

Ritual Possession and Healing practices: A Performance Process

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Ever since Bartholomaeus Zeigenbalg (1713) had opened up avenues in the Ethnographic accounts and study of the south Indian cultural traditions, many other missionaries and scholars started showing great interest in studying the Indian culture at large. It was Zeigenbalg who first mentioned about *devil dancers* in his “Geneology of the Malabar Gods”. Then followed anthropological, sociological and other cultural studies on spirit possession and mediumship. Earlier studies especially the western social science reduced this socio cultural phenomenon into problems of psychological pathology and sociological(esp. as a male chauvinistic) hegemony; however, these approaches might be hasty preempting the indigenous expositions, cultural cognitions induced by past traditions, memories and collective archetypal frames.

By contrast, this part is intended to centre on the performative aspects of possession, since performance theory attempts to understand the whole of the event (Claus 1985). The study on ritual possession and healing practices a “process of performance” have been approached in four kinds of research streams (Csordas, 1996:93). While the interpretive anthropology focuses on the theory of performance(Singer1958; Geertz 1973; Kapferer 1979a, 1983), the sociolinguistics on the performance-centred approach(Hymes 1975; Bauman1975; Ben Amos 1975), the performative utterance approach(Tambiah 1975, Austin1975(1962) and the rhetorical persuasive approach by therapists. All these approaches highlight on the importance of the hermeneutic sense of the context, genre, act and rhetoric. Singer emphasizes that a performance act by creating a specific mood, constantly and intensely(1972). Geertz formulates that “religion acts to establish powerful, pervasive, long lasting moods and motivations.... “ (1973:30 as quoted in Csordas 1996:92).

Bauman(1975) and Abraham(1968) remark that the performative aspect, “resides in the interplay between communicative resources, individual competence and the goals of the participants within the context of the particular situations”. The third stream of research reinforces the blurring lines between ‘word’ and ‘deed’ which also includes non-linguistic ritual acts in the analyses. The rhetoric aspect of performance theory comes from the results obtained in therapeutic processes of healing. This emphasizes that there exists an analogy between psychotherapy and healing.

However, a synthetic approach to performance would offer analytic criteria to what manner the participants of a ritual healing gets existentially engaged in the healing process; what are the cultural sequences that bind the healer and the participant in the healing process and how does it function in a culture?

Since this part is more concerned about looking at the ritual phenomena from the theatrical and performative aspects, this is enumerated in two parts. The first part would deal with the empirical data available in the Pondicherry region, and the latter part with a theoretical disposition to critically analyse the ritual phenomena.

The ritual healing centres are busy on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays, wherein people with their problems of minor illnesses, domestic turmoils, marriage grievances, economic reverses, portentous dream, spirit afflictions and so on. Some healers are available throughout the week days. However, Tuesdays and Fridays are generally preferred by the ritual healers. On these days, the healers will be available in their respective and usual healing centres for their shamanistic and exorcistic performances. Even those ritual healers who live far away from the ritual healing centres, visit the centres on these days. Specifically, even on these days, the midnight time is scheduled to be the time (usually the prescriptive norm for this specific purpose) of their possession trances, divination and exorcistic performances.

People with their problems gather on these days in the ritual healing centres. They gather from the morning till noon on the days. People from faraway places come to the centre early in the morning or even a day earlier and in such cases they stay in the precincts of the healing centers' vicinity.

From the morning, the healer's assistants start performing some initial preparatory arrangements in the centres. The Assistants are of various types: 1. it may be usually may person who has benefited or intended to benefit from the ritual healer of the deity of that centre who volunteer to do the service of assistance in the centre; 2. the healer himself herself may appoint a person to mind the preliminary duties in the healing centre on wage basis; 3. the healer may assign one or two persons who had been benefitted or healed by the healer or one who is related to the healer to do some minor services in the centre for a stipulated time. This assignment is considered to be the ritual obedience to the divine order i.e, the divinity who is sought solace in the healing centre has assigned the duty. This is because, the healer does it when the initially treats, exorcists or divines a sick person. The patient himself herself or some

one other than the patient but related to him/her may take the responsibility of offering service in the centre.

However it cannot categorically be concluded that each healer may have one of more assistants upholding the ritual services. There are also some healers who do not engage such assistants. In one shrine, the daughter of the healer herself engages in doing such auxiliary service of ritual specialist. In another case, the husband is doing it. It is also very important to note that these service assistants are in no way, the novices of healing performance profession. For in not a single case such preparatory course for becoming or initiating youngsters or others of this healing profession. But in so many other cultures vocational processes by which either an individual not in any way related to the healer or the descendant heir of the healer is initiated into this shamanistic profession through this methods. (I.M. Lewis 1960; Ruthe Heinze Choi 1987; and others).

Healing rituals are constituted by chores of rituals. These rituals range from cleansing the shrine, idols of the deities, pouring oil to lamps, lighting camphor balls, decorating the idols with flowers, neem leaves and the ritual entry into trance and possession, divining and exorcising. In this chorus of rituals, it is not only the healer is important, but partly the part of auxiliary ritual assistants, clients or the public is having their lot. The initial preparation for the shamanistic performance, the ritual assistants along with the help of some others are done.

On the stipulated days, from the morning, people begin to assemble in the centre. The healing centre, when it has a pucca building structure with doors will be opened. An initial burning of camphor and waving the fire for the idol is done. Surrogate sacrifice with a pumpkin filled in with vermilion or lemons dipped in vermilion are cut into pieces, squeezed and thrown in four directions. The whole are cut into pieces, squeezed and thrown in four directions. The whole shrine premises is cleaned. All the things that are used in the previous ritual sessions are removed. The flowers, the lemons in front of the idols, on the cu:lams are removed. The pa:va:tai (the ritually yellow/ saffron colour dress) worn on the idols are removed. The idols, icons, stones (representing the deity), the trees (standing as a representation of one of other deity), the metal cu:lams are all given a bath. In some places the idols, cu:lams are given baths in oil, curd, fruit juices, milk, tender coconut juice, ghee and so on one after the other. Usually the neem tree, representing a deity will be given a wash. Simultaneously the left out offered food, dried flowers are also removed. The main

and presiding deities' idol which is generally called the mu:la teyvam receives a special attention. This mu:la teyvam or mu:lavar gets prime care and attention in the preparatory ritual chorus. The mu:lavar may be stone statue with roughly or clearly hewn images, a wooden statue or a metallic statue. In the cases where the mu:lavar is a mere stone without any anthropomorphic figurine engraved on it, the special making of the deities' face is done. This is usually done with the sandal paste. Over this sandal paste, small metallic plates with the shape of face, ears, mouth, nose and eyes are fixed parts are donated ones by the public. Thus a clear face of the deity is made. Here this will form the mu:lavar.

Following this cleaning, a ritual bath, the oil lamps in the temple are poured with oil and lighted. One shrine may have more than one oil lamps. Among the oil lamps, the oil lamp in the form of kuttu lamp is kept in front of the mu:lavar. This light is lighted first. The lighting of lamps, receives special significance. This lamp is lighted with the fire. i.e., the camphor fire by which the mu:lavar is given the prime and initial obeisance. Fresh flowers are kept for the idols. This flower may be bought for the shrine at the cost of the ritual healer. The flowers brought by the people also are made use of for the purpose. Surrogate sacrifice in lemons or pumpkins is offered.

By this time, many clients would have assembled in the centre. They will be generously contributing flowers, oils, lemons to offer the divinities. They will be used for that. The assistant will also receive money from the clients and distribute chits of token to them. This money is collected as the ritual consulting fee. The amount collected as consultation fee varies from Rs. 5/- per head to Rs. 10/- The clients are attended to in the priority on the first come first served basis. The assistants also procure some bunches of fresh neem leaves for the ritual performance.

Once these initial preparations are over, the core ritual is expected for. The ritual healer arrives at the centre. If the healer resides within the vicinity of centre, he/she takes a bath. The dress of the healer who leads the ritual performance is significantly remarked with special type. The colour of the dress will usually be: yellow, red, saffron, green or blue coloured dresses. Male healers usually wear dhoty on their warts and remain bare in chest or wear a shirt. Women healers wear a sari and blouse. They flung the hair on the shoulders, back and front.

If the men healers do not wear a shirt he is seen with sacred ash paintings on the chest, forearms, neck, forehead and on the bindams One healer, who is employed in a private industry, comes to the centre for ritual performances after his routine duty. So

he is seen to be wearing a pant and a shirt. He serves in the centre with the pants and shirts. And whereas when he is on rest without his routine duty he changes to a dhoti and shirt. However it was striking in note one particular healer, who was wearing a sari and blouse. His transvestite behaviour is interesting.

As the healer makes his entrance into the centre he/she makes camphor fire offering with a bell ringing and kanikka:vu(surrogate blood sacrifice) one healer was particular in lighting a camphor an offering fire wave to the idol, holding the fire on his palm, while this marks a difference, all other fire offering by others are done having the camphor fire on a special plate meant for it.

These initial ritual preparations are a prelude for the whole ritual performance. The ritual healer is ritually and psychologically ready for getting into trance and to uphold ritual divining and exorcist performances. In some centres, the healers hold bunch of neem leaves in one hand and metalic cu:lam on the other hand or a bamboo stick (pirampu) instead of cu:lam. The neem leaves are intended to beat or to pat the sick persons. The stick or the cu:lam are also used to touch or beat the sick patients. In one centre, the healer bears the whip on his shoulders.

Simultaneously the assembly gathered in the centre is eagerly awaiting the descent of the deity on the healer, i.e., the possession trance of the healer. The healer's physical and contextual exegesis is the next step in the dramatic sequence that elevates the healer to the theatrical domain. This sequence of actions makes him enter into an imaginary plane. But this imaginary plane is not treated in the common parlance as an imaginary one but a real state in which the divinity descends into the being of the healer and communicates through him/her. As a prelude to this divine drama, the real realm of the centre and the psychological realm of the public are slowly shifted to comprehend the divine drama as a real one. The descent of the divinity into the being of the healer and interacting with the assembly is treated as performance, i.e., as a 'purposive, contextually situated interaction'. In this framed enactment, the present circumstances and mundane problems get fused with the past traditions and memories. The following paragraphs will enumerate this dramatic enactment.

Every individual healer differs in the way of getting into the dramatic enactment of embodying the divinity. At the outset the common features are described. The idiosyncratic and special features are described later.

As the initial preparation of cleaning the centre, lighting the lamps, offering food to the deities are over, the healer in the ritual costume, lights camphor, offers a 'ti:pa:ra:tanai' to the mu:lavar and the other divinities in the centre. The whole assembly is silent, the incense sticks emitting smoke, and the musical sound of the traditional percussion instruments of pampai and utukkai (not in all incidents) is vigorously played. The healer closing his eyes in front of the ku:lavar, stands or sits squatting. The healer shows signs of yawning, a few deep yawning with noise. It may continue for a minute or a few, some healers, together with the deep yawning, gnash their teeth violently, throw staring looks; they twist the body, keeping the heads straight upwards through the head. They slowly begin to tremble with teeth gnashing, shout aloud or make loud yelling. They wave the hands here and there and make loud noise; suddenly the assistant or someone from the assembly forcibly inserts a bunch of neem leaves in the hands of healer. Also the healer begins to make dancing steps and literally starts dancing. The women healers dance vigorously with their unhavelled hair disorderly flung downwards. The women dancers sometimes rotate their upper body alone together with the head violently.

This episode is followed by clear words and utterances. The earlier unmarked signs of yawning, gnashing the teeth, yelling gets changed to a marked oral utterances. The utterance generally is concerned about how the people are? How do they offend the deity and other? It shows disappointments about the worldly treacherous and maliciousness of the people. Immediately the assistant would respond to her questions. From the gathering one or two would slowly pour down their sorrows and miseries. It is the clear sign when the healer utters some oral statements that the deity has descended on the healer and uttering divine oracles. Then the whole ritual enactment begins.

The ritual healer is given a bunch of neem leaves on the right hand and cu:lam or a whip or a pirampu is given in the left hand. The healer with these things on its hands is taken or goes to the kurime'tai. The kuri me:tai is either the floor space in front of the mu:lavar or a special space of room or a wooden plank or raised platform which is just near the mu:lavar. One or two healers have separate rooms as kuri me:tai.

In the sequential process of getting into trance for the healer, in some healing centres there are seen, other minor ritual forms. They are prayer offering in the form of a litany. One main person recites a phrase and all the assembly responds with a fixed phrase. The lead reciter, praises the deity in the lead to which the assembly

responds. “Om! Sakthi! Om!” This prayer may be recited for 108 or 1008 times. While reciting the prayer, the assembly is given a small amount of vermilion. Each member of the assembly, throws the vermilion while responding over the mu:lavar or throws in a separate paper dish. This vermilion is believed to possess special powers and this vermilion is taken back home by the assembly as the piraca;tam.

In some other centres, for special occasions a fire pit is made. An opening fire with camphor is grown by ghee and some sticks (the sticks are usually of neem tree, banyan tree, pipal tree and so on). The opening fire is brought from the opening light obsecience offered to the deity by the healer. This light is transferred to the oil lamp that is burning before the mu:lavar. The fire pit constantly is fed by sticks, ghee, fruits, betel nuts, lemons, oranges, pongal, jangary and other items that are usually offered to deity. This fire is called ‘agni kuntam’ or ‘ya:kam’. While the agnikuntam fire is being fed, a prayer session of recitation of a litany, or singing songs or bhajans is going on simultaneously. At one point, the healer enters into ec-static flight.

One particular healer, who is known for his extraordinary fetes, transvestite features already mentioned, pierces his thick muscles beside the knee or in the muscle of the fore arms with needles or cu:lams or a spear (ve:l, - the weapon of murukan). These needles, cu:lams or spears are already pierced with lemons. There is seen sometimes blood oozing out from the penetrated points on the muscle which is blocked by smearing the sacred ash. This piercing the muscles is called ‘cetal po:tutal’ sometimes he pierces his tongue with a culam or a spear.

After these extra-ordinary physical mortifications, the healer shows signs of possession. Once he enters into possession trance, he leaves to this chamber of kurime:tai- to give divinations. Two male healers are noted for standing on a nailed bed in trance. The nailed bed is wooden plank on which hundred and thousands of nails are fixed. The pointed edges of the nails are facing upward. The healers stand on the pointed edges of the nails on barefoot and sometimes jump over the nails. There is also kind of wooden sandal with pointed nails. This pointed nail bed is called ‘a:nip patukkai’

The whole episode of divination, healing rituals, and exorcism takes place, while the healer tramps the kuri metai the nailed bed usually denotes the other form of kurii me:tai.

The possession drama, enacted in the ritual contexts need not be always successful. Most probably, all the possessions session would be successful in embodying the deity and divination processes. But in some cases the possession enactment fails or delayed. With all the ritual preparations and creating a conducive climate, the healers do not get possessions at the stipulated time. Sometimes, the whole ritual time goes without any possession drama. Likewise, the deity characterizes that performance acts by creating a specific mood, constantly and intensely (1972). Geertz defines that these acts induce establishing powerful, pervasive and long lasting moods and motivations (1973- 30), Bauman (1999:75) and Abrahams (1968) remark that the performative aspect “resides in the interplay between communicative resources, individual competence and the goals of participants within the context of particular situation. The third stream of research enforces the blurring lines between ‘word’ and ‘deed’! This also included non-linguistic ritual acts in the analyses. This aspect of performance theory comes from the results obtained in therapeutic process of healing. This emphasizes the analogy between psychotherapy and healing.

However a synthetic approach would offer analytic criteria as to what manner the participants of a ritual healing get existentially engaged in the healing proves and what are the cultural sequences that bind the healer and the participants in the healing process and how does it function in a culture? This part aims to draw an analogy between the ritual possession healing practices and a theatrical performance. The ritual healing practice is an indigenous health care systems, that needs to be comprehended within the context of cultural traditions. This health care system can be seen as a sequence of ritual performance, in analogous with a theatrical performance. The ritual performance involves the sick people, who are culturally conceived to be the possessor of an evil spirit or somehow affected by the ill effects of a body of evil spirit, the participation of a ritual healer and the body of cultural cosmology of the people.

The ritual role and function of a shaman or the medium needs to be understood from the cultural cognitive frameworks and worldviews of the people. As reflected by the possessed mediums and the people in general, mediums are the so called ‘god persons’ or the intermediaries who are wished by the supernatural divinities to save people and the world. Spirit medium ship is provided social sanctions and legitimacy to perform ritual activities for individuals and the society. Hence these mediums are

treated to be the ritual intermediaries between the human domain and the divine domain or to put it the other way, this physical world and the metaphysical world.

Mediums claim social legitimacy and approval by exhibiting certain extraordinary fetes specifically meant to symbolize them as intermediaries between the physical world and the metaphysical world. The mediums' prime exhibition lies in entering into an abnormal state of consciousness. This is called trance, i.e., an altered state of consciousness in which the medium symbolically or ritually possesses or stands in possession of a supernatural divinity. The medium in such altered form of consciousness performs divination which is indigenously called *kuri*. The physical changes the medium incurs upon him/ her add a symbolic note on their ritual role. The dress pattern, costumes (matted hair/ beard/ clean shaven assorted coloured dress) are looked upon by the people as if it is something non-humans and something that is associated with superhuman beings, certain physical mortifications like lacerating with swords. Piercing the spears through the tongue, thighs, arms and shoulder backs, sitting, walking or standing on nailed/thorny beds and walking or standing over fire and burning themselves, whipping themselves and observing celibacy/ abstaining from sex, fasting add to believe in the extra-ordinary powers of the mediums. Some such activities called "tricks of the trade" (Kleinmann 215) are manifestations of frenzied performances of self mortifications.

Culturally, the social domain in which the individuals and the society live is construed to be a harmonious whole either socially or psychologically. Any breach in the peacefulness of individuals or families or society is cognized to be caused by the intervention of somebody or some supernatural entities into the individual or social self. Any disharmony noticed in peace, love, domesticity in the social domain is to be warded off so as to keep the human domain culturally harmonious individuals. This disharmony or unhealthy situation gets expressed when an individual or a group of people irrespective of age show palpable hazardous manifestations in physical health, social behaviours and interpersonal relationships.

The social space i.e., the settlement area of human beings is culturally conceived to be an area well guarded by the body of village pantheon. The *urteyvam*-s located inside the settlement and the tutelary or guardian deities, indigenously called *ellaitteyvam*-s lay a strong protection over the social domain from the evil and malicious spirits and other unfortunate events and diseases. It is the overall cultural comprehension that the settlement area of human beings i.e., the social domain is

construed to be a domain of peacefulness, harmony, love, life and domesticity. In contrast, the exterior domain is construed to be the domain of war, violence, death and disharmony. And disharmonious, chaotic situation arising in the social domain due to natural calamities, epidemics and human violence are summoned to the u:r teyvam-s in the form of festivals and other rituals. However, individuals and some families, who show behavioural disorders of physical ailments and so on are considered to be a social and abnormal incidents. Possession traumas and the physical illness, economic crises are thought to be manifestations of some supernatural inflictions. These supernatural inflictions are caused to the individuals either by their violations of social norms knowingly or unknowingly or by some others. Such individuals afflicted in one way or the other are no more treated as normal social members. They are allocated to be social beings and hence are taken to the traditional and ritual practitioners for exorcism and other ritual warding off rituals.

The cultural perspectives on the cosmology of the universe are manifested in the social and the religious institutions. The universe is culturally partitioned into two: (1) This mundane world and (2) the other world or the metaphysical world. The mundane world i.e., the physical world is where the human beings live and the metaphysical world is inhabited by a variety of super natural powers. The whole pantheon of supernatural powers are grouped into one divine pantheon whole which play a vital role in maintaining harmony in the world and protecting the human kind and the other living creatures of the world from disaster and chaos. There are also some other supernatural powers, who are innately and characteristically destructive and malicious in nature. These powers are the spirits of the dead humans, who are variously called pe:y, muni. pica:cu, mo:kini, and so on. These two kinds of entities are functionally and characteristically two opposing categories. Both the supernatural categories descend upon the human beings and act either positively and constructively or negatively and destructively, depending upon the nature of the category of entity that has descended on human beings/ agents. Ritual persons and the mediums are believed to be possessed by the first category of the supernatural entities. Such possessions are legitimate, solicited for the purpose of alleviating human problems. On the contrary, the possession by the unwanted and the malicious spirits i.e., the second category are considered to be unexpected and unsolicited intrusion of the spirits into the lives of the humans. Such unwanted and illegitimate possession on individuals causes disturbances in the harmony of a social being and is regarded negatively with concern and apprehension. It is often reported to be a special form of illness.

However possession by a divinity or a spirit whether ritual and legitimate or illness and illegitimate is a state of altered consciousness, which defines, the possessed to belong to a nonhuman category. Hence these non-human categories are taken away from the human domain. The mediums adopting an extra-ordinary life style, do live in secluded places. The spirit possessed individuals are removed from the social domain to non-social domain, i.e., usually a village shrine or a ritual healing centre. The mediums usually inhabit in huts, caves or in the shrines or dilapidated structures which are exclusively at the exteriority of the village landscape or characterise the features of exteriority.

The temporal and spatial imageries as manifested in the social economic, religious arenas of the human society reflect the cognitive pattern of the folk of the phenomenon. The spatial and temporal aspects do share a logical coherence with the social life and the cultural behavioural pattern of the people. The physical landscape, and its varied distinct spatial units in the way it had been given significances and prominence in the social cultural behaviours of the people do reflect the long historical, emotional and cultural experiences of the people with them. The spatial consciousness one way or the other gets reflected in all the domains of human behaviours from the macro-level physical distributions of a village landscape to the micro-level distribution in the human dwelling structures and the structures of the divinities, i.e., the shrine or the temple. However, spatial dimensions is not an unilateral one, but it operates in the horizontal and vertical planes (Helms 1988/ 4 and Nicole Bourque 1994/ 230)

The temporal aspects of the phenomenon characterize another significance in the ritual phenomenon. All the spirit possession cases manifest that spirits attack occur at some specific times i.e., the moon and the midnight. When the victims are one way or the other occupy the liminal territories at the liminal periods are affected by the spirits. This particular and specific temporality marks, in the cultural life of the people of malevolent spirits, pe:ys, ghosts are actively bowering over with hunger and thirst. The temporal and spatial aspects get reflected in the organization of healing centres and exorcistic rituals. The physical location of the healing centres is always seem either at the periphery of the village, settlement area. When such rituals are done ivethin the inhabited area i.e., the individual dwelling house, a specific area of chamber or hall is specifically demarcated for the purpose. Also the specific spatial realm is symbolically enmarked with a cow-dung cleansing and other symbolic acts.

The whole sequence of ritual possession and ritual healing practices takes place in the exterior domains of the village landscape. The ritual healing practices take place in a ritual healing centre which are seen outside the settlement are or at the cremation grounds. Following an initial ritual preparations, the healer in an extraordinary state gets into a possession trance. He, in such trance states and during the ritual activities occupies a specific space, a demarcated space of bare ground, a wooden platform, a fire bed or a nailed bed. This space denotes a symbolic space, where in the divinity descends on the healer. The healer performs his oracle utterances, ritual gestures from this specific space. The sick also, is expected to occupy another demarcated space while attending the healing session wherein only the evil, malicious powers are encountered (exorcised) by the healer. The ritual objects like sacred ash, water, neem leaves, incense sticks, sticks (Pirampu), sword, spears are used by the ritual healer. The healer in the trance state, encounters the malicious powers possession the sick through oral interrogations. She/he makes the malicious spirits speak out, express its origin/identity, characters, grievances and purpose of possessing the individual. And finally the healer orders the vacation of the spirit from the individual. In such an encounter with the possessed spirit, the healer may happen to use violence and harsh oral abuses and statements against the spirit. The physical violence with a whip, fire stick spears inevitably will do harm the possessed individual, though it is intentionally, in the initial exorcism, directed towards the possessed entity. The physical violence and oral harshness depends upon the nature and vigour of reaction exhibited by the possessing spirit through the possessed individual. As a token of expelling out the unwanted spirit from the sick, the healer cuts a piece of hair from the cortex of the sick and nails it down on a tree esp. a tamarind tree which is present at the exterior part of a village landscape.

Ritual performance is a complex whole of verbal utterances, ritual acts, physical gestures, ritual objects, manipulating them, physical and temporal aspects and so on. this ritual core in the healing practices has a theatrical or dramatic quality.

“The theatrical strategy refers to the way in which means are used within a performance to accomplish theatrical intentions. Theatrical strategies may be to some degree programmed into the “Script” or “scenario” of a performance. This phenomenon has been analyzed by many symbolic anthropologists who sought to explain the transformative power of rituals mainly by following the strategic transformative power of rituals mainly by following the strategic transformations

outlined in their symbolic structures, scripts o tests” (e.g., Gell 1975, Block 1992, Munn 1986, Bathaglia 1990). But in the ritual performances, the most subtle theatrical strategies lie outside the script, the activity of participants, creation of a series of domains and constantly manipulating these domains by destroying one, creating another in the sequence and juxtaposing one another in the performance. Thus the performance is kept intact and progressive. From moment to moment the healer strategically modulates the quality of interactions by constantly cutting across a series of domains (theatrical).

Thus the performance of ritual possession and ritual healing within the context of society reflects to be a constant and continuous juxtaposition of domains and ultimately the performance places actor, the one acted on in his/her right domain. The healer from his ritual status travels through the right domain. The healer from his ritual status travels through the “hyper-ritual domain”, through the possession trauma and the whole gestures, his manipulating acts of gestures, objects things, spaces and the lay humans are the a sequence of theatrical strategy provides a cultural dramatic event. This dramatic event placed at the particular cultural and ritual mood, transforms the ritually or symbolically misplaced identity (or a schizophrenic individual) and re-instates the initial and original social being through, throwing him or her into a pair of shifts from the real domain to the “ritual” and “hyper ritual domains”. The spirit afflicted person who was deranged from the social domain is restored his/her original social status.

The whole series of ritual performance involving human beings, objects, temporal and spatial moods, are juxtaposed in a cultural setting. This juxtaposing of various aspects sets the core of rituals an actively moving theatrical performance.