CHAPTER II

RITUAL AND THEATRE

2.1.0 Introduction

A study on the broad conceptual framework of Rituals and Theatre in the perspective of the East and West would reveal how ritual moves towards theatre and theatre moves towards ritual. Often they intermingle in horizontal and vertical structures. The multi-dimensional definitions of rituals have been analysed here to trace their connection with the future development of theatre-art. The functional relevance of rituals with respect to theatre is an important phase of the proposed study. It is made in the interdisciplinary approaches towards the theatre, in view of anthropology and religion with the synthesis of socio-cultural, political and social interactions.

2.1.1 Ritual, definition and scope

The word 'ritual' has the Indo-European root, 'Ri', meaning 'flow' or 'rhythm'. It is upon 'Rita' that the cosmic functions of the universe are based. The performances that keep the rhythm of the universe are named therefore, rituals. (Encyclopedia of Religion, 1987, Vol. 12:405). Ritual is a concept and the definition of ritual will depend upon how the concept is used. The exact identification and interpretation
of ritual still remain a puzzle to the anthropologists. They agree in essence, that all culturally defined sets of behaviour which are communicative to some extent can be termed as rituals.

2.1.2 Ritual and religion

Ritual is treated same as religion, by some authorities who connect it essentially with belief. Many modern theories of religion are in fact primary theories of ritual, and studying the literature of either topic would introduce us to the other. According to Styan:

"Ritual is an act of solemn ceremonial. It is usually an organised expression of prescribed customs of religious belief or social behaviour." (1990:145).

This relates ritual to belief, religious or otherwise. But Durkheim defined religion as, "A unified system of beliefs and practices (rites) relative to sacred things..." (1954:47) This opens up new avenues to interpret ritual, in terms of its religious factor.

"A religious ritual is a patterned act that involves the manipulation of religious symbols." (Pande, V. 1379:10). Prayer, offering and sacrifices, manipulation of objects telling or acting out myths, altering the physical state of individual (as in a trance and ectasy) are given emphasis by Northrop Frye.
"In human life ritual seems to be something of a voluntary effort (hence the magical element in it) to recapture the lost rapport with natural cycle... It is the deliberate expression of a will to synchronise human and natural energies... that we call ritual." (1951:422). Therefore, in rituals an eternal will to establish a rapport with natural power is manifested. This is expressed in harvest songs, harvest folk customs, harvest sacrifices etc. These definitions of rituals act as symbolic actions connecting them with religious or other beliefs.

2.1.3 Ritual, as irrational acts

The irrational nature of rituals is stressed by some other writers. Jack Goody stressed the irrational and non-instrumental character of ritual.

"It is a standardised behaviour in which the relationship between the means and end is not intrinsic..." (1961:142). But according to Steven Lukes:

"It is a rule governed activity of a symbolic character which draws the attention of the participants to objects of thoughts and feelings which they hold to be of special significance." (1979:54).

Here rituals are non-rational or formalised symbolic behaviour of any kind distinct from pragmatic, clearly end-directed
behaviour. Ritual is contrasted to 'science' or even to common sense.

2.1.4 Ritual as symbols

There are anthropologists like Glifford Geertz (1973) and Victor Turner (1977) who are interested in the explicit meaning of ritual symbolism. They point out that ritual act do endow culturally important cosmological conceptions and values. This symbolic meaning of rituals is stressed by Nancy Munn (1973).

"I define ritual as a generalised medium of social interaction in which the vehicle for constructing messages are iconic symbols (acts, words or things) that convert the load of significance or complex socio-cultural meanings embedded in and generated by the ongoing processes of social existence into a communication currency. In otherwords, shared socio-cultural meanings constitute the utilities that are symbolically transacted through the medium of ritual action." (Nancy Munn, in Henig mann (ed), 1973:580).

Thus, ritual can be accepted as the formalised behaviour patterns which are symbolic, verbal and non verbal, necessary for the establishment of relation among members of a group or between groups. It is this symbolic nature of rituals that takes them near to theatre.
According to Durkheim (1954) to understand the symbolic meaning in rituals, it should be re-interpreted in terms of the modern social contexts. Durkheimian theory has three components, for the study of rituals. One is how certain situations of collective effervescence generate and recreate religious beliefs and practices and evolve a functional theory of the consequences of those beliefs and practices. Durkheim attributes two aspects to his interpretation of religious beliefs and rituals. One is as a cognitive means of interpreting the social world. It is to understand the world in a metaphoric or symbolic way. By attributing some theatrical aspects to it, he calls ritual 'a flag', 'a rallying sign', 'a set of dramatic representations'. This can be seen as analogous to games and the principal forms of art. (1954:47). Obviously he connects rituals to aesthetics here.

2.1.5 Ritual and art

Jane Harrison connects ritual process to art especially drama and traces the origin of the Greek word 'dromenon' which means religious ritual and lays emphasis on the Durkheimian category of imitative rites.

"Primitive man . . . tends to re-enact whatever makes him feel strongly; any one of his manifold occupations, hunting, fighting, later ploughing and sowing, provided it be of sufficient interest and importance, is material for a
dromenon or rite." (1966:18) This takes ritual nearer to peformative art. This dramatic aspect of ritual is stressed by Levy-Strauss (1966). He evaluates them as an integral part of our thought. When one witnesses a drama of ritual, it breaks up the continuum of visual experience. One's intellect is raked up with symbols represented by the ritual actions. Then one is provoked to associate oneself with the abstract and metaphysical meaning of it. This leads to a vital aspect of the theatre which is to be discussed later.

2.2.0 The origin of ritual

How did ritual originate? To trace it, some scholars tried to find out its historic origin. They tried to explain the development of ritual behaviour through history. They traced the roots of the oldest cultures and cults. If the origins of cultures are discovered, they believe, they would be able to explain the contemporary ritual of man. With this aim, they began to single out various cultures and rituals and tried to analyse them.

2.2.1 Fertility-cult

This led scholars like James Frazer, W. Robertson Smith to interpret rituals in terms of the original fertility cults and sacrificial rites. In all religions there had been the existence of fertility cults. Frazer says that in all ancient races of man there had been the concept of the goddess of
fertility. The term 'rice mother', 'corn mother', 'barli mother' are examples of this. In the Northern Regions of Europe and America, there had been the belief that their goddesses would take the form of bulls and pigs and make their journey through agricultural fields during the time of sowing and harvesting. (1974:178-184)

Frazer, again points out that the worships of trees was an element of all ancient religions. The kelt-clan worshipped the Oak tree, the Slav, the Sweed, the Romans also worshipped trees. Even sacrifice was given to trees to propitiate the tree-goddesses. (1974:144-54).

Serpent-cult and tree-worship are deep rooted in the folk life in India and performances are emerged according to those traditional beliefs in Kerala also. Archetypes of those cults were seen in the Vedas.

2.2.2 Ritual and sacrifice

W. Robertson Smith (1961) says that sacrifice was the origin of rituals. The ritual of sacrifice was motivated by the desire for the communion between members of a primitive group and their God. Ritual of sacrifice is even viewed as the elementary form of religion. The victim may not be human or animal, vegetables, cakes, milk and the like are also 'victims'. The destruction of the victim would be taking
place through dismembering or cutting into pieces, eating or burning. The sacrificial rituals fall under two categories. One is which the participants are benefitted by it or an object is benefitted. This points to the fact that along with the individuals in a society, objects such as a house, a particular place, a thing, an action, family or community or Gods become the beneficiary of the ritual. Other rituals of purification developed as a secondary stage of sacrificial ritual. From the above analysis, it is clear that by fertility or sacrificial rituals in the ancient days, the whole society was intended to be comprised. This leads to the conclusion that ritual is a social process.

2.2.3 Functional approach

Anthropologists like Malinowski (1948), Radcliffe Brown (1952) have traced the origin of rituals in the functions they had been doing. They tried to solve the puzzle why rituals are present in a society and explained that they are present in a society to satisfy its needs. As long as rituals satisfy certain needs, they can be explained in terms of their functions. The merit of this approach is that it is logical as well as empirical. This also takes one to study the role of rituals in society which is done in detail in the coming descriptions.

2.2.4 Ritual and religion
ritual is by studying their connection with religion. Some of the famous historians who support this view are Van de Lecuw in Netherlands, Rodolph Otto in Germany, E.O. James in England. (The New Encyclopaedia Britanica, 1987, Vol.26 : 824 - 27). According to them ritual behaviours are signifiers of the realm of the life beyond, which is explained by religions. The history of almost all the religions shows that religions and rituals are intrinsically connected. It is known that rituals in Hinduism are more pervasive and comprehensive while in Islam they are pervasive and take precedence over all other activities. In Christianity also rituals vary according to different sects. Inspite of all these facts, rituals are part and parcel of all religions. The study of the origin of all religions leads to the origin of most of the rituals practised today.

2.3.0 Functions of rituals

What are the functions which rituals carry out in society? It is already pointed out that the function of ritual depends upon its reference. Ritual is often described as a symbolic expression of actual social relations, status or the role of the individuals in a society. It is already referred to the opinion of Steven Lukes in this respect that 'ritual is rule governed activity of a symbolic character." (1979:54) But it cannot be said that one symbolic interpretation of a ritual is more valid than the other. The symbolic meaning of the ritual is to be derived out of its
context. A modern theatre-worker is concerned with this aspect of ritual.

2.3.1 Social integration

The main function of ritual is to bind the society together i.e. social integration. The existence of ritual in a society means, there exists some communication beyond ordinary language. There is no significance for the ritual where people live scattered, i.e. they have meaning only when the people live together.

According to Redcliffe Brown:

"Rites can be seen to be the regulated symbolic expression of certain sentiments. Rites can, therefore, be shown to have specific social function when, and to the extent that they have for their effect to regulate, maintain and transmit from one generation to another sentiments on which the constitution of the society depends." [1976 (1952):157]

Some rituals are performed to escape from the calamities of life and nature which afflicted society. Some rituals are performed to establish a rapport with the cycle of nature as that of harvest or festival seasons. All in the society participate in the ritual and share the experience of the performance. There is the sacredness of certain fundamental values in the rituals that holds the society together.
Performance of rituals often makes it to be in contact with these sacred values and renews its devotion to those values by an act of communion. This is the way in which social integration is effected.

It is worthy to recall here a study conducted by Tribhuvan Kapur in a ritual village in India. (1983) This clearly illustrated that rituals influenced every realm of the social life of the people. By studying their ceremonies and their belief in myths and legends, the author tries to trace to what extent religion and ritual played their role in the medical crises of the villages. The study was based on the interaction between life cycle rituals, magical rituals of exorcism, myths and legends and the part they played in the village society. In this study it is established that the life cycle rituals are paramount in the social integration of the society. Through the rituals, supernatural forces are contacted. These rituals were conducted to disperse evil influences or to control them. It is found that through these rituals the social fabric of the society emerged stronger.

2.3.2 Ritual in the Modern context

This leads one to the interpretation of rituals in the modern context. In the modern context, there is obvious erosion of the belief in rituals. This may be attributed to the awakening of the spirit of rationalism. The ritual
practices find their greatest challenge in the development of technology. This change is manifested in the fields of economic activities and social relations such as agricultural operation, attitude towards sickness, disease and death, divination and the supernatural approach to medicine, political and social leadership.

It is to be accepted that technological systems tend to develop their own rituals. Thus the distinction between ritual in the traditional sense and ritual in the modern sense arises. This is elaborately explained by Sitakant Mahapatra (1986:109). Ritual in the traditional sense implies a host of symbolic functions which are kept outside rationality or logic. But technology demands the logical analysis of every human action. Thus the ritual based approach to life and reality is in direct conflict with the new technological value-systems and attitudes which are very well applicable to art too.

2.4.0 Ritual and myth

The English word "myth" is from the Greek 'muthos' which just meant a tale, or something one uttered, in wide range of senses, a statement, a story, the plot of a play. All myths are usually founded upon stories about God or man.

"A myth is an expression of the sacred in words, it rapportss realities and events from the origin of the world that remain valid for the basis and purpose of
all there is, consequently, a myth functions as a model or human activity, society, wisdom and knowledge." (Paul Ricoeur in Encyclopaedia of Religion, 1987: vol. 10:261).

2.4.1 Myth in the modern context

Myth can be taken as the horizon of understanding the world view today. Myths provide us with the ultimate reference-point for truths. "Myth thus serves us the ultimate reference-point, the touchstone of truth by which facts are recognized. Myth when it is believed and lived from inside, does not ask to be plumbed more deeply, i.e. to be transcended in the search for some ulterior ground: it asks only to be made more and more explicit, for it expresses the very foundation of our conviction of truth." (Panikkar. R, 1979:88)
The modern relevances of myths are (i) they are quasi-stories concerning gods, super human beings and origins of the world (ii) These are models for human behaviour and also the horizon of understanding world view (iii) Myths open level of reality both in the perceiver and the perceived. Hence, the significance, when myths re-enacted in the theatre.

2.4.2 Myth in ritual connection

Myth is one of the three forms of religious expression: Sacred speech (myth) sacred acts (cult-ritual) and sacred
places and objects (symbols). Myth can be expected to elucidate the entire religious life of a community shedding light especially on ritual acts and sacred objects.

G.S. Kirk elaborately discusses the myth-ritual association. (1977:1-29). He is of the opinion that myths have originated from rituals. He further draws in the famous Anthropologist Malinowski to show the connection between myth and ritual. He points out that the ideas of Malinowski about myths are very important because they illustrate the function of myths as charter of customs and beliefs. Agreeing with Malinowski, Kirk further asserts that myth is a system of word symbols, whereas ritual is a symbol of object and act symbols. The same type of situations are symbolically dealt both by ritual and myth. This takes us more near to our study of rituals with respect to theatre. He further elaborates his point by saying that myth and ritual have a common psychological basis. According to him ritual is a symbolic dramatisation of the needs of the society while mythology is the rationalisation of these needs. But it does not mean that every ritual refers to a myth. For eg. even among the aborigines, whose whole life was dominated by rituals, myths sometimes extended beyond rituals.

This theory that ritual is the action part of myth is well illustrated by J.G. Frazer:

"The story that Attis unmanned himself under a pine tree was clearly devised to explain why his priests
did the same beside the sacred violet wreathed tree at his festival." (1906:169).

E.R. Leach supports this myth ritual connection. According to him:

"Myth in my terminology is the counterpart of ritual; myth implies ritual, ritual implies myth, they are one and the same." (1954:13)

According to him, the inherent belief whether it is present or not in the rituals, cannot be questioned. Ritual action and belief are alike in the sense that they are the symbolic statement of the social order.

Northrop Frye stresses another important function of myths which is theatrical (1951:430). He says that myth is the central informing power that gives archetypal significance to the ritual and archetypal narrative to the oracle. This reading of ritual throws light to the social function, ritual does, which is to be analysed later.

Rituals depend upon certain-belief systems, say myths. On analysis it is seen that great rituals are patterned after myths which can be called initiative rituals in the sense that they repeat the myth or an aspect of the myth. This leads to a theory that all rituals repeat myth or basic motif in myth.
According to E.R. Leach (1954:13), the inherent belief whether it is present or not in the rituals, cannot be questioned. Ritual action and belief are alike in the sense that they are the symbolic statement of the social order.

This analysis leads to the conclusion that in the enactment of rituals, myth is inherent generally. This provides it with a theatrical quality.

Anthropologists and folklorists have analysed myth's functional role in the society. According to Malinowski, myth "expresses, 'enhances and codifies beliefs, it safeguards and enforces morality, it vouches for the efficiency of the ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of mass." (1946: 101). "Myths are the mental supporters of rites; rites the physical enactment of myths. By absorbing the myths of his social group and participating in its rites, the youngster is structured to accord with his social as well as natural environment." (Campell, 1972:45).

2.5.0 Origin of Indian Theatre

For the origin of Indian Theatre and particularly theatre of Kerala, so many theories have been advanced. Bharata's Natyasastra advances the theory of divine origin of theatre. Scholars like Varad Pande (1987) M.R. Madhu (1968) plead for the Vedic origin of Indian Theatre. While, Adya Rangacharya vehimently opposes this (19668:1-2). As far as
Kerala Theatre is concerned, it is traced back to the tribal arts as well as indigenous forms of folk arts. In the folk arts, as ritual rendering is less, it is left out from the analysis.

2.5.1 Ritual dances: the origin of Indian Theatre

M.L. Varad Pande opines that the origin of Indian theatre is in ritual dances (1987: 6–7). The pre-historic picture galleries found in the rock shelters of India prove this. (N-7). From dance, verbalisation of ritual might have evolved. The use of masks for impersonising animals was also widely found. There were clear proofs that hunting-dances, a sort of sympathetic magic for the success of hunting was also practised. Hunting-dances were kind of ritualistic drama, which was clear manifestation of how ritual evolved into theatre. Ritual dances have two aspects. One pure dance in a kind of magical frenzy and the other, a dance with meaningful, conscious portrayal of myth. In both these, there are dramatic elements. In the first a dancing shaman impersonates the spirit of the deity who possesses him in the course of the ritual. A dialogue of an oracular nature ensues between him and the devotee or another shaman. Sometimes he elevates himself spiritually into a trance and starts a dialogue with the spirit itself. This he does as the representative of the community. Drama implies a struggle between two forces. Ritual drama implies a struggle between two shamans, between
men and demon, beast and hunter, or between the personified forces of life and death, summer and winter, good and evil. It implies a well-defined sequence of encounter, conflict and denouement. This sequence may deal with exorcism, with pursuit, capture and sacrifice. In the other type, the actor impersonates a character in a myth. He himself might direct the ritualistic process, its enactment, dialogue, recitation, music and singing.

2.5.2 Theatre: Vedic origin

The Vedic origin of theatre is also stressed by Varad Pande (1987: 43-55). The Aryans were essentially worshippers of nature-spirits and performers of fire-sacrifices which are reflected in the four Vedas. The nature or Vedic deities, their myths as reflected in the narrative poetry of The Rigveda, points to the evolution of various dramatic elements in the Indian context. Their dramatic cult was invariably connected with myth. The myth-ritual association culminated into a cult-drama. The advanced stage of verbalisation of ritual is found in the dialogue hymn of The Rigveda. Then the germs of rudimentary drama came out to establish its own identity.

M.R. Madhu also supports Varad Pande about the Vedic origin of Indian Theatre. He illustrates this from certain dramatic contexts from The Rigveda and The Atharva Veda. He quotes A.B. Kerth in support of his view, "The period of The
Rigveda knew dramatic spectacles, religious in character, in which the priest assumed the roles of Gods and sages in order to imitate on Earth the events of heaven." (1968:31). He evaluates the analysis of Keith about the song and dance in the Vedic rituals besides dialogues and the views of other scholars. Based on these he substantiates that the origin of Indian Theatre can be traced to the Vedic rituals. The view of the Vedic origin of Indian Theatre is supported by Farely P. Richmond also: "Vedic ritual could have served as the foundation of the emergence of dance and theatre in India in much the same way that the Catholic man is said to have paved the way for the emergence of drama in Medieval Europe." (1990:22).

2.5.3 Theatre: Tribal origin

Dramatic dances also form a part of tribal culture all over the world. This is also a clue to the development of theatre from its most rudimentary nature. In our tribal rituals some of the rudiments of dramatic art was inherent. These tribal rituals practised by early human societies give us a vision of their significance. Adya Rangacharya supports this view (1968:2). He vehemently opposes the Vedic origin of Indian Theatre. His opinion is that we cannot confine ourselves within the sanskrit dramas to study the origin of Indian Theatre. "On the other hand, with the revival of interest in modern India in Theatre activities, the Indian Theatre means, plays and theatrical activities in the various
modern languages... This Indian Theatre was the theatre of the Indian people from days earlier than the earliest Sanskrit plays." (1968:2) His opinion is that even before Natyasastra, there might have existed in the earlier days a theatre catering to the uninhibited tastes of the audience whom Bharata calls 'shudras'. He accepts the view point that dramas were enacted during ritualistic occasions but refutes the religious origin of drama. According to him the origin of Indian theatre can be traced back to the low, vulgar and undisciplined 'uparupaka' type of theatre, in the primitive form of rituals. In the analysis of the two opinions, there is a point where ritual and theatre come together.

In Kerala, the origin of theatre can be traced back to tribal arts. Chummar Choondal traces the origin of the theatre of Kerala in the tribal rituals of the aborigines of Kerala (1991). Most of the tribals of Kerala indulged in exorcist rituals during harvest seasons and festivals, for the worship of their ancestors. In the styles of their living, the prevalence of the dance tradition can be seen. The art of these tribal dances can be traced to the anthropological origines of these tribes. The tribal dances of Vayanadu are performed in all special occasions of life like sowing, harvesting, puberty etc.

According to Frazer, magical rituals were performed to control the natural forces also. Such rituals Kuliyyattu and Gaddhika are practised by these people. Gaddhika is a ritual
performed to cure the illness of a person in the houses of these people. There will be singing of songs to propitiate the tribal gods. Along with every song, a shaman will dance, as if in a trance. The ritual of rolling a coconut to find out the result will also be performed. The Gaddhika-song will be sung throughout the night to disperse the dead from the body of the living. During the morning the 'Komaram' (the shaman) in trance-dance will 'utter' the solutions for the illness. The movements, the gestures, the utterances of the shaman are expressions of the actions which are highly dramatic in essence.

Koothu, a form of dramatic form of Kerala is full of theatrical elements. The search for the origin of drama may reach here also. Here the theatrical rendering of the story is through all its elements like dance, song, music, action and dialogue with the inspiration of the transcendental creatures; the 'rasas' of 'veera' and 'Kama' are also rendered. In all the performances the basic element is the tribal culture. The tribal performers of ritual dramas are 'Urali', 'Ulladan', 'Muthuvan', 'Mannan', 'Erullan', 'Mudukan' etc. They render their myths, events and dramas in their theatrical forms. Koothu is performed during sowing, harvesting, during death ceremonies, festivals etc. As in Mudiyettu and Padayani, it is seen, some comic characters heighten the theatrical effect of the performance.

The origin of certain ritual arts like Padayani and
Theyyam can be searched in the fierce dance-form of the tribal group 'the Malayars'. This dance-form is deeply rooted in astrology and magic of these tribes. They sing and dance wearing masks. The theatre of cruelty of Artaud which is going to be discussed in the next chapter, draws a very good parallel with this dance-form.

The ritual of 'Uchaveli' of these tribals is actually a theatre of cruelty. It reminds one of the sacrifices of man in ancient days, to propitiate the dieties. Here the shaman cuts his hand and pours out blood, and smears it all over his body. His fierce ritual dance during the process even surpasses the vision of Artaud's theatre of cruelty. Another ritual 'ninaveli' is also like this. A blood-like paste will be smeared all over the body. The actor dances here with roaring utterances. He would tear a cock with his teeth and drink its blood. The whole scene, his roaring, the fierce music and the ritual dance, the cry of the cock produce the effect of a terrible theatre there.

From the above analysis, it is clear that the essence of ritual theatre which Artaud visualised had been present in certain tribal art-forms of Kerala.

The analysis showed that theatre owes its origin to ritual whether it is Vedic or tribal. Though opinions differ about the origin of Indian Theatre, there is a general opinion among the anthropologists and historians that the elementary form of modern theatre is latent in the early performances of
ritual arts. As suggested earlier this takes one to the realm of the study of the effect of these ritual arts on the constituent parts of theatre, the actor, the audience and other theatre externals, like costume, stage-props, application of music and lighting.

2.6.0 The Actor-concept in ritual arts

The actor-concept in ritual art is completely holistic. Here the actor is an object of sacrifice at the altar of performance. He is a total actor, a stylised actor in the sense that he is a completely disciplined actor. He possesses the strength and endurance to participate in the ritual. This energy he gets from regular practices of physical discipline. Before the performance he is physically and mentally prepared effecting the perfect balance between the fitness of the performer and the excellence of what is performed. This is to be taken to the Modern Théâtre. (A detailed analysis of this is given in the 4th chapter).

2.6.1 Training in ritual arts and theatre

In ritual arts training and rehearsals are fixed, because what is performed is not a means of new discovery. The acting codes and symbols full of religious or ritual meaning are already fixed. They are an integral part of the whole ritual. Sometimes these come so close to theatre that it becomes very difficult to distinguish between them. The
training is in a set-patterned way as in Noh, Theyyam, Padayani, Mudiyettu, Koodyattom or Kathakali. This takes a fixed 'score' in the performance. But the gift and the experience of the performer may alter this fixing up. (Eg. 'Manodharmam Attam' in Kathakali' and Koodyattom'). But in theatre, training is replaced by rehearsals. Here also, the actor should be prepared bodily and mentally so that he can be adapted to any situation swiftly and efficiently. After modification through rehearsals, the actor is not allowed to vary the elements of performance as in ritual arts. In order to make his body more expressive, the actor should first of all control his own body, know his own body.

"Then he will be able to practise theatrical forms in which by stages he frees himself from his condition of the spectator and takes on that of actor in which he ceases to be an object and becomes a subject, is changed from witness to protagonist." (Boal, Augusto, 1979:25).

The effect of training is a separation, a transition and incorporation in the performance. In theatre and ritual arts these occur differently. In ritual arts the separation is effected through a series of training process like his way of living, his 'Vrithanustana' etc. In the ritual performance process, he exhibits a personality change and involuntariness. The separation of the performer in theatre happens through training, workshops, rehearsals and warm up. The performance
itself is liminal. He appears to be in control of himself. (See Chs.3 & 4 - Actor-Training)

2.6.2 Transformation and Transportation in ritual arts and Theatre

Barbara Mayorhoft, refers to some 'transformation of consciousness' affecting the performer when taking part in a performance. Transformation occurs, "when symbol and object seem to fuse and are experienced as a perfectly undifferentiated whole." (1990:245). In such a state the symbol inspires imagination and insight, belief and emotion.

'Flow' is a kind of holistic sensation present when we act with total involvement. In such a state action follows automatically and spontaneously. There are six qualities to this flow-experience. The first is merging of action and awareness. Here the consciousness must be narrowed and intensified on a limited focus of attention. The body and mental awareness is heightened by the loss of ego which is another quality of this flow-experience. All the while a person being in this flow-experience, finds himself in control of his actions and the environment. 'Flow' demands coherent action and clear feedback to that actions. Finally 'flow is autoletic', it seems to need no goods or reward outside itself. In old societies, ritual could always have a 'flow' quality for the total communities like tribes, class, lineages, families etc. But the modern ways of life have
pushed this 'flow' experience to the leisure genres of art, sport, games etc. (V. Turner, 1982:55).

Richard Schechner comments about this 'flow' quality of the actor (1985:4-7). He speaks about Ram Leela. During performance Rama and Ravana surrender to the 'flow' of the action. This surrender to the 'flow' of action is the ritual process. Getting out of the 'flow' is 'transportation'. It is 'cooling down'. In ancient theatres of ritual arts, there are devices for this cooling down process. For eg. in Bali, there are cooling down rituals including sprinkling with holy-water, inhalation of incense, massage. How this cooling down occurs is discussed later. In theatre, after a perfect show which literally empties the performer, he drinks, eats, talk and celebrate. This is the way the actor cools down. (N-8).

The ethnic culture of the performer has its great influence in the transformation of him in ritual arts. Schechner cites the example of 'Arizona Yagu' a type of deer-dance. Here is the belief that a supernatural being will visit the human world temporally. Balinese also believed that Gods and spirits would descend to possess dancers in 'trance' or in the state of transformation. This belief also induces the actor for transformation. This ethnic connection is evident from the fact that when an outsider learns the deer-dance, he can do it only differently from the original performer. This leads to the point that an ethnic culture works in the performer during a ritual performance.
2.6.3 Performance Theory

Along with all other qualities, man is also a performing animal. He is a self-performing animal, his performances are in a way reflexive; in performing he reveals himself to himself. Performance is a unit of social process. Van Gennep is the father of processual analysis. He has analysed society as a 'social process'. He derived this insight from the cultural custom known as 'rites of passage'. (1960) Social dramas have a liminal or threshold character, in the sense of manifesting what is hidden. The opaque surface of regular, uneventful social life becomes transparent social dramas. Performance too is liminal. During performance anything may take place as it is a time when all norms of day-to-day life are relaxed. It is a time for enchantment, to shed all inhibitions and controls, to be what the community is, and thus what each person is. Performance is a time when creativity abounds. Potentiality escalates, for the inhibitions that stifle creativity are kept to a minimum. In every major social formation, there is a dominant mode of public liminality. In simpler societies, it will be the sacred or ritual performance, in other complex societies, the carnival or festival, and in advanced societies the film.

2.6.4 Status elevation or status reversal of the performer in ritual arts.

In a highly complex net work of status relationship
between individuals in a society, ritual serves to reaffirm what these status relations are. The performer in a ritual believes that rites can change the state of the world because they invoke power. If power is inherent in the ritual itself, we can call it magic and if it is external to the situation we can call it religious. The difference between religion and magic which Frazer illustrates is in this distinction between direct control on the one hand and propitiation of superior powers on the other. The ritual performance can be classified into two: Life-crisis rituals and Calendrical rituals. These two rituals are liminal in nature, as are all other performances. The life-crisis rituals are characterised as ritual of status elevation. Here the ritual-subject or novice is being converted irreversibly, from a lower to a higher position in an institutionalised system of such position. Calendrical rituals, usually of a collective kind in which, at certain culturally defined points in the seasonal cycle, groups or categories of persons who habitually occupy low status positions in the social structure are positively enjoined to exercise ritual authority over their superiors, and they, in their turn accept with good will their ritual degradation. Such rituals are said to be rituals of status reversal. They are often accompanied by robust verbal and non-verbal behaviour, in which inferiors revile and even physically maltreat superiors. (Turner, 1977:167).

The actors in the rituals sometimes break the moral conventions of the mundane society. They behave in a manner
precisely contrary to in ordinary life. This role inversion happens because he enacts an event which belongs to the other world, they invert whatever is appropriate to the profane world. Hostilities which are not expressed in normal circumstances, may sometimes be acted out by the performers. While appearing to deny some moral codes of the society, on deeper analysis, we can see that they are serving to strengthen them. This role inversion of the actors can be seen in Theyyam and Mudiyettu (Ch.4).

2.6.5 The Performative Principle of 'Tai' and 'Ya'

The comments of Schechner on another performative principle of the performer in ritual arts or in theatre is pertinent. During performance, the consciousness of the actor may be activated so that other alternative ways of performance may be expressed. This is what the old masters of rituals had been doing. This has been true of the performative principles of Japanese Noh drama. This is also true of all ritual arts like Theyyam, Mudiyettu, Padayani, Koodiyattom and Kathakali. Schechner distinguishes between the dialectical tension of 'tai' (what is seen by the mind) and 'Ya' (what is seen by the eyes). 'Tai' is the fundamental texture in acting and 'Ya' is the visual manifestation on the theatre. "Copy 'tai' and it will become 'Ya'. If one copies 'Ya' it will become a false 'tai' and one will not be able to have either 'tai' or 'ya'." (Schechner, 1985:8). This is one of the fundamental principles in the performance theory of rituals.
2.7.0 Audience in Ritual arts: Experiences

What is the participants' experience in taking part in a ritual? What is the symbolic meaning that the non-verbal activity of the ritual can convey to the audience? The ritual carries a semantic load, but whether it reaches the audience is a point of contention. Normally the ritual takes place in an ideological context, it gives form and relation to precepts and allows us to think with them. In a ritual the ideological system of the common culture is shared by the actors as well as the audience. The ideological system may comprise their beliefs in the value systems, the myths and tradition etc. An emotional meeting point occurs at the time of ritual-process. There is always an unconscious symbolic meaning, a sudden sense in a ritual, despite its appearance of meaninglessness. Peter Lang (1989) points out that usually three layers of meaning can be attributed to a ritual. The first is the manifest superficial explanations, including myth, symbolic relationship and stories. This level may reveal much about cultural beliefs and values without necessarily explaining what is going on in the ritual. The second is 'the hidden' meaning which may give hints of social structure, traditional authority, metaphorical explanations of cultural ideas and boundaries etc. The third is a purely symbolic level which is holistic, which cannot be translated into any logical language. A ritual-process becomes holistic, "Because ritual transcends a mere form of art, entertainment or play, although it
certainly include those elements. It is a form of access to mystical experience." (Peter Lang, 1989:9) This mystic experience can otherwise be called an altered state of consciousness. If ritual can produce mystic experience, we can detach it from religious or cultural beliefs and in this respect we can cross cultural and linguistic boundaries. Thus we can make rituals 'culture free'. (N-9). This point is very vital to the modern theatre.

2.7.1 Audience participation: Physical level

The participants in the ritual art become the part and parcel of the performance. This aspect of the rituals is stressed by G. Sankara Pillai.(1986). For the participants in a ritual, it is an eventful social activity. Each activity in a ritual usually is looked after by each class or sect or family. Illustrations can be given from the ritual arts of Kerala (Ch.4). Representatives of one set attend to oblation made to a God or Goddess. Another set may take care of the play of instruments. Doning of the characters is the right of one clan. The costume design is taken over by another sect. Usually the performance-right of the ritual art is the artiste's birth right. They hand this right from generation to generation. Thus a ritual art is a complete social activity. For the participants, along with the spiritual, it is a physical co-operation. This aspect of the audience in the ritual arts is vital for the Modern Theatre-worker.
2.7.2 Audience - Performer identification

It is seen in Aristotle's *Poetics* the spectator delegating power to the dramatic character. Here, the character acts and thinks for him. But in Brecht's *Poetics*, the spectator, while delegating power to the character to act in his place, thinks for himself. A catharsis occurs in the former case, while in the latter it is only an awakening of critical consciousness. But in ritual arts, the delegation does not happen, but only an identification with the performer. That is why in ritual arts, audience are participants. (N-10). This identification happens in the sharing of the enjoyment by the performer and audience.

2.7.3 Transformation and Transportation in the Audience

During a ritual performance, 'transformation' and 'transportation' happens in the audience too. The gradation of the transformation level depends upon the standard of the audience, his belief, his ability of involvement etc. Schechner refers to the collective dimension of the transformation of the small group of communities. How Grotowski tried through his theatrical experiments to effect this transformation is dealt in the next chapter. All through the performance, as different kinds of attention are required from the spectators, several varieties of transformed consciousness are involved in them.
2.8.0 Ritual and Theatre

In all performances there is pure efficacy and entertainment. We can call a performance ritual or theatre according to the degree to which, the performance tends towards efficacy or entertainment. Any ritual can be lifted from its original setting and performed as theatre. Similarly, it is also possible for ritual to arise out of theatre. (This was Grotowski's venture with his Living Theatre. But the rituals he created were unstable because they were not attached to actual social structures). The move from ritual to theatre happens when the audience evaluate a performance before and after its staging. The move from theatre to ritual happens when the audience is dissolved into the performance as participants. "Theatre comes into existence when a separation occurs between the audience and performers... The audience is free to attend or stay away and if they stay away it is the theatre that suffers, nor its would be audience ... In ritual stay away means rejecting the congregation or being rejected by it, as in excommunication, ostracism or exile." (Schechner 1988:126). The response of the audience as well as the experiences of actors are portrayed by Wyne Ashley and Regina Holloman in "From Ritual to Theatre in Kerala." (N-11). Ritual and Theatre are clearly distinguished here. In rituals the actor can be elevated to a possessed 'trance' while in theatre the performer always knows what he is doing. The 'flow' quality is different in both cases. In rituals audience participates, while in theatre the audience watches. In
rituals criticism is forbidden, while in Theatre criticism is encouraged. In rituals there is the collective creativity, while in theatre the creativity is based on the individual. No performance either in ritual or in theatre is pure efficacy or pure entertainment. When efficacy and entertainment are both present in nearly equal degrees, theatre flourishes.

2.9.0 Theatre-externals in ritual arts: a lesson

The theatre-externals or the spectacular part of rituals is one of the main areas of interest of the theatre worker today. These include the costume design, the stage-props used, the application of music, light etc. Inspite of the other-worldliness in the use of these, they are sources of high aesthetic enjoyment. The entertainment value provided by these, also is very high. This sensuous element of entertainment in ritual theatre is underlined by Badal Sircar (1982:2). The sensuous effect of the ritual performance is intensified through many other theatrical devices too. Redundancy, repetition, formalization and structural rigidity etc. are employed. A close analysis of all ritual arts shows that they make extensive use of rhythmic music and dancing, hypnotic intonation of 'mantras', song, drink, food, sexuality, emotional states, masks, sculptural and other visual arts and trance. How these sensuous aspects of rituals can provide lessons for the modern theatre is also a point of concern.
The analysis of the different definitions given by the authorities leads to the scope of ritual in connection with theatre, which is the main point of study. Inspite of the belief-aspect in this phenomenon of ritual, the standardised behaviour with its symbolic nature, evokes in the mind of the participants new flights of imagination. This symbolic meaning may be secular or religious but it has got a social and psychological significance for the participants. It is an effort to have a spiritual rapport with a metaphysical power or with nature or even with other men. As rituals are imitations of natural activities of man, they acquire the character of art in terms of Aristotilian ideas. Again, the re-interpretation of the symbolic meaning provided by rituals in modern context opens up immense potentialities for theatre. Also, as they are often the dramatisation of myths, usually enacted with almost all the theatrical qualities, it may be deduced that for the origin of theatre we may go to nothing else than rituals. It is seen that almost all the writers on ritual agree on the intrinsic connection between myth and ritual. Myth's archetypal significance provides deep meaning to the performance of rituals especially in the modern context. The participation of the audience is ensured by reviving the mythical consciousness in him.

The origin of rituals owes its need to fulfil certain social functions in society. First of all, they act as
symbols of communication, signifiers of certain ideas usually above mundane existence. In this respect a theatre-worker is inspired by its application in theatre.

On analysing the origin of Indian Theatre it is seen that rituals owe their origin to dances with all their theatrical qualities. They involve 'thauryathrika' - songs, dance and music. Whether theatre originated from Vedic ritual-process or tribal ritual-process, there is the inevitable conclusion that theatre has its roots in rituals.

A study of the participant's involvement in a ritual process, again, opens up new avenues for the modern theatre-worker. It is found that a participant cannot get all the semantic meaning of a ritual action. But he gets an extraordinary experience, sometimes unworldly or mystical. It is an unworldly experience of communion with metaphysical power or with his own fellowmen. It is an altered state of consciousness which leads him to a full involvement with the action. This mystic experience can be produced by the enaction of rituals even without attaching religious significance to it. The audience - actor relationship in the modern theatrical context absorbs valuable lesson from this concept. If the modern theatre can produce this experience, it can enrich it with new potentialities. Also, it attributes a new spiritual power to the spectator making him a part of the whole theatre.
The onslaught of the modern scientific and political culture has altered the past, deep and sacred structural meanings of the ritual arts. When given more stress on the spectacular elements in them, they are drawn closer to theatre. An important aspect evolved in the analysis is that the artiste achieves the mental and physical adaptation to the performance by systematic and intense training. It is also seen in the analysis that true theatre can emerge only by achieving a balance between efficacy and entertainment and ritual and theatre are so intrinsically connected that often theatre arises out of rituals. And, the theatre experiments of Artaud and Grotowski were mainly consisted in the preparation of the actor through intense training, building up of a ritual concept in the actor-audience relationship, creation of new spaces for the theatre and the adoption of the principles of theatre-externals from ritual performing arts for their functional uses. In this respect, it may be said that rituals arise out of theatre. This is analysed in the next chapter.