CHAPTER VI

PULAYA CONVERSION: A PROTEST

MOVEMENT

6.1. Introduction:

In the previous chapter we have seen that the pulaya symbol system is an expression of social protest. The pulayas found the solution to their social oppression by changing their religion to Christianity.

This chapter has two sections, in the first, we dwell on the actual event of conversion as the culminating point in their social protest and in the second section we deal with the new symbol system of the CP. Our contention is that the new symbol system of Christianity itself is a new challenge to the pulayas as they are totally uprooted from the parent culture. This has contributed to the change of behaviour pattern of the CP.

We devote the second section to the analysis of the Christian symbols and its effect on the behaviour pattern of CP.
6.2. Introduction

Mass conversions from one religion to another is conterminus with written history of India. Much of the expansion of Islam in India took place through mass conversions. The expansion of Hinduism also has been accomplished by systematic absorption of tribal units into Hinduism through the centuries (Kosambi, 1985:42f). The spread of Buddhism and Jainism took place through socio-religious mass movements. This process has not ceased, for in Hinduism the absorption of tribals continues unabated as the census would tell us.

On the basis of who takes the initiative for change of religion we can divide them into two categories: (1) Those conversions where the initiative comes from the converting agents for various motives. Increase of number, and through which, enhancement of power and prestige and also the spread of the good message as Buddhism, Islam and Christianity at times have done. (2) The second category of conversions where the initiative comes from the group. In this second category itself we can find two kinds: first, for reason of enhancing
their financial position or status in the society. Secondly as protest against the existing situation where the people are denied basic dignity and freedom. The presence of Catholics in Goa and Bassein is mainly due to the first kind of mass conversions. The Portuguese government used political power to promote the profession of the Roman Catholic faith.

The sixteenth century mass conversions of the fishermen of the coast from Cape Comorin and Ramnad, and later in the Travancore State under the leadership of Francis Xavier also come under the first category. The difference here is that these are not forced, but 'enticed' conversions. The conversions in the Tribal belt also can be put under this category.

6.2.1. The Jacket Controversy and Mass Conversion in Travancore

The 'Jacket Controversy' and the mass conversion followed comes under the second category. In 1822 the first few christians converted by the protestants started wearing cloths above their waist. The caste law was that the low caste men and women are not supposed to wear any cloth above the waist. This irked the upper-caste hindus and demanded that christian converts obey the old caste law. Supported by the Maharaja the persecution continued for three
decades until in 1859, the governor of Madras intervened with a proclamation allowing members of the lower castes to wear a cloth over breasts and shoulders. This followed a 'protest mass conversion' to christianity (Pickett, 1933:42).

The conversion of pulayas of North Malabar to christianity can be classified under the protest conversion to christianity. It was a protest against the inhuman situations where they were treated like animals by the upper-caste.

6.2.2. Conversion - A Social Protest

The investigator, was fortunate enough to interview two surviving members out of the twelve who got baptised first and became christians. Mr Thomas Kapiar, the more competent and articulate of the two, narrated the beginning of their conversion as follows: A group of youth of present Thavam under the leadership of Panayan Kunjiraman opposed the oppressive caste system. They thought about several ways of getting out of it. They finally came to the conclusion that change of religion is the only solution. First, they thought of becoming muslims. It was around this time they heard about the Basil Mission and they wanted to invite them. How they became catholics is an accident of history.
One day Panayan Kunjiraman happened to go to the house of one of his relatives at Edakepuram where he met Fr. Caironi, an Italian Jesuit priest. Thinking that he too belonged to the Basil Mission he invited Fr. Caironi to see their place now known as Vadakkebhagam at Thavam. After a week Panayan Kunjiraman and some others went to Fr. Caironi's place at Thalipparamba to take him to Vadakkebhagam. There they had a small group meeting and described to him their suffering as an untouchable caste. The people were moved by the simple and approachable ways of Fr. Caironi; he took their small children and kissed them with affection and patted them with love. It was too much for a despised people who never experienced the understanding look of a high caste person to resist the loving concern of this foreigner. Fr. Caironi also agreed with them that change of religion is the only solution to abolish untouchability. The group was given a week to make their final decision. When they gave their consent, Fr. Caironi moved fast. He immediately built a small hut adjacent to Panayan Kunjiraman's house and started celebrating eucharist for the small group. After some time the group was taken to the church in Cannanore (Valiya Palli) for instruction in preparation for baptism. About a year was spent in probation. The solemn baptism of the first twelve was
celebrated on 28th October, 1938. The first twelve who became Christians were, Panayan Pathrose (Panayan Kunjiraman), the sister of Pathrose, her infant child, father and mother of Thomas Kapiar (Edacherian Velleswaran) and their six children and Mr. George (Kanjiran). In other words the first Christians comprised of just two families. These two families had land of their own. The first thing they did was to buy a plot of land to build a small church, and the later activities of further conversions were monitored from this centre of worship.

There was severe opposition from Hindus and Muslims as well. Under the leadership of Swami Ananda Theerthan the high-caste Hindus tried to incite some section of Hindus including pulayas to challenge the minority CP. The answer CP gave to Swami Ananda Theerthan was: "We have become Christians to live as human beings". Inspite of the threats the number of Christians began to swell. As a last resort the Hindu high caste got the HP to deny water to the CP. With the help of the Father they built their own well, and it is still remembered that the well water which the Christians were denied turned in salt. On questioning the first converts closely, the investigator gathers, that there are two other important factors that they acquired from the
ritual inversion which strengthened the basic energy to protest. First, the ownership of land. It is important to note that the first two families of Christian converts had their own land. How they came to own land is not clearly known. They explained to me that there were some tricky ways of acquiring land in those days. Given that level of oppression it is not easy for pulayas to own land through the legal manoeuvres of the high-caste. One way of acquiring land for the pulaya at that time was by way of "gift". When a high caste land lord took a fancy to a good looking pulaya woman he gifted some land to the immediate relation of the girl. To the father of the girl, if she was unmarried and to the husband if she was married. This was an accepted custom in North Malabar. Our surmise is that the forefathers of these two families might have obtained the land by way of "gift". The physical appearance of the members of these two families indicates such a possibility as they don't look like typical pulaya, who are dark complexioned with dravidian features.

The second factor that strengthened their basic protest is their exposure to the landlords of Coorg. The land lords in Coorg were more just and humane in their dealings with the workers.

The immediate reason for increase in number of converts was the removal of untouchability.
Hesitatingly, when the first pulaya christians went to tea shops and asked for tea, they were treated on a par with others. While the HP were still treated as untouchables, the CP were mingling with others in dignity and freedom. Fr. Caironi took pains to gain for the CP their rights.

Another reason for the mass conversion was the flood followed by epidemic of cholera. As the pulayas lived in the low-lying areas they were the worst hit. Hundreds of them died and there was nobody to bring relief material. Fr. Caironi went around alone, from house to house regardless of caste and creed with medicine and food materials. After the epidemic there was a literal flow of HP into christianity. About this time the Tiyyas also wanted to become christians but it was strongly opposed by the Hindus and they abandoned the idea.

The entire pulaya community was set to become christian, Thomas kapiar said it was at that time Fr. Caironi was transferred from chirakkal area due to a difference of opinion that developed between him and the bishop.

In the beginning, Thomas Kapiar said, there was no plan of buying land and building house for the pulaya christians. All these big projects of making the CP to own their land and houses started with an
incident. At that time of conversion except for a handful of pulayas, all others were bonded labourers of Muslims, Nairs and Tiyyas. One Sunday a Christian pulaya woman who was a tenant of a Muslim could not get to work in time as she had gone to attend the Sunday eucharist in the church which is obligatory for Christians. Because of this the Muslim refused to allow her stay in his property, and asked her to vacate the house immediately. This incident led to the conclusion, that for the Christians to practice their religion they should have land and houses of their own. The big movement of every CP family owning land and house started with this small incident.

The 'enticement-theory' of conversion is not quite true in the case of pulayas. The movement is historically developed as a progressive fight against the oppressive element in the system.

The CP systematically fought for precisely those rights that had been denied to them by the society. Education was the fundamental thing that has been denied to them as a caste. They were not allowed to sit with other caste Hindus in school. So they started their own schools and educated their children, and the schools run by the CP became so prestigious that other high-caste people started sending their own children to these schools. Many
CP became very successful teachers and were appointed in all the branches of bureaucracy.

They started owning their land and property and some became very successful in life and built houses better than their one time landlords. CP are generally known for their cleanliness and fashionable ways of dressing. Are they making up for the century long ban on the use of cloth above their waist?

The most sensitive and delicate issue was the Muslim and high caste exploitation of pulaya women. The pulaya women were considered to be the common property of the upper class. They were not supposed to resist or refuse the advances of the caste Hindu or Muslim. As their men were too weak to defend, the women were non-resisting. It took almost ten years for the CP to muster enough courage to register their open protest through confrontation.

It happened at Madai in 1948, exactly ten years after the first conversion. Madai is a heavily Muslim area with few CP families scattered in the midst of this Muslim strong hold. One night about 9 o'clock Mr. Henry saw a Muslim entering his house through the back door. Deciding to fight it out he took an iron rod and went into the house. (The custom was that while the Mappila is inside, the pulaya was to remain outside, pretending ignorance of what
was going on). The woman tried to hide the muslim covering him with a mat. With one stroke the mappila lost all his teeth; Henry beat him up thoroughly, as the muslim was under the mat he was totally defenseless.

The news spread like a wild fire. Muslims gathered in hundreds outside the Madai church where Henry hid himself. The muslims wanted to kill him who had questioned their unchallenged supremacy. The helpless CPs ran to Fr. Caironi who was at Thavam about four kilometers away. Fr. Caironi sent a foreigner who happened to be there as his guest, with a gun and also with the instruction: "If they break open the church, shoot them." It was a night long vigil of the CPs with the muslims outside the church. In the morning Fr. Caironi himself came and led Henry to Payyannure, a hindu dominated area, and put him up there. With that incident the custom of keeping a 'bed' in the hut for the muslims and the highcaste came formally to an end.

Thus point by point the CP fought for their freedom to be human beings. The history of conversion to christianity is a history of fight for freedom and dignity. As any growth is a process, the growth in freedom too is a process. But initial energy for their protest was there in a seminal form in the symbol system of the theyyam dance.
6.3.1. Introduction

In this section we briefly deal with CP life-cycle ceremonies (sacraments), life-ritual (Eucharist) and myths. There is a very clear difference, if not opposition, between CP and HP life-cycle ceremonies, life-rituals and myths. While the HP life-cycle ceremonies are long, symbolic and one with the rhythm of life, the CP sacraments are, short, verbal, alienated from life. The same can be noticed in the case of life-ritual celebration too. Christianity is said to have no myths, it has only historicized myths.

6.3.2. Life Cycle Ceremonies of Christian Pulayas

CP do not have the kind of life cycle ceremonies that we find in HP. What the Christians have in the place of life cycle ceremonies, are sacraments. According to church documents, "The sacraments are privileged means instituted by Christ and entrusted by him to the church, which the mystery of salvation becomes, for every age till the end of the world, a living tangible reality. Through them the mystery of
christ is ever actual and effective." (Neuner & Dupuis, 1981:365). Some of the seven official sacraments, coincide with the important moments of life and can be called life-cycle ceremonies. They are:

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<th>Sacraments</th>
<th>Life-cycle ceremonies</th>
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<tr>
<td>baptism</td>
<td>naming ceremony</td>
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<td>confirmation</td>
<td>initiation ceremony</td>
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<td>marriage</td>
<td>mangalam</td>
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<td>sacraments of healing:</td>
<td>sharanism</td>
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<td>i. physical healing</td>
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<td>ii. spiritual healing</td>
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The other two sacraments are eucharist and ordination to priesthood.

Eucharist in christian ritual, takes the place of theyyam in the pulaya rituals. All the sacraments are recommended to be conferred during the eucharistic celebration as almost all the lifecycle ceremonies are somehow related to theyyam.

The christian sacraments are universally the same and they have been documented adequately. Their description need not detain us here. We shall briefly define them.
Baptism: By baptism one becomes an official member of the church. "Through baptism 'as through a door' men enter the church. Plunged into the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, they are once for all sacramentally confirmed of this mystery, become members of Christ's mystical body and receive a spiritual rebirth" (Neuner & Dupuis, 1987:383).

Confirmation: confirmation and baptism are closely connected, together they confer full church membership. It is given at the beginning of a person's youth and maturity. "Though already destined through baptism to share in the life of the church and her mission, they are even more directly ordained to witness to Christ in word and deed through confirmation." (Neuner & Dupuis, 1987:383).

Matrimony: marriage, according to the church, is not only a coming together of two individuals but, it is a reflection of the covenantal relation of Christ with church. Therefore, it acquires certain qualities such as: it is inseparable, it is indissoluble, it is done with full consent of the spouses, etc. "Thus, Christian marriage is one of the means by which the mystery of the church is actualised, for in the marriage covenant of her members she manifests herself as the mystery of the union of Christ with humanity. The Christian family is a fundamental
expression of the mystery of the church, the most incarnate form of her charity; hence it is rightly called the 'church in miniature' (Neuner & Dupuis, 1987:523).

Confession: It is a sacrament of spiritual healing. Through baptism a new existence is given in the Christian community. This new situation gives a new dimension to sin and repentance: sin affects man's relation to God as well as to his fellow being in the church. Repentance requires a twofold return: to God and fellow being through the church."Hence the doctrine of sacramental penance must take into account two distinct yet closely interwoven realities: firstly, the inner renewal of the sinner whose relation to God, severed by sin, is restored in conversion and repentance; secondly, the ecclesiastical discipline by which the reconciliation of the sinner takes place within the Christian community" (Neuner & Dupuis, 1987:445).

Anointing of the sick: It is closely related to the sacrament of confession. In the new knowledge of the interrelation between body and spirit and their disharmony as sickness, the sacrament gains relevance. It is a sacrament of total harmony of the person. It is "healing and disposing for final glory" (Neuner & Dupuis, 1987:443)
Priesthood: The Christian community is a priestly community. There are chosen people who participate in the priesthood of Christ through the succession of the apostles. This ministerial priesthood is the sacrament of the priesthood (Neuner & Dupuis, 1987:489).

Eucharist: Eucharist is the self offering of Jesus to the Father as a sign of reunion of God and man. Commemoration of this mystery is the celebration of the eucharist. "For, at the last Supper, Christ instituted the memorial of His death and resurrection and gave it to the Church to celebrate. The Eucharist is the Church's greatest treasure" (Neuner & Dupuis, 1987:403).

The importance of theyyam and eucharist becomes imperative from our short ethnography of the Hindu and Christian pulayas. The life-cycle ceremonies of pulayas are somehow related to theyyam, in some as a way of communication with the transcendent power, in others as entertainment. On the occasion of marriage theyyam is mainly used as an entertainment eg. chemmanakali.

The eucharist of the CP, too is equally a ruling symbol in their ritual life. All other sacraments are recommended to be conducted during the eucharist, often enough they are integrated in the eucharistic
celebration. We, therefore, proceed to analyse these two rituals in detail in the coming chapters. As there is so much material available on eucharist, we briefly deal with it here, our focus, however, is more on theyyam, the life symbol of HP.

6.3.3. EUCHARIST — Myth and Rituals

Eucharist is the life symbol of CP and in their life it takes the place of theyyam rituals of HP. We give a brief description of eucharistic 'myth' and rituals with emphasis to the effect it creates on CP's behaviour patterns. The description is a step by step comparison of potten theyyam myth and ritual we have done in chapter IV. The purpose of this comparison is to emphasise the role, the life ritual plays in the formation of behaviour pattern of a culture. The comparison also will help us find the reason for the difference in the behaviour pattern of HP and CP.

Etymologically, eucharist is derived from the greek word eucharistia, which means, the gratitude which is the source of thanks giving.
6.3.3.1. The 'Myth' of Eucharist

Jesus is said to have instituted the core of the ritual of the eucharist. Four New Testament texts report the institution of the Eucharist. Mt.26,26-29; Mk.14,22-25; Lk.22,15-20; 1Cor, 11,23ff. The incident is believed to have taken place the evening before Jesus was taken captive and ended, with his death on the cross.

Now as they were eating Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and give it to the disciples and said, 'take, eat this is my body'. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom'(Mt. 26,26-29)

This incident from the life of Jesus is taken and ritualized. The present day christian pulaya eucharistic ritual has mainly four parts. (i) the ritual of the word (ii) the ritual of offertory (iii) the consecration of the bread (iv) communion rite.

The first part begins with the arrival of the priest with vestments on to the altar. As he comes to the altar he bows down before the holy sacrament and the entire congregation does likewise. He then, goes up to the altar and begins what is known as the
penitential rite. He invites the faithful to repent for their sins; and after a pause both the faithful and the priest together recite the penitential prayer and at the end the priest gives a common absolution. With a commemorative prayer invoking God's great works, the reading from the bible follows. Usually there are two readings one from what is known as the non-gospel part of the bible and the second reading is invariably from the gospels. The gospel reading is always read by the priest indicating, thereby, the great esteem the gospel is held in the church. After the readings there is an interpretation of the readings by the priest which is known as sermon. The sermon is optional.

The second part of the ritual follows with the offering. The essential items of the offerings are the bread and wine, the wine is always mixed with water. The priest offers the bread and wine with a loud prayer and the congregation responds. There are prescribed forms for the prayer and response. The third part begins with what is known as the recital of the eucharistic prayer. It is a long prayer which is also carefully prescribed by the church and no deviations are permitted. More or less in the middle of the eucharistic prayer comes the consecration. The words of consecrations are nothing but the repetition of what Jesus said as his parting
message (Mt.26,26-29). The belief of the catholic church is that with the utterance of these words the bread and wine offered are transformed into the body and blood of Jesus. The recital of the consecration prayer is followed by the recitation of the prayer, "Our Father", the only prayer which Jesus himself taught his disciples. Then, the exchange of peace by all the congregation.

The fourth part is the communion rite. It is the distribution of the consecrated bread to the faithful by the priest, equivalent of giving prasada of HP. At the end of the communion with a thanks giving prayer by the priest and a final blessing the eucharist ends.

The eucharist is celebrated everyday in the church, preferably in the morning. In exceptional cases, evening celebration is now allowed.

There are two types of celebration of the eucharist (1) Ordinary (2) Solemn celebration. What we have described above is the ordinary celebration of the eucharist and this takes normally half an hour. What is celebrated everyday is the ordinary celebration. The solemn celebration is meant for sundays and feastdays and important occasions. The structure of the solemn celebration is the same as the ordinary with the difference that the prayers
will be sung by the priest and the congregation also respond singing. There will also be four times extra singing added to the ordinary ritual: one hymn at the entrance (in the beginning of the eucharist) a second hymn during offertory, a third hymn during communion and a fourth hymn at the end.

Eucharist is the life ritual of Christians. All other rituals are related to the eucharist. Every catholic is supposed to participate in the sunday service failing which is considered to be a mortal sin.

6.3.3.2. Celebration of Parish Feast

In every parish there is one solemn celebration known as the parish feast, other than other important feasts of the church such as christmas and Easter. The parish feast is the celebration of the feast of the saint whom the parish is dedicated to. As in every celebration in the Church, the parish feast also is centred around the eucharist. That day the eucharist will be a 'Solemn High Mass' with several priests con-celebrating. Some times the Bishop himself will be the main celebrant. The eucharist will be marked by a long sermon by a distinguished preacher.

In most of the parishes, said the informants that there will be some kind of cultural items on
the previous evening of the feast. Invariably the cultural item will be a drama and other variety entertainments, crackers form an integral part of the celebration.

The parish priest being the sole unquestionable authority the nature of the celebration depends upon his taste. Some of the informants said that these days most of the parish priests in CP parishes are against cultural celebration. The overt reason, they give, for this apathy is that if the celebration goes late into the night, there is danger of boys and girls misbehaving and which affect the sexual morality of the people, the overriding concern of the catholic church. The fervour of the priest in the catholic church is measured in proportion to the strict measures he takes to ensure absolute separation of boys and girls, young informants said grudgingly. One such latest invention is that there should be minimum festive celebration at night particularly after 8 pm. The covert reason seems to be that de-mythised and alienated from the day to day struggles of the common man, the life of the priests have become very colourless and shrunken. By refusing to allow people to celebrate their life, they are betraying the one-sidedness of their life, said one of the informants who is a teacher.
With the progressive specialization in singing and musical instruments, it is a fashion now a days to bring art troupes from outside the parish which reduces the participation of the crowd to a bare minimum, complained some of the elderly informants, particularly women. At all levels the CP are progressively reduced to the level of spectators especially in the realm of art and ritual, the investigator felt.

Perhaps the most relaxation is provided in a CP celebration of feast by the 'itinerant road-side shop owners' who go from one celebration to another supplying rare household items. Children enjoy most the fancy items of these imaginative shop-wallas. The investigator noticed that people, young and old alike spend alot of time in buying and in the process relaxing, substituting for that which is missing in a true celebration.

6.3.3.3. Characteristics of Eucharitic Ritual Celebration

6.3.3.3.1. Eucharist as a Ritual of Status Affirmation

As against the ritual status reversal of theyyam celebration, the Eucharistic celebration affirms the status of its members. First of all it is an occasion for the affirmation of the status of the priestly class. A strict separation of the priests and the
entrance to certain parts in the church is restricted only to priests, holy objects can be touched only by them, the consecrated bread is not allowed to be taken by the people. Thus numerous ways the priestly dominance is corroborated during the ritual celebration of the Eucharist.

It is also an occasion for the people to get legitimized their position in the secular society. The dress, the mode of transport, are all used to affirm ones position in the Christian community and so in the secular society.

According to the place they occupy in the church, the men and women, young and old are reminded of their position in the community. It is also an occasion for people to protest and rebel against the organized religion either by standing outside the church as a sign of non-cooperation or by refusing to attend the Eucharist on obligatory days.

The Eucharistic celebration is also an occasion for the affirmation of the hierarchical ordering of the Christian community. Starting form the ordinary faithful to the pope, the supreme authority in the Catholic church, define their position in the Catholic community in relation to the Eucharist. The Eucharist celebrated by the pope is considered to be
the most meritorious and a faithful is one who can only be present for the ritual, in the sense that one who can be a participant not a celebrant.

6.3.3.3.2. Liminal vs Permenancy

The liminal situation that we experience in the theyyam celebration is absent in the eucharistic celebration. The people and the church being pilgrims on earth, the christians are in a permanent state of liminality. 'Permanent liminality' is a contradiction, the normless-state, the 'betweenness', which is the determining element of the liminal state during which anything can take place is totally absent in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Unlike the liminal expression in the theyyam celebration, the eucharistic celebration does not bring out the contradictions in the society, it does not embody the social process. Insulated and alienated from the life of the people the ritual of eucharist is devoid of liminal elements in its celebration.

6.3.3.3.3. Ludic vs Rigid

The ruling mood of the Eucharistic celebration is one of rigidity. A spiritual person in the catholic church is a rigid person. The more unemotional one is the more holy he or she is
expected to be professionally rigid and he somehow exudes it during the ritual celebration. The movements and gestures of the priest are designed to communicate rigidity. The gestures are mostly performed with the hands and the body is always upright and solemn.

We have seen in our discussion of the theory of performance, the playfulness, the ludic element in the liminal state is that which makes the culture a process. The ludic element in the public liminality such as in ritual performance gives rise to ritual inversion and consequent formation of egalitarian values. Playfulness, the ludic element, is almost unknown to the church dealings and much less in its ritual celebrations. The CP ritual of eucharist is an exercise in rigidity, other than the recital of the priest and the monotonous response to the prayers by the people no other sound is permitted during the celebrations; even the cry of an infant is frowned upon.

Devoid of playful element, the eucharistic ritual strengthens the position of each one in the hierarchy. Built-in the ritual celebration itself, one can see the hierarchical ordering of the social set-up. Each celebration, therefore, is a status affirmation.
As we have stated elsewhere in the thesis, the CP are trained to be intolerent towards the symbol system of their own origin. And the isolation is so complete that the older CP are uncompromising on their condemnation of theyyam, for they believe that theyyam celebration is a devil worship and all that is connected with is hoax and unethical to a Christian.

Some of the older members also said that they do not participate in theyyam celebration because they are reminded of the oppressive days of their childhood as they watch theyyam.

6.3.3.3.6. Social Catharsis vs Individual fulfilment

The Eucharist is celebrated daily in the morning, the duration of which is for half an hour. Sunday attendance of the Eucharist is compulsory under the penance of mortal sin. Such rhythm of life is simply untenable for people who make both ends meet through hard daily wage labour, even the Sunday obligation is too much to be fulfilled, as they are regular employees. As the eucharist is an instant, repetitive ritual, CP who are used to long celebrations of theyyam, find it unfulfilling; and it is obvious that there is no catharsis taking place in these short celebrations. We have seen that even the festive celebrations are restricted for fear of
violation of sexual morality. The thrill of losing sleep which provided the people with total relaxation is denied to CP. Though Christmas and Easter celebrations are originally designed to provide the exotic spiritual experience by losing sleep, today those celebrations have become so mechanical in the hands of people who lack spiritual and aesthetic experience.

The CP youth has taken fully to the Christmas carol singing and dancing with the mask of "christmas pappa" on, which fits very much into their own tradition of wearing the masks. Even this fails to provide the community with the mass catharsis that a theyyam celebration would provide, because the ludic elements are lacking in all these celebrations. More and more young generation of CP are attending theyyam celebrations for the satisfaction of their histronic needs.

6.3.3.3.7. Protest towards the Social System

vs Protest towards Authority

The ritual of status affirmation unconsciously creates in the people resentment towards authority — the priests. There are incidents where the resentment against the priests developed into public protest by the people and representation to the higher authorities. The recent protest event where
the CP achieved a complete victory is the gherao of the priests in the Little Flower Orphanage Mattul. Briefly put the incident is as follows. The Orphanage which is a boarding house for boys up to high school was originally run by the Jesuits. Their style of running it was more in keeping with the simple rhythm of life of the people, but all concerned felt the boarding house could be run more efficiently. For efficient management, it was entrusted to the Don Bosco Fathers who are known for efficient management of schools and boarding houses. The Don Bosco Fathers introduced reforms which are beyond the means of the CP and which they resented. They wanted the Don Bosco fathers to quit the place forthwith and they have seen it through by pressure tactics such as demonstrations and gherao.

A general unrest is noticeable in different parishes which speaks of an aggressive trend developing in the CP towards the ritual authority.

6.3.3.3.8. The Eucharist is a Frozen Symbol

Those symbols which are not emerged from and do not reflect the cultural process we call frozen symbols. Like the theyyam rituals the eucharist does not reflect the cultural process of the pulayas community. Being rigid and well defined the rituals of the eucharist fail to incarnate into the culture
of the people who use them for their religious expression and experience. As an essential dynamism of culture when the rituals are adapted to the meaningful expression of people's aspirations, the priestly authority comes with fresh reminders to ensure faithfulness to defunct and meaningless rituals. There is, therefore, disinterest in the eucharistic rituals not only in the CP, but in Christians the world over.

6.3.3.4. CHRISTIAN MYTHS

Strictly speaking, Christianity claims to have no myth at all. This official position of Christian understanding is on the basis of the mistaken notion of myth and history.

It was thought that there existed a real opposition between myth and history. Myth was understood to be mere fable, and belongs to the realm of fancies and fantasies; and history as a factual chronological recording of events, what we would call today the hagiography.

Thinking in this line has so advanced that today historians are hesitant to speak in terms of a history without mythification and myth without a historicization. Myth and history are the two dimensions of the same reality. (see chapter IX)
The understanding of history and myth as mutually exclusive opposites is still continuing in the Christian churches at all levels, including at the level of theological formation of priests and religious. Those people who think differently are considered to be ultra-progressive and they are looked at with suspicion. Some of the leading figures who stand for the revival of myth in Christian thinking are, Panikker (1983); Bede (1983); Fawcett (1973); Alen Watts (1968) and many others.

Christians are by and large known to be an exteriorized people. They are good at scientific manipulation of nature and goods, body building, sports and gymnastics. They are driven by a kind of killer instinct, aggressive and unmystic. In sports and games the Christians do proportionately well, but the percentage is almost negligible when it come to art and literature which is the realm of myth and imagination.

The Christian pulayas of North Malabar are facing this problem of poverty of myth in Christianity. One of the Christian informants who was a gurukkal before he became a Christian told the investigator that he finds it very difficult to live the Christian life without stories, myths, fables, fairy tales, music, drumming and dancing.
Christian pulayas tried in vain to create myths, stories and fairy tales around Father Caroni. But they were all rejected by the supervising authorities of faith as 'non-historical' and unrealistic. They have not given up the hope, it looks, for they are very eager to narrate the story of their liberation. One of the two surviving first converts told the investigator about twenty-five stories of the unusual courage, valour and physical strength of Fr. Caironi. Fr. Caironi, their liberator, is a hero (veeran) for them, if the church were open to them they would have created a 'Caironi veeran' theyyam, the investigator felt.

From our analysis of Christian rituals, with emphasis to eucharist, and myths, it has become apparent that Christian rituals are dead and consist of frozen symbols which do not enshrine the pulse of the Christian community. As Christianity lacks myths or in other words, it has only historicized myths, Christians generally tend to be artistically uncreative. Intolerant to myth and stories, Christians tend to be one-dimensional people who are mostly concerned with the outside world, unaware of the world within them.

In the next chapter we will begin our analysis of symbols of HP and CP. A comparative analysis of
archetypes will be undertaken emphasising their difference in interpretation in HP and CP cultural life.