of art. The theory of Alfred Gell is a communication theory. In that, art is a medium for energy transference.

In between the presentation of *Repetition*, in a unit, sex is done. The performer by lying down is doing sexual actions in maximum extent using his body. In between this, the groaning and palpitations are raised as sounds and is transferred into the audience from the body of the performer. After that unit, a baby is born. It is pampered and his growth follows. The growth of this baby is shown in the next unit by the performer. The growth of the baby is done using stained socks on the right hand of the performer. At last, the socks which is the baby transforms into a gun and the performer's body falls into the ground and using less space is doing spectacular performance by lying on the floor. In all these times, the performer keeps direct eye contact with the audience in a sharp manner. The audience are prevented from getting directed into other thoughts or feelings that is how the performer kept his eye contact. Fischer-Lichte's elaboration of 'presence' is not against the energy transmission between stage and auditorium. For the direct interaction between performer and spectator in the pre-conscious level, the intent and desire is inherent part and pre-requisite of all stage arts. It is multiplied or blurred depending on the style and background.

What mediation intends here is a conscious interference between perceiver (subject) and another external entity. The ones who experience empathy generally know that the object of their experience is not themselves even though it is primarily their own feelings and not others. This fact has not changed by the discovery of mirror neurons. In the 'theory of mind', the mirror neuron is an important scientific corner stone: "an understanding of others in terms of goals, intentions and perhaps desires"³⁵.

Implementation of concepts of performance art in *Repetition*, immediacy of presentation of flesh which is involved in *Repetition* resembling Artaudian theatre elements

³⁵Brian Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories*(Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 2009)

and elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* in its performance: In theory and concept formation also the performer can participate. It can be done only by adopting a reflexive observer position either after, before, or even during the performative act. This “meanwhile” tends to be an issue because the understanding of consciousness of us which is culturally determined allows only one type of consciousness at a time (i.e. the experience of pain is not there while reflecting on the same pain). On and in front of a performance stage, this paradoxical state unfolds. The origin of performance art is from the surroundings of visual arts. It’s at the same time, swept away conventions which are theatrical and representational. Performance art is seen mostly as an attempt, an attempt to present an event in an authentic manner because actions have innate meaning in given situations. The term Allan Kaprow uses is “happening”. By drawing spectators into a concrete tangible world, the presence is created. It is a world not made up of metaphors and metonyms. Comprising action involving skin, flesh, and blood, human beings are exhibited as operating organisms. This is a strategy which is found in body art.

The scope of *Repetition* in challenging the audience to respond physically and the opening up of pain and trance to the audience when it adopts elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb*: The greatest peculiarity of *Repetition* presentation is that the audience are challenged to respond physically. During the performance the performer hurts oneself by beating in the chest that time the spectator cannot experience pain or trance but through the action of beating which is repeatedly done in same manner, pain, trance, and violence are opened up towards the spectators. To the deep nimbus of performer’s body the spectators are drawn in. Such modes can be seen in *Repetition* performance and *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Towards the purity of science of the body, the spectators are drawn in completely are the performances of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Repetition*. How does each spectator respond to clear sounds is related to each individual? That is according to their gender and nature. Richard Schechner, a performance director, sees the ideas of performativity and performance as connecting concepts and as a basic character of

various cultural manifestation and events. Performance art is only one example. He finds the common characters of indigenous rituals. To make everydayness into extraordinary is a character of rituals. A room and time are limited and separated from the daily pace of life. Van Gennep and Victor Turner³⁶ describe this as Liminality³⁷.

The peculiarities of rituals in the west where state of trance is implemented: The rituals in the west are often associated with orgasmic trance states, in that rationality is transcended. The dramaturgy of ritual is defined clearly. The given script is followed by all the participants, both audience and performer. That describes the essential elements of performed act. In the scripts, one finds the ritual's social purposes and aims. There is a documentary nature for the ritual script. Like that the ritual script has a non-vulnerable direction that acknowledges a societal power structure which exists. That opens up spaces for cultural innovations and improvisations.

The state of pain, violence, and trance experienced in *Repetition* and its similarity with these experiences in *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual: The ritual's (*Kuthu Ratheeb*) boundary is its space and time. In *Kuthu Ratheeb*, the first observation level is the performer's being-in-action. It is same in case of *Repetition* presentation. There the performer experiences his body and actions. Through that, state of trance and state of pain which forms in flesh is experienced. Through this, the third thing which audience get is state of violence. The experiences of trance and pain are experienced by spectators emotionally and not. Through *Kuthu Ratheeb* presentation, the performer gives the state of violence into the audience. Later the performer observes the sensation by staying in the spectators' internal position. The script performs the action. Then

³⁶.Victor Turner, *the Ritual Process: Structure and Anti Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969).

³⁷.*limen* (Lat.): Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982).

also, the presence of the body in stage doesn't go out because in the presentation of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and *Repetition*, the importance is given to bodies. The pain experienced by the body is treated as the performer's pain. Through body the script is acted and the body as a machine performs on the stage is what can be seen in *Repetition*. What we can see here is that the performer becomes an interpretive observer of his own actions. Flesh is opened and shown by the performer gives rise to an inverted theoretical movement.

5.2.2 The Making Process involved in the research production *Repetition*

The process of making *Repetition* production: It was in June 26, 2016 that *Repetition* production staged in *Natyashastra*. The careful use of sources like sound, intentional actions, and lights are seen in this. The use of sound, light, and action is composed in relation with Artaudian theatre concept. The use of music (sound) is used first in the production process. Action is created according to the use of the sound. In order to apply action, *Repetition* has given form to a space (performance space). In rectangle shape with four edges open is how stage is formed.

5.2.3 Story line portrayed in the research production *Repetition*

The story line used in *Repetition* production: It's only the body of the actor that comes as a character. That body enters on the stage and lights the objects kept in a square shaped frame. After that, by looking at the chess board which was drawn above a mirror which is placed in a corner of the frame, this body does makeup using its cosmetic items. It is by using cosmetic items of ladies and cosmetic items of men such as blade and shaving set, the body plays chess. When the ladies costume items win the chess, the body entirely changes to the body language of a woman and changes into Kunthi Devi. The body then becomes Karna and one of the arrows shot by Karna gets struck into the eye of King Oedipus. Jacasta who has Kunthi's story in her memories pulls out the arrow shot by Karna into her son's eyes and throws it to Kitharon mountain ranges. The body comes out of Oedipus's life that is full of tragedies

and then goes to death. Before that, the body travels through certain elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual. The obstacles, quests, journeys, and realizations of the body experiences are presented on the stage.

5.2.4 Presentation style used in research production *Repetition*

The presentation mode used in *Repetition* production: Based on story line, it is with the help of the body, sound, and light that the body creates postures and movements of different types. The intentional actions of the body are what are mostly used. As part of action of the body, by receiving elements of body actions of self torture ritual which is *Kuthu Ratheeb*, the body presents *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance. By making silence as a part of the music, here music comes as a character. By using candle lights and lights of fire, the heat necessary for the performance is given to the audience and by arranging lights in Artaudian style and types, light comes as another character in the performance. It is by placing restrictions on the spectators that the performance is presented. The spectators restricted in number are made to sit in the stage with hang ropes in their heads. The acting body does close communication through gazes. At certain times, actors are made from the spectators through interaction. It is by irritating the audience from beginning to end is how performance comes on stage. In between the presentation, the trance state, pain state, and violence state of the body that can be reflected through the body using ritual movements come in the presentation. Violence, pain, and trance stay close to tragedies. These tragic myths are presented as rituals in the *Repetition* production.

5.2.5 Spectators' feedback in the form of interviews

Before three years, *Repetition* production took form in *Natyashastra* which is a theatre commune in Kerala. The audience who were part of *Repetition's* first presentation in 2016 was made into different groups based on their generations and group interview and individual interviews of them are what is included in this study. In the research production *Repetition*, the new sources which are newly experienced, about that is what comes as the subject of discussion

in the interview. They completely as spectators, what are the new experiences they felt as spectators seeing the performance and after three years what they collected from their memory are exhibiting through statements. For this study, the feedback collection of spectators is done through fieldwork. In the feedback collection, spectators are given full freedom. 1) Does the *Repetition* production lie close to ritualistic performance? 2) How are the three states of trance, pain, and violence used in the *Repetition* production by relating it to *Kuthu Ratheeb* in the form of ritual? 3) In the making of stage, in which way the types in Artaudian concepts are used? These questions are the research questions of this study.

5.2.5.1 Interview with Dr. G. Dileepan

Repetition as a performance centred on body, like that of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and as a performance that breaks the logic of language, which is same in the case of Artaudian concept of theatre: In the first stage of field work Dr. G. Dileepan, a retired English professor, is interviewed. Dr. G. Dileepan is one who played a major role in the formation of *Natyashastra* (theatre group of Kerala) and is continuing that support. As an appreciator, more than the theme of *Repetition*, Dr. G. Dileepan talks about how the body is used in the stage. As a person who has studied about body is how Dr. G. Dileepan analyses *Repetition*. In 2013-14 periods, in *Natyashastra* about the topic 'body' two national seminars occurred. It was a seminar where theorists and philosophers took part. Because of the background of the three day seminar and as a person who has done research on theatre related to *Koodiyattam* and play is why the thought about body on the stage has come, says him. About the *Repetition* production, he says two things. One is objectively about the play, second is that the performance, as a spectator gives some thoughts about the body to the spectators and accordingly guides forward the thoughts of the spectators. *Repetition* is a performance type centred on body. The sound used in performance lie not outside or inside. Other than breathing, human sounds were less. So that, to think about the body the performance has given chance. Another question that came is when

is the body used in the stage objectively? Not only about stage but about social life too, this performance engenders such a thought. Generally, a sound or sound language is not able to express what is inside of us and the sound language we use lie foreign from stage and presentation. That doesn't mean that, that is not sufficient for our performance but it becomes a language incapable of performance. This happens in certain stages. In the life situation of humans, certain sound languages come as language that does not allow the humans to perform. Such type of unnecessary sound language is not used in *Repetition*, according to the analysis of Dr. G. Dileepan. As a consequence to over usage of language, the language gets evolved or the situation where language is used gets evolved and the performers see face to face this situation. Thereby, real language gets lost from the performance. At one level, language imposes certain sciences and other things. To react with our language, we become incapable. When language becomes supreme, language is used to resist language. Body is very important in *Repetition*. There is violence that the body experiences and there is violence that body does to another body. Not only the violence we receive but also the violence we want to do to a body. To express all these, situation is such that, only body is there. In these situations, the importance of body increases. The historians of play gave more importance to the theatre language. After sixties and seventies, even though body has entered, it is the logic of language that many presentations followed. In certain presentations, the logic used on stage can be understood as that of sound language. *Repetition* is a performance that breaks the logic of language. Language has logic but the subject of language is old. Language always exists in the past. Body always travels in the present. The past works in our body as memory. When history becomes memories, it becomes part of our body. For that, logic of language cannot be asserted. The memories of the past or the dreams about future exist in the present. The past that works from the memories and the dreams about future exists in the body is the possibility of the body. But if we place the possibility of body in the present, same time with reality, these memories and dreams would

intervene. What happens in the logic of present is that gives body logic. The attempt of theatre is to recapture this logic. When body is used, this possibility is started to arise in these kinds of performances. A lively possibility of the same was there in *Repetition*. In the continuity of the performance, in many moments, body was undergoing the experience of pleasure. During trance or during devotion or during prayer (*Namaz*), a body or a human gets entangled in a different space. A body endures much suffering. In loneliness, body could be saved from this world. A body which is of the social structure of the present passes through all possibilities and bringing such possibilities to stage is what the research production *Repetition* does.

Use of facial expression and facial movements as in *Repetition* is largely seen in traditional theatre and Artaudian theatre that gives prominence to gazes, gestures, etc. When *Repetition* is presented on stage, emphasis was given on the size differences of body movements. Bodies forming groups and making bigger size have been researched by many theatre groups. But in *Repetition*, along with the size of body movements, certain movement where body is engulfed back was also there. Another important thing is the facial expressions and facial movements. In certain times, there are movements where attention is given to that alone. From a type of facial expression to another does not necessarily require logic but any movement of the body has logic behind but we might not be able to find that. The illogicality of our experience or the logic which is placed in body by language is destroyed.

What *Repetition* puts forward is the concern about body. That doesn't mean that telling a story is not necessary. Even when we tell a story, it is the logic of narration that develops the story. A story heard or read is presented on the stage. When epics are read, the narration should come to the logic of the body which is narrating. That is when it becomes a part of sense of history. The body which is presented in *Repetition* might raise a narration which establishes this logic in the future. As a new audience, as one who has tried to see it intimately and so close, and know how the performance has started, certain draw backs happened in *Repetition*

performance, in the opinion of Dr. G. Dileepan. In performance, chess is played by placing cosmetic items in a mirror and even though the body which comes after is Kunthi's body but it is entering in the stage as if a transgender body. The body in the performance travel in between many hang ropes is enough to mark present day. After all the actions which is the general character of the stage, the mirror which came in the beginning is placed face to face and travel through the stage. It's in mirror does the play ends also. The travel is by reflecting the spectators in the mirror. There was a body in the beginning, there is a body rejuvenating from the mirror. Through make up done with the help of mirror is how we present ourselves on the stage. A body which is recognised through mirror is the performance on stage. To such knowledge, all the appreciators are led by the body on the stage in this performance. The socio-political issues during the time of generation of production have influenced the performance. The time period after the suicide of Rohit Vemula is when *Repetition* formed as a research production. It was with an immense shock that students from Hyderabad Central University came to do *Repetition* production at *Kadambazhipuram Natyashastra*. The suicide of an individual and issues has been brought into performance. That, it is not one section of people subjugating another section but it is the problem of the bodies of all individuals is how that is picturised in the performance. The space of our language to share pain and pleasure has gone. This is a bigger socio-political issue as well as an individual possibility. More than seeing it as a socio-political issue, how is it received by an individual body is what the performance of *Repetition* tends to consider.

Experience of *bhava* on theatre performances and the use of music in *Repetition* which guided the performance which is similar to the *Baiths* leading *Kuthu Ratheeb* and use of sounds and music than language in Artaudian theatre: When a play relating to body is seen, is *Rasa* there, is the question? If it is a *Kathakali*, as an emotional *Rasa*, sorrowness comes. All the traditional performances awaken the spectators in an excellent way by using *Rasas*. The body goes to; this is my body that is another body, such type of communication. An actor if said how

much ever he has lived as a character, an actor in the stage, more than an actor lives a materialistic life. If there is a wound in the body, even though he acts as Bheema, that wound bothers him. When a body doesn't have a wound compared with a body with wound, there is difference in their performances. Therefore, to be a character coming out from a materialistic body is not possible.

Acting has two possibilities. One is politically motivated; we cry and make the audience cry. An actor cries and makes the audience cry. That is wrongly conceived by many as a higher step of acting, says Dr. G. Dileepan. An emotion which lasts for one minute is presented in detail. The possibility of sorrow and happiness creates how many minute possibilities in our body, also in what type it is formed and a study is based on that, through that study is how the working of the body happens. Other than that, emotion is not working here. Using body, emotions are made. The emotion of *Rati* is studied by the body. Through body a thorough *bhava* is examined and it is presented. Through these presentations, the possibilities of body are deployed. Through the deployment of body, our body examines *bhava*. All these were said as the possibilities of *bhavas* and *Rasas* by Dr. G. Dileepan. But body analyses *bhava* very minutely. How that process is made to reach the stage by the body is a task before the performer. How the body of the actor is given to the spectators. Not the *bhava* but the body which analyses the *bhava* is received by the spectators. Through that what happened to spectators is the position that is by the analysis of the *bhava* by the actor. So that spectators reach to this position. Spectators are not immersed in *bhava* but receive the body of the actor who analyses the *bhava* to one's own body. That time, our body changes to a possibility which analyses *bhava*. A moment so is *Rasa bhodha*. It is not through actor's thought or emotion that *bhava* is generated. But through actor's body. The body spreads to the spectators. A spectator who has received the body goes out to look at the life in that way. This is the social function of art. Why *Nalacharitham*, *Kathakali* is seen more than one time does not have another answer, because

each time we reach a position. The *bhava*, thought, or event can be analysed by a body. By receiving such a body is how everyone goes out of theatre space. The body that gets out becomes capable of observing, studying, and analysing. When Abhinav Gupta says *Rasa* is of eight types then also it is only one. Whether it is *Bheebathsa* or *Shanta*, the experience that the spectator gets is one, says *Rasa Chintha*. In these testimonial books, it is said to be pleasure. But what is that pleasure where that is discussed in the modern world is not known by Dr. G. Dileepan is the argument he puts forward. But he again says that *bhava* or any experience we narrate, the actor becomes a body which can observe any experience from a distance and that actor is received by the spectators. So the work of an actor is to give the possibilities of his body to other humans. This is my blood, this is my body, take it. It is in this manner that body is given to audience. Using our body, their body is awakened. That is called *thathaatmyarasa*. It is not towards the emotion of the actor but towards the position of the actor towards *bhava*. When we see *bhavas* so close, we could see that when we bring each thing close to us, it starts to blossom. Our body does so. That body is used by the actor for the activities on the stage. How much that is right, spectators receive it that much. Not so strong and lazy performance is rejected by the audience. When spectators receive it so in the social life which is continuous to it also it is received. How life works, to understand that performance makes the body ready. Each individual should see the world but to look at the world from distance to give such type of visions is the responsibility of art. *Rasa* is said to be in the spectators and we ask the actor to show *Rasa*. Now, in the last part of *Rasa* debate it is established that *Rasa* is originated in spectators. The nine *Rasa* are shown by the actor and discussion is done on *Rasabhinaya*, the opposition between these two in ancient aesthetics has not come in the attention of Dr. G. Dileepan is what he says. But in modern thoughts, as in the last part of Brecht's play, 'Alienation' is realised and empathy is rejected. Dr. G. Dileepan is not in agreement with it. An actor who gets identified with alienated body, the actor on stage is a person who has kept a

distance from his actions. The preceptors of *Koodiyattam* says it as *kaatuka* (to show) he (the actor) is not living but showing. The western thinkers like Walter Benjamin say it is 'showing'. He says that in Brecht's play 'showing' is there. Showing is there in the production of *Repetition*. Visual expression was communicated with the spectators. In *Repetition* no emotion is logically grown. It does not take the *bhava* of any emotion. Changing with moments was the performance of *Repetition*. The attempt for usage of sound was also seen on the stage of *Repetition*. The music and musical instruments inflamed the performance. But in certain situations, music has gone up. But the type of music is used in a good manner. Music has the possibilities to increase mood of the situation. It could be said to have an individuality and a good relationship with body. Music does not need to go together with body always. It could be opposite also.

The construction of bodies without organs reminding the base of Artaudian idea of theatre: For the use of Artaudian elements two parts are there. In the performance, the body with organs is seen as a wonder. It is said about a body without organs, a body which is kept away from organs. Eye is the organ for vision when it is used to demonstrate intensity the function of eye changes. The scenes in *Repetition* which constructed bodies without organs remind of the root of the Artaudian thoughts. The functions of organs from the functions of day today life are converted to the body on the stage. So that, the questions related to body's experience has reduced because Artaudian theatrical methods are raised in performance. With the cruelty that body receives, the suffering that body undergoes, body is considered as a space (stage) for showing that. In western theatrical thought, it is from Artaud that this thought started. If asked whether there is a background of this in this presentation, we could say yes beyond doubts. It is the relation of the presentation with ritual that is the reason for it.

5.2.5.2 Interview with Narippatta Raju³⁸

In the production *Repetition*, use of elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* was excellent and a query arises, how many of the spectators will get to know that elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* are used? Narippatta Raju is a well-known theatre activist in Malayalam theatre arena. He got Kerala Sangeeth Natak Academy Award 2019. He was a student and teacher at the Thrissur School of drama. He took his masters in theatre from Hyderabad Central University. He is still active in theatre in acting and direction. He has done plays in different languages in India and outside. He has conducted a number of theatre workshops. He has presented a number of papers on theatre in different institutions. He has also worked for different documentary films. He has made lighting for traditional classical forms of Kerala such as *Koodiyattam*, *Kathakali*, *Nangiarkoothu*, *Mohiniyattam*. Narippatta Raju discussed about the performance of *Repetition* in the interview with him.

Narippatta Raju in his childhood has lived in *Karalmanna* near *Cheruppulassery* in Palakkad district where there is no way to get to know about Christian religion. With the change in time, he came to know and study about Islam, Christianity, and other religions. Through that he got to search about the rituals and other performances practised by religious people. Later, when Narippatta Raju was studying in Calicut University, School of Drama, Venu Gopal who was the *Doordarshan* director and others had used *Ratheeb* for improvised play. Later P. Balachandran who was the professor at Mahatma Gandhi University used elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* in the play *Pavam Usman*. The ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb* was used very rarely as a theatrical expression. A better version of this usage is found in *Repetition*. Other than that, inside the performance, many small elements that happen in human life are used in a different type of images, says Narippatta Raju. Also bodily elements that visualise deep privacies are also found in the performance. Many elements which are secretive have come in the

³⁸Interview Date: February 12 – Wednesday-2020, Time: 11:48 a.m.

performance. Such type of images has not yet come in Malayalam theatre, says Narippatta Raju. It is only through the differences in time period could these visuals be done on performances is his opinion. The example he takes from *Repetition* is the use of condom in between the performance. In a unit of the performance, condom is used. How is this condom used in early ages on stage? Will that be accepted by spectators? But in this time, studies have happened to receive images of these types. So that *Repetition* is a research production in which usage of these types of images was successful, says Narippatta Raju. It was able to display the complexities of life through different images. *Kuthu Ratheeb* which is a ritual not so exposed in Muslim culture, basing on that *Sunni- Shiite* issues are referred to and a different level of theatre production is made is what makes *Repetition* excellent. There is a unit in performance where body torture is done. Performer is beating heavily on his chest with hands. If this action is seen, how many spectators will understand that in this unit, elements of rituals like *Kuthu Ratheeb* are used? When this remains as a unit which communicate to the ones who know about this ritual, what we could understand is that *Repetition* production is a performance having ritualistic nature. Because, each ritual is a performance conducted following indigenous tradition and belief. This could be understood by people of Arabian countries, because performances of these types have come to Kerala through coasts from Gulf countries. Even among Muslims, only those who believe in the ritual can understand these types of ritualistic elements. Narippatta Raju witnessed a performance and its dreadfulness in Bahrain. In between a performance or a society, a special circumstance and situation gives certain state in a man's body. In these states, bodies perform in superhuman ways. The reason for this is the trance of mind. To perform in these ways, the performance of the bodies coming from the society is called social performance. The changes in the thoughts of the performer also leads the performer to trance is my finding. More than a spectator, Narippatta Raju had talked about this research production as a theatre activist.

5.2.5.3 Interview with Sudevan³⁹ (*Kathakali* artist and senior drama artist from *Natyashastra*)

Contrasting *Repetition* with *Kathakali* and finding that the elements of self torture in *Repetition* are in par with the self torture in *Kuthu Ratheeb*: Mr. Sudevan said that as he has seen the play before three years, all the images of the play are not in his mind. He said that he got fascinated when he entered the space itself. There were many hang ropes that time in it; an experience of reaching another space is felt. Along with it, the ambience of *Natyashastra* (theatre group) drew the attention of him. After seeing the lighting patterns, the play seemed to him to be concentrated in a specific place. In the beginning a person was putting make up. That person was getting ready in front of a mirror. Sudevan got such a meaning from that sequence. After that using small space, that person was trying to take them to a different place was understood. Sudevan says that *Kathakali* communicates through *mudras* (signs). He says that *Kathakali* is an abstract thing. Meaning is attributed for the placement of hands, so that if one doesn't know the language, it won't be conveyed to the audience. He who doesn't know anything gets a vague idea of it. The play demanded their minute observation. An ambience is said to be setup so. Then he discussed about the space in *Kathakali*. In stage, an actor with all the costume gets only a small space. Using that space, *Kathakali* is full exaggeration. Even the costumes are exaggeration. Everything is made big. But in *Repetition*, the body was almost naked. Using body is how the actor did. It is that much struggle. There is the element of torture in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The image of it was evident and the researcher had already spoken about that. So it was conveyed for Sudevan. After the self torture, death, and other things, it is understood to be that but it was not conveyed to him of what character it is from, of which epic or history. He felt that the body was under torture in that journey, a journey with so many hardships. The journey on the steps, self-torturing was felt as torture. That self torture is

³⁹Interview Date: March 14 – 2020, Time: 7 p. m.

something which is torture for the sake of others. Self torturing is not sharing. For others, could undergo self torture is what he felt. He didn't feel music was standing apart. Music was felt to go along. It has created an ambience. It did not stand apart.

5.2.5.4 Interview with Prashanth Cherumittam⁴⁰

Impact of elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* in the rhythm and mood of performance of *Repetition*, the use of light in *Repetition* which is an inspiration from Artaudian theatre style, the smell and smoke of frankincense resembling the traditional Kerala performances like *Kuthu Ratheeb* and the use of musical rhythm according to which body movements are staged resembling *Kuthu Ratheeb* are discussed. Prashanth is a senior actor of *Natyashastra* and an expert in the *Kalari* martial art. Prashanth Cherumittam who conducts theatre workshops and acting schools is a teacher also. He is sharing the experiences that the production *Repetition* has given him. In the production *Repetition* there was problem of visibility says Prashanth Cherumittam. The spectators who were sitting in four parts could not see some units with clarity, and then also the ambience that performance gives the spectators, the visibility accordingly was there throughout in the performance space. In the production *Repetition*, make up unit which was the first unit and subsequent actions as a starting was a mix of visual beauty and politics. In the first unit only, mirror was made lying on the floor, in that chess is played between gent's cosmetics and ladies cosmetics. Gent's cosmetics fails ladies' cosmetics win and subsequently to the performer's body ladies cosmetics are applied and transform into Kunthi (mother of *Karna*). It is a unit which lasts now also in his memory says Prashanth Cherumittam. In the renowned art of *Kerala sangha kali*, Prashanth Cherumittam is a famous artist. The use of elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* in the performance has increased the rhythm and mood of the performance and has made the spectators reach different levels of visual beauty. The light which is used from the beginning to the end and in the light itself, the way in which

⁴⁰Interview Date: October 21- Monday -2019, Time: 8 am.

fire which is an actual light is used and sending of special smell of incense sticks and smoke of frankincense, etc. is used and sound used throughout the performance has helped to create a special type of ambience. The research production *Repetition* is a performance which was completed by three characters, sound, light, and action or body. The next day after production in *Natyashastra*, seminar related to the presentation has happened in the topic ‘Body in the Stage’ where important personalities took part in the discussion. Discussion of these types has helped to understand the motive of *Repetition* research production. The hang ropes that were hung on four parts of the stage have given another type of visual beauty and mood. In the hang ropes that were hung, audience of one side have seen audience of other side as their heads are hung on the hang ropes. In-between the spectators, all the spectators have seen the performance individually. The *Repetition* production has made the other spectators to be part of the presentation. One who starts to understand and study about body language, in this performance throughout had chances to understand and study about body. *Repetition* is a performance where body is used relating to folk-arts. Musical rhythm is what makes body movement. Due to the nature of the presentation of the performance it is not said to be a ‘play’ alone. This presentation could be called a theatre performance. The elements taken from *Kuthu Ratheeb* are not done in same way. The element taken from *Kuthu Ratheeb* is made theatrically is how design is made. In-between the performance by sitting, body is repeatedly rotated. Such actions are the elements only of *Kuthu Ratheeb*. But this action was related to *Mudiyattam* which is a folk art of Kerala. After the performance or before, those who know the *Kuthu Ratheeb* could understand these types of actions. In rituals like *Velichapadu* (oracle), there are piercing in lance, etc., as well as trance, violence, and pain.

5.2.5.5 Group discussion⁴¹:

Inferences from the group discussion with the audience

The way in which light is seen as an irritation is similar to that of Artaudian theatre concept and the body's possibility resembles traditional theatre performances. It was a group of six members who were interviewed together. All six of them are theatre artists who work in *Natyashasthra Katampazhipuram*, namely Sathyan Kottayi, Arun, Varun, Ahad, Vijesh, and Chandra Kumar. The first person to speak among the group was Chandra Kumar who had a rather serious reading of the play. He said that it is the human itself which becomes the light, and we just choose the source of energy. Humans have more energy than even the Sun; the elements which make us energetic are those humans around us. That is how he tried to see the light. And that is how Chandra Kumar sees any form of art or performance. The life which begins so beautifully, reaches the depths and heights of its weight. It could be of good or bad nature, but the weight reaches its high point. The ropes which were hung around the performance space seemed to signify the repetitiveness of life. The process of life beginning beautifully and reaching the complexities is a repetition in itself. Ropes could also be read as our ancestral roots. For him, the play *Repetition* reminded of all the life forms which go through difficult times. Rituals as such at the end takes us to the fire, it begins with song and dance and yet ends with jumping on ember (Jumping on ember is a ritual performance in Kerala). The immersion of one's body in this fire is life itself. This life which a human leads is very much like walking on ember. The same way drummers during *Chendamelam* increase the tempo towards the end to take us to its heights; all the rituals and art forms are trying to express the human problem.

⁴¹Interview Date: October 17 – Thursday – 2019, Time: 7:30pm.

Continuing this discussion, they all talked about the performance, specifically the politics and possibilities of a body during the performance. It was similar to the areas Dr. G. Dileepan had discussed. Sudevan said “*Repetition* was a torture play”. And everyone in the group discussion said that the form of performance in *Repetition* was such that it irritated the audience from the beginning to the end. The feedback of the research production *Repetition* was taken from a select group of artists among the audience. Most of the discussion revolved around the concept of body and the relation of the performance with traditional rituals. It was clear from the feedback collection that *Repetition* as a research production could include the elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and convey it to the audience. The nuances of the body during a *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance were theatrically brought on stage with the play *Repetition*. As Artaud’s theatre concept was in relation with the concept of ritualism, the relation between Artaud and *Repetition* was underscored in the discussion with Dr. G. Dileepan. This led to further discussions with him about body. *Repetition* is a physical theatre research production which delved into the nature of body, Artuadian theatre concept, and ritualism.

Conclusion

Details of the research production *Repetition* directed and performed by the researcher is explained in this chapter with discussions on various performance aspects of it including stage setup, actions used in the play, implementation of concepts of performance art, etc. Elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and elements of Antonin Artaud’s theatre where sound, light, and body actions form central role is used in *Repetition* and implementation of states of pain, violence, and trance in all the three is elucidated. Irritation is produced by the performance *Repetition* and is passed on to the audience. Flesh is presented which invoked immediacy and the audience was challenged to respond physically opening up pain and trance. The making process, storyline, presentation style of *Repetition* etc. are discussed. The method of study implemented in the feedback collection of *Repetition* is through interviews where single person

and group interviews with theatre activists, artists, and film makers is done. The performer experiences the state of pain, violence, and trance in the performance and is communicated to the audience and an investigation of the reception of it is done through interviews.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

Customs that are practiced traditionally or that remain as folklore in society are looked upon as performance by this study. In the earlier times, *Kuthu Ratheeb* was propagated in two ways. Firstly, *Kuthu Ratheeb* ritual was conducted for the propagation of religion. An individual's understanding of the performer's belief is depends on the depth and volume of harm and good the performer does to his own body. *Kuthu Ratheeb* was also conducted to collect money, food and other goods from the rich to distribute to the poor. Considering the poverty existed in the fifteenth century, collecting money, food, and other goods from the rich and distributing to the poor was not as a service, but also a religious duty that was customised and ritualised with the performance of *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

The history of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and the ways in which *Kuthu Ratheeb* influenced certain sections of Muslim community have been discussed in this study. The physical and mental changes that happen to performers and audience during the practice of *Kuthu Ratheeb* too are discussed. All the elements are connected with the Artaudian theatre style and a comparative study has also been done. Similarly, by bringing together the *Kuthu Ratheeb* and Artaudian theatre elements, a research production *Repetition* has been created and in its presentation, trance, pain and violence are exhibited to the audience through the performance. It can be conceived that a ritual is a product by the general society. These rituals have historical backgrounds; various dynamics transformed it from the time of inception. In order to serve as an identity of the tribe also rituals are formed. This will help in concretising the culture and the continuation of its existence. When these rituals are performed, that unify the members, and thus a consciousness of group is developed. For the union of an organized society, a performance space could be responsible. The ritualistic practices that are formed from the

circumstances of a society will have the peculiarities of that region. The integration of society is possible by the occurrence of rituals. The present-day customs are formed as a result of catering to the societal needs of a particular place and time. From a custom, if we separate out the factor of spirituality, it becomes an element of entertainment. According to the changes in societal structure, there is direct proportionality to the changes in ritualistic practices. For the variations in the ritual art and for the demise of an art form, these changes are accountable. The process of the birth of a myth to the ritualistic practices continues to take place aimlessly and with any society it comes in contact with, it adapts instantly. This happens by the union of different cultures. Through violence or attack, the variation occurs. We don't know the time for its survival but even its merging with another art form in the course can be done. When analysing *Kuthu Ratheeb* with Artaud's theatre ideas, many elements that invigorate hard the audience are present in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. That makes it more lively and excellent. Sometimes, we could politicise *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Above all, into the lives of performer and audience, an element of magic is brought in. The main factor for such possibilities as seen by Artaud is pure poetry. In a century which had known unparalleled cruelty, the idea of cruelty to lead an artful concentration is not hard to understand. That is not only for bloodshed or sadism, not only of crucified flesh or those who received martyrdom but in Artaud's words it is of strict control and submission to needs. From the background of just entertainment, theatre is taken out and to give initiation to education or a higher spiritual truth was the aim of Artaud. The fundamentals of Theatre of Cruelty are closely related to the fundamentals of Balinese theatre. We could understand that this study has maximum tried to relate Artaud's concepts with *Kuthu Ratheeb's* presentation style. Rituals are created from beliefs which are created with specific interests and purposes. When the innate creativity of specific community is explained through rituals, different art forms gets sprout. At the same time, art can be self and societal.

There were exchanges between *Mappila* and non-*Mappila* cultures and art forms, apart from the exchanges between various *Mappila* cultures and art forms. If an element of *Mappila* art is performed at a different location of its origin, it means that art has been borrowed by other clusters from *Mappila* or existent art forms and it have common characteristic with one or other of *Mappila* art forms. Different types of Islamic arts have been accepted for protests, entertainment or as a response against the system in spiritual places. To an independent new culture the *Mappila* art form is not developing into but to the existing culture it is made as an addition. The *Mappila* transformation of the story of *Ramayana* is an example for that. Space is found by *Mappila* characters in *Theyyam*. The involvement of spectators can be seen in *Theyyam* and *Kuthu Ratheeb* even though they don't have the authority to change the direction of the performance. A big section of the spectators are the believers in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. Within the religious arena is literally the performance. From this sphere, art forms like *Mappilapattu* are taken out and they got popularity beyond the Muslim community too.

The performer detaches him from any kind of pain through strong belief and divine determination. The communication in *Kuthu Ratheeb* is demonstrated through injuring the body through knives and by rapid movements. The performer attains different states of performance by holding control over the body. An insanely mystical world is created by the performer. For a spectator, this vision generates a similar feeling in them and seeks out to this arena projected by the performer. To change our physical conditions and to divert from any misery and to find contentment this vision has enough affinity. The pain is not suppressed but thrown away to the unconscious. When the performer goes into the altered state of consciousness, the performance becomes intense. The performer reaches a state of trance. By moving into unknown state of mind, things that cannot be consciously thought through are transformed into trance state by the performer. The energy level of the body is increased by the increase in adrenaline level. The performance is intensified by the hyper level of brain activity.

The ethnographical studies among the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performers led to the production of a drama *Repetition*. This experiment was formed by combining elements of *Kuthu Ratheeb* and the theatrical concepts of Artaud. Trance, pain, and violence are experimented by performer and audience along entire production.

Repetition, a production experiment conducted as part of the research to analyse the relation between *Kuthu Ratheeb* and Artaudian concepts in the line of ‘Theatre of cruelty’. Through the field experiments and the production of *Repetition*, I realised that the actions and body movements can be incorporated and implemented to theatrical performance. This experimentation also revealed that the trance experienced by *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer can be understood by theatrical practices. Trance, violence, and pain can be articulated through theatrical performances, but to meet the perfection of these three aspects, a performance should not only extract elements from the style and character of the rituals, but also the dimensions and peculiarities of time, space, and historicity of the concerned ritual.

The preservation of art forms developed out of the cult of faith in God and religious customs are done by such practices. At least in the arena of art form performance, it enables the lower castes to resist the dominance of higher castes. These efforts are considered as a part of resistance. In *Kuthu Ratheeb*, there is portrayal of animalistic violence and this is seen as emotional by the believers. In a ritualistic performance like *Kuthu Ratheeb*, the importance of a beautiful spectacle is not how it is seen and enjoyed, but how it has been experienced. It is with a bit of fear and uneasiness the spectator watches the experience. This art has not had any change in its structure because it has been performed usually before a restricted crowd. But the level of violence has mitigated. *Kuthu Ratheeb* is not considered as a conventional Islamic ritual art form by many people. The *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer directs pain into spiritual states through trance. Such magic processes create wonder in spectators and make the spectators a part of *Kuthu Ratheeb* performance. Pain as the medium of communication has played an

important role not only in attracting mass attention, but also in attaching them to performance. No other emotion makes an emergency for a reaction from the audience as immediate and intense pain. The intensity and depth of one's belief have crucial role in making an emotional impact on the spectators. Strong faith makes the expressive form to a trance state in *Kuthu Ratheeb*.

The art of knowing and controlling one's body is an extra ordinary capacity that requires the mastery of body and mind. The *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer who transcends to a stage unfamiliar and unknown to the spectators by experience is someone who transmits fear, violence, devotion, and amusement and that transforms the *Kuth Ratheeb* performer to an extra human (extra ordinary, in a standardised normal language) senses and capabilities. Knowing the unknown is as much excited as much as feeling the God. The *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer is like a prophet or a shaman who shows the lights of God's mercy and all powerfulness, by protecting the body even after stabbing and piercing it with a violent bloodshed. Belief and dedication are the elements that can protect someone when practiced with involvement and trust in self. The trust in self may transform to the trust in God in a ritualistic practice, but the *Kuthu Ratheeb* performer demonstrates the strength of the trust that any common human being needs to find to survive the pain and misery of existence. *Kuthu Ratheeb*, as religious rite can be a propaganda to justify the mercy and power of God, but as a folk ritual, the performer is someone who enables the spectators to trust in self, life; and even death. Religiosity and ideologies based on God transforms to the question of existence and reality of material life in *Kuthu Ratheeb*. The performer who inflicts fear, pain, devotion, and several other feelings among the spectators is not someone who speaks the philosophy of life and existence, but demonstrates and lives a philosophy of existential crisis that undergoes fear, anxiety, violence, and several other emotions; all those can be overcame only by trust and devotion- either in God or in oneself. The ritualistic performance is a rite that explains the philosophy of existence of

the humankind (and beyond), and the explanation of it as a solar drama by Artaud is a political statement that states that the ritualistic performance are not confined to the blindness of Eurocentric anthropological perception, but a philosophy of life, death, and existence that exists exclusively in a ritualistic folk performance.

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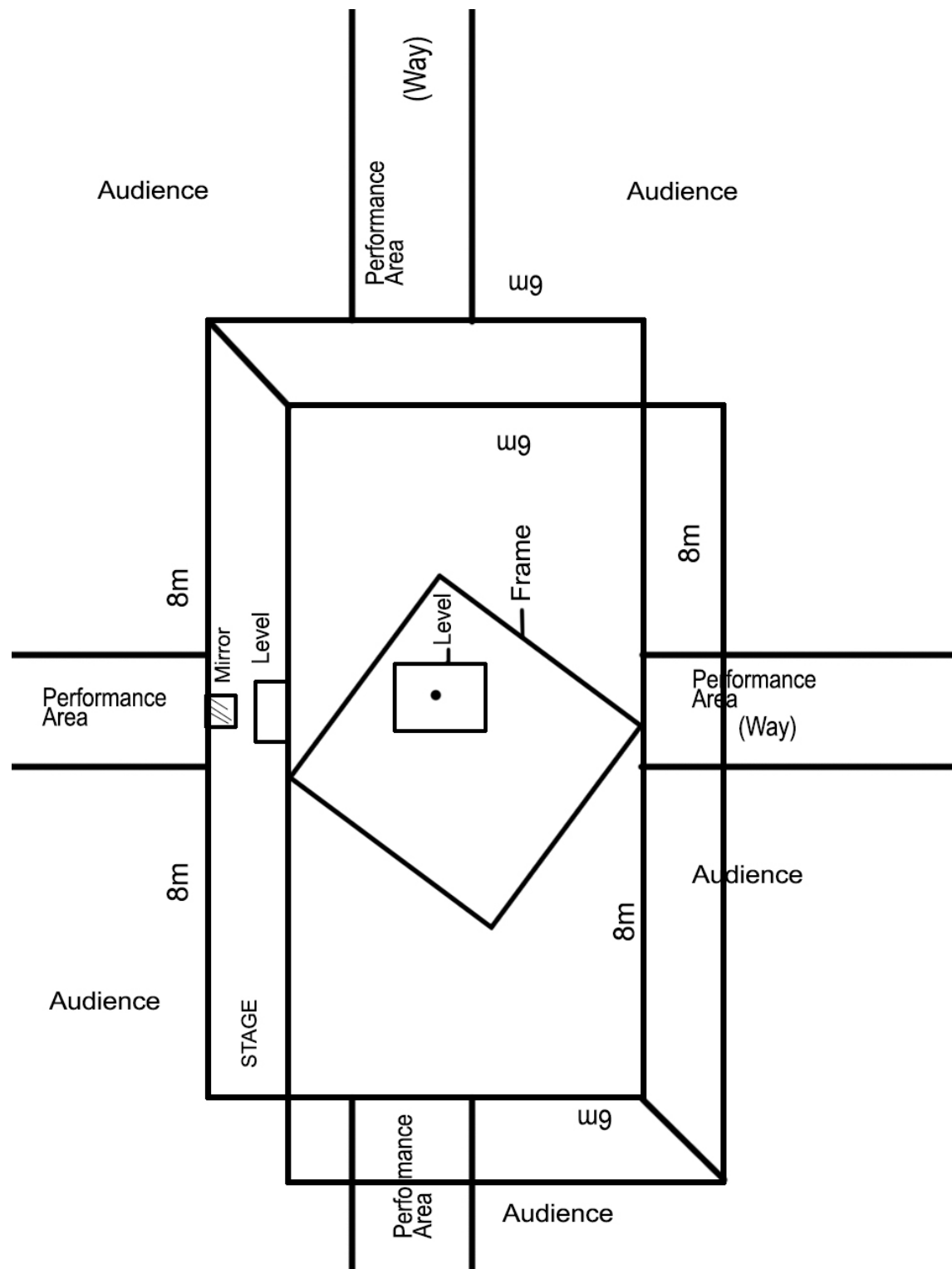
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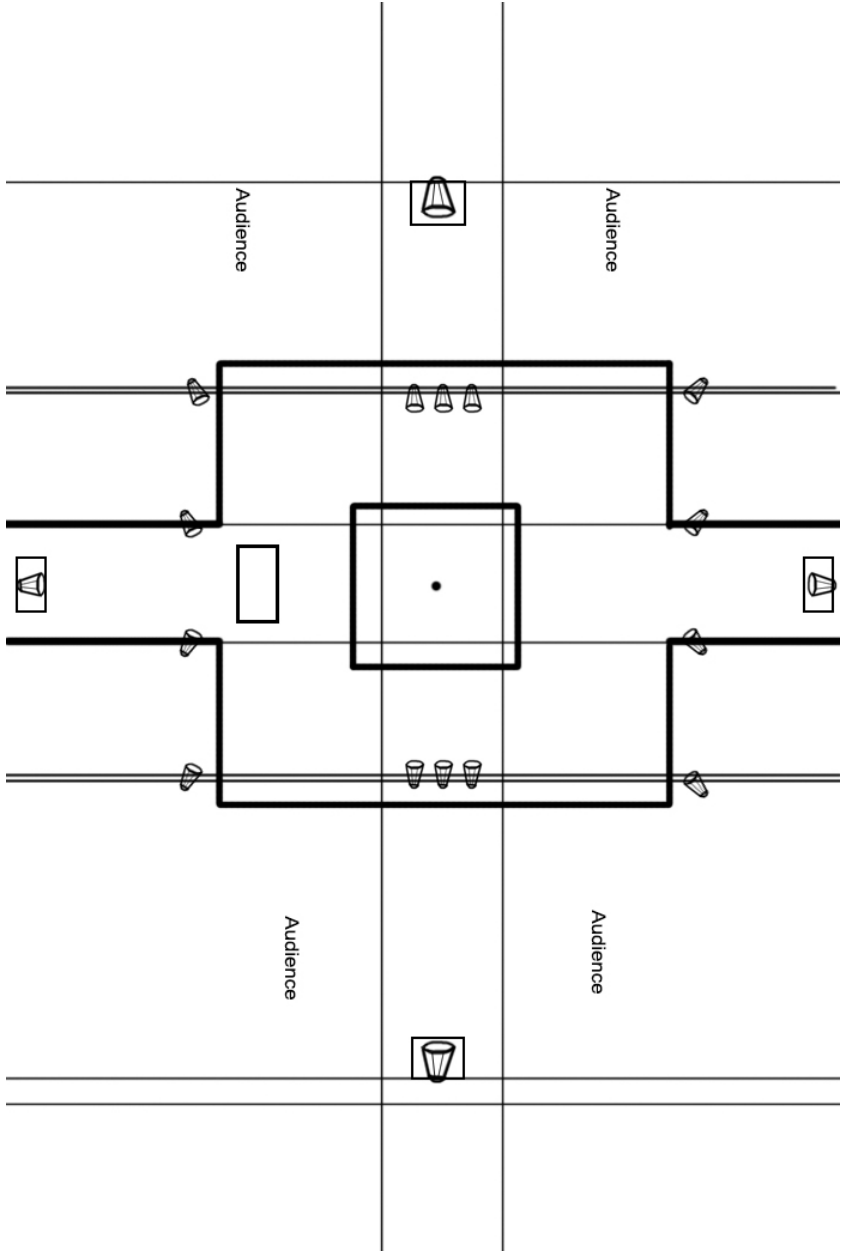
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Appendix-A: *Repetition*

Ground plan of *Repetition*



Light Plan of ‘Repetition’



Performance of *Repetition*















Appendix-B: *Kuthu Ratheeb* Performance







Arabana Muttu



With *Kuthu Ratheeb* Performers



Interview Details:

Personal Interviews:

1. Haji, Muhammad. (*Kuthu Ratheeb* Performer). “Muhammad Haji’s memory of experiences in Kondottinercha's ritual of *Kuthu Ratheeb*”. Conducted by Usman V. K., 20 October 2019.
2. Haji, Vappu. (*KuthuRatheeb* Performer). Interview. Conducted by Usman V. K., 22 December 2019.
3. Muhammed Sha, Arimbra. (*KuthuRatheeb* Performer). Interview. Conducted by Usman V. K., 9 February 2018.
4. Ibrahim. (*Kuthu Ratheeb* Performer). Interview. Conducted by Usman V. K., 8 August 2019.
5. Kappad, Koya. (*Kuthu Ratheeb* Performer). Interview. Conducted by Usman V. K., 6 April 2019.
6. Latheef, Abdul. (*KuthuRatheeb*) Interview. Conducted by Usman V. K., 19 February 2018.
7. Dileepan, G. (Theatre Activist and former of *Natyashaastra* Theatre research centre). Interview. Conducted by Usman V. K., 21 October 2019.
8. Raju, Narippatta. (Theatre Director, Trainer and Teacher). Interview. Conducted by Usman V. K., 12 February 2020.
9. Sudevan. (*Kathakali* artist and senior drama artist from *Natyashastra*). Interview. Conducted by Usman V. K., 14 March 2020.
10. Cherumittam, Prashanth. (Drama Artist form *Natyashastra* Palakkad). Interview. Conducted by Usman V. K., 21 October 2019.
11. Theatre Artists from *Natyashastra* Palakkad. Group Interview. Conducted by Usman V.

K., 17 October 2019.

Glossary

Catharsis: - Psychoanalysis, Purging of emotional tensions.

Chandanakudam, Uroos: - Masjid festival in Kerala.

Chisthisufis: - A special type of Sufism.

Dargah (shrines): - The tomb or shrine of a Muslim saint.

Edayathazham: - The predawn meal is referred to as Suhur in Muslim fasting.

Fana: - Passing away, Destroy, Annihilation, to die before one dies.

Halal: - Permitted, Allowed, Permissible.

Halir: - Appearance of Muhiyudheen Sheikh as per the vision of performer, a divine space shared

Performance as Sacrament: A light on states of Trance, Pain, and Violence by comparing Kuthu Ratheeb with Artuadian Theatre.

by Usman V K

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