

Mudra: Choreography in Hands

There is no difference between marks and words in the sense that there is between observation and accepted authority, or between verifiable fact and tradition. (Foucault, *The Order of Things*)

Abstract

Mudra is a domain of movement, and it is considered to be a prominent mode of communication in dance and the dramatic arts in India. Mudra, primarily, is understood as an inscriptive form that follows the linguistic parameters, expressing symbolic meaning through systematically codified patterns of the dancer's hands. Beyond the level of linguistic symbolism, mudra is kinetic energy. It is essentially a form of movement, and the deliverance of its meaning is embedded in the kinetic modalities of the hands. A mudra is a 'thing' composed of a number of spatiotemporal properties such as tempo, duration, rhythm, motion trajectories of the hands and eye movements. Mudra is the 'optical mechanism' of the hand, so it sees things, narrates events, interprets their meaning and experiences a range of emotions through movements. Mudra connects the subjective and objective worlds in a performance through kinetic properties of the hands. The body remembers and repeats through the embodied thinking of the gestural practice of the hands.

Keywords: mudra; inscription; kinetics; mimesis; embodiment; *fingerature*; *kutiyattam*; *Natyasastra*; optical mechanism

Mudra is a kinetic event. It is an act of structuring hands in motion. The assemblage of the gestural sequence of fingers in mudra generates abstract symbols using spatial and rhythmic properties of movements. By arranging patterns of dancing fingers in the hands, mudra notates the visibility and emergence of the body as a process of the dancer's expression of meaning, emotion and rhythmic experience in performance. In the Sanskrit language, where the term and practice originated, mudra means a symbolic position of the hand that literally means seal.ⁱ

The word also refers to a series of corporeal techniques such as eye positions, body postures and breathing techniques found in the Esoteric rituals, Yoga, Hindu and Buddhist art and the performing arts in India (Hirschi 2000: 2).ⁱⁱ Although hand gestures are integral to many human civilizations and are available in various cultural and

linguistic traditions in the world, a massive repository of systematically classified hand gestures is specific to Asian cultures. The Chinese word *yin* and the Japanese *in*, meaning 'seal', render the dominant Sanskrit meaning of *mudra*. *Muzra* in Old Persian and *muddika* in Pali demonstrate the transliteration of the Sanskrit word (Sanders 1985: 6). Scholars have given various interpretations to the term: '[...] an established and conventional sign language' (Coomaraswamy 1928: 279-281); 'hand poses adopted during meditation or exposition' (Rao 1914: 14); 'finger-signs' (Woodward 1917: 267); 'manual signs indicative of various ideas' (Soothill 1937: 203a-b); 'mystic pose of the hand' (Getty 1928: 171); 'a system of magic gesticulation consisting in distorting the fingers so as to imitate ancient Sanskrit characters, of supposed magic effect' (Eitel 1888: 101); 'a certain manipulation of fingers [...] as if to supplement the power of the word' (Gangoly 1915: 158b); 'a sign relationship that [is] inscribed in a dancer's hand' (Ness 2008: 19). For many of these studies, mudra is a territory of spectatorial semiotics and an inscriptive form of symbolism enhancing sign production. The intention of this study is not only to examine the ways in which the hand gestures are theorized in recent scholarship, but also to raise concerns about the lack of understanding of its inherent kinetic properties in the process of meaning making. The study would also argue that mudra is 'optical mechanism' (Deleuze 2006: 339) of the hand and a kinetic evocative of the visual field of a performance generated through the skeletal apparatus of the hand. Mudra hand in this sense is a visual technology embedded in the body.

Mudra as Inscription

Sally Ann Ness proposes the idea of gesture as inscription (2008) that brings movement and writing as corresponding discourses of performative semiotics. She argues that gestures are inscriptions in the body in which the bones, ligaments and other tissues of the dancer function as the host material (Ness, 2008: 15). She offers two examples: classical western ballet and the Indian dance form of *Bharata Natyam*. In ballet, the inscription of gestures includes the entire skeletal frame and musculature of the bodily regime, including movements and structural patterns of the dancer's body. Gestural inscriptions here become an ongoing corporeal process that has permanent consequences on each individual body of the dancer (Ness, 2008: 23). Unlike in western ballet, in *Bharata Natyam*, as in other classical Indian dance forms, gestures, known as mudras, are inscribed in the dancer's hands (Ness, 2008: 19). Linguistically equivalent, the mudras in Indian dance, in general, express symbolic meaning through systematically codified patterns of hand gestures. The appearance of mudra, therefore, creates a 'dual semiotics' that is expression and techniques on the one hand and corporeal gestures presented in the performance on the other hand. In this way, as Ness writes, the hand of the *Bharata Natyam* dancer appears as a material host that serves two inscriptive forms: a symbolic language co-existing simultaneously with bodily gestures. These 'thought-enabling' and 'technique-enhancing' hand movements are 'gestures as inscriptions' and a source of the semiotic capabilities of the art of dancing. *Bharata Natyam* tradition, for Ness, does include an expressive, interpretive tradition that is explicitly symbolic and even conceptual in character (Ness, 2008: 19). Considering mudra practice as the outward semiotics of the *Bharata Natyam*, Ness further argues that the dance form possesses the capabilities of conventional symbolism

in linguistically equivalent terms to an understanding audience. The spectatorial semiotics of the mudra hands, in Ness's arguments, operate on two levels that she calls dual semiotics that are performative symbolism and the linguistic narrative of the dance performance. Poststructuralism and linguistic symbolism form the critical trajectories of Ness's arguments, and there are semiotic reductionism and linguistic determinism throughout in her observations regarding gestural practice of mudra especially foregrounded while saying that it is 'highly plausible that [...] performative terms that work in a similar manner and with the same kind of thought as such grammatical terms' (Ness, 2008: 21). Although some of her linguistic observations of the mudra practice seem to clarify the correspondence between Sanskrit grammar and mudra in classical Indian dance, she seldom acknowledges the kinetic properties involved in the gestural practice of the hand.ⁱⁱⁱ This kinetic dimension of mudra practice can neither be reduced to a linguistic mode nor can be taken in the literary sense of a language alone. The operational modality of mudra in a dance is kinetic rather than linguistic, and mudra, therefore, is a language without inscription. It cannot be written anywhere. Rather, it is a performative occurrence of movement energies delivered by the dancer's body and extended into air; it is impermanent and leaves no visible traces. Recalling Mark Franko's emphasis on 'trace' not being disappearance (1995) and Carrie Noland's notion of 'movement form' to 'kinetic energy' (2008), in this essay I argue that mudra is kinetic energy without ontological shape and symbolism, which conveys performative experience through motion trajectories.

Mudra Notation in the *Natyasastra*

Mudra is a domain of movement, and it is considered to be a prominent mode of communication in dance and the dramatic arts in India. In the *Natyasastra* (200 BC–AD 200), the manual of performance studies in India, we see mudras as an integral part of choreographic rhythm (Sanders 1985:12). Hand gestures are an insistently indispensable part of rhythmic expression as outlined in the *Natyasastra*, which is supported by a combination of a range of physical and verbal means of performance such as percussion instruments, songs and words. On the one hand, a mudra, therefore, is essentially a cluster of symbolic movements having an explicit physical form, a name and a visible shape. On the other hand, it has implicit kinetic energies that are expressed through rhythm and trajectories of movements that bring the dancer's body into irresistible moments of choreographic experience.

A mudra has a name (*nama*) and a form (*rupa*) in the *Natyasastra* Bharata^{iv} listed 66 mudras with names in the ninth chapter and noted their physical forms as key ingredients of physical acting. Mudras are primarily classified into three types: single-hand mudras (*Asamyukta-mudra*), of which there are 24; joint-hand mudras (*Samyukta-mudra*), of which there are 13; and dance mudras (*Nirta-hastha*), of which there are 29. Out of these 66 mudras, two joint-hand mudras are mentioned repeatedly in the section relating to dance mudras, and therefore, in effect, there are only 64 names listed in the *Natyasastra*, but in terms of application, 66 mudra hands are practiced. In his extensive documentation process, Bharata records 4 types of finger movements (NS IX 185-190), 5 palm movements or positions (NS IX 156-157), 10 hand elevations (NS IX 191) and

20 generic classifications of mimetic practices of the hands that are capable of bringing *rasa*, the emotive aspect, to the performance (NS IX 146). These are movements of the hands indicating specific actions such as breaking, cutting and beating. Mudra practice in Indian performing arts follows a stylized mode of acting, and therefore these actions are presented in a non-realistic manner, extracting and foregrounding the underlying motion trajectories rather than the actual physical appearance of the actions. In another way, from an audience's point of view, each of these actions, breaking, cutting or beating, is identified and acknowledged through the force, rhythm and motion trajectory of the hand gesture rather than by engaging with a decoding process involving understanding which mudra stands for which specific mimetic action.

Bharata mentions four types of finger movements and classifies 66 hand gestures into four categories. Two of the types include the folding and unfolding of fingers, starting from the index finger: the mudra of *bhramaram* in *Kutiyattam*^v is the folding of the index finger, whereas *suchikamukham* is the unfolding or upright movement of the index finger.^{vi} Other types include two clusters of mudras, the folding and unfolding of fingers, starting from the little finger, *pataka*, *sikharam* and *ardhachandra*, which in *Kutiyattam* forms the mudra by folding the fingers starting from the little finger, whereas *oornanabha* is a movement outwards from the folding position of fingers starting from little finger. In this manner, Bharata's notation of hand gestures is complex and extensive, offering detailed descriptions of hand elevations and kinetic application of mudra hands in the *Natyasastra*. Each notation of mudra in the *Natyasastra* is carefully described and classified in exactly the same way, and the same degree of importance is given to the body and physical acting. Hands are rigorously trained in classical Indian performance, and flexibility, presence, force and dynamism of the hands are as important as the flexibility of the body. A huge repository of performance knowledge in India is orally transmitted through generations of performance practice over the years. The techniques and practices are disseminated through embodied learning in intensive and interactive training sessions. Performance knowledge is transmitted from the body to the body without the mediation of paper.^{vii} In this way, Bharata's approach to notation is phonic and kinetic instead of graphic and pictorial.

Kinetics of Mudra: A Performative Example

A mudra is essentially movement, and the deliverance of its meaning is embedded in the kinetic energies of the hands. Although the shape and composition of the hands are important in the mudra practice, it conveys meaning through movement. A mudra is a 'thing' composed of a number of spatiotemporal properties such as tempo, duration, rhythm, geometrical patterns of the hands and eye movements. In *Kutiyattam*, for instance, the *oornanabha* mudra is used to show a number of things such as 'flames', 'taking a bath' and 'radiance', of a person or a thing. The same mudra is used to create three different meanings and mimetic actions. The 'flame' is created through a speedy and a shorter circular movement holding the hands parallel to the chest [figure 2].

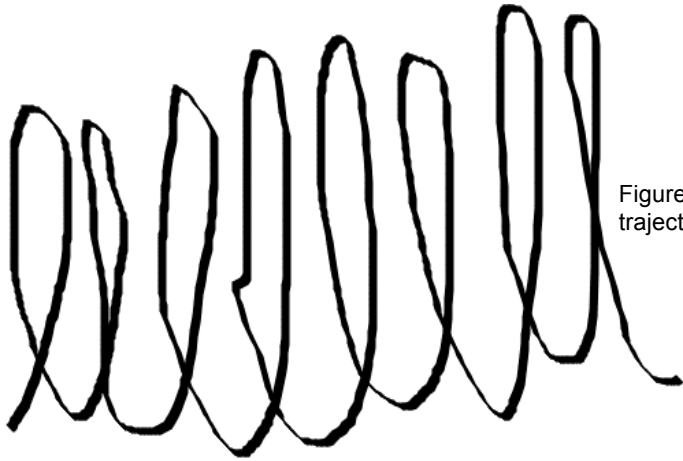


Figure 2 - Flame. The coils represent the movement trajectory of the hands.

Whereas 'taking a bath' is a vertical movement starting from the middle of the chest, going up over the head and then flowing down like a stream of water [figure 3], 'radiance', on the other hand, is drawing a circle over the head, covering the upper parts of the body [figure 4]. In all these examples we see different motion trajectories of the hands operating through different meters of tempo, rhythm and duration. The *iterability* of mudra hands creates different perceptual contexts in a performance. It is not the linguistic symbolism but the kinetic disposition of the hands that create the performative experience of fire, water and light in these examples. Citing another example, the same mudra of *katakam* is used to show the woman, the God Krishna, gold, silver, flower, the demon and the war. The mudra looks the same, but the difference in performative experience is generated through the kinetic properties of the hand movements. The meaning of a mudra, therefore, is created through the movements of the hands, rather than by their traceable linguistic presence. Signals and forms are superseded by the kinetic energies of the hands in mudra practice, and past and present are submerged into the trajectories of movements of the hands.



Figure 3 - Shower. The hands show the flow of water.

Perhaps the idea of trace does not exist in the kinetic moments because of the lack of a pre-existing past in the course of movement: movement always takes place in the present. Movement is doing and doing involves the shaping of the body position and locomotion in space (Leder 1990 in Noland and Ness 2008: 88). But it is the organization of kinetic energies that brings the dance experience. In mudra practice, beyond the symbolic dimension, it is the *fingerature*^{viii} of the hands that deliver a performative experience.

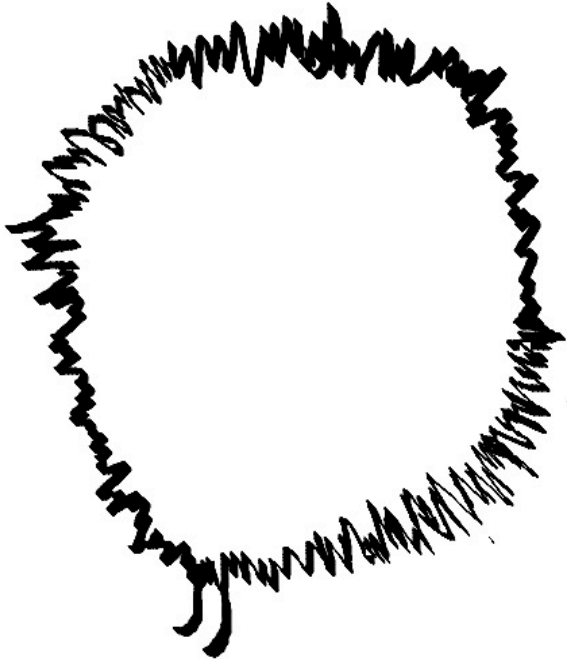


Figure 4 - Radiance. The hands vibrate through a circle around the face of the actor.

Mudra practice in *Kutiyattam* insists on a strict in-body discipline that helps the actor to reinforce the kinetic qualities in a performance. The principles and methods of training^{ix} of *Kutiyattam* demand that the actor should accomplish in their hands the same physical qualities that are required of the body in a performance: hands need to be flexible, expressive, dynamic, graceful and stable. Five patterns of movement can be found in the mudra practice of *Kutiyattam*, such as upward, downward, sideways, palm-up and palm-down. According to Arya Madhavan, at least six specific exercises are given to the wrist and fingers alone (Madhavan 2010: 100-101). All of the following exercises are practised in a bent-knee posture, which is the typical standing posture of *Kutiyattam*:

1. Rotating the wrist ligament through 360 degrees while holding the *mushti* mudra and with arms forming two triangles, which is a typical posture for mudra exercise.
2. Holding the same arm position and the body postures, and rotating the wrist ligament through 360 degrees while holding the *shukatunda* mudra.
3. Holding the same postures, hands are brought to the front, facing each other, while holding the *urnanabha* mudra, shaking the fingers vigorously and making a

small circle in which the hands are going up and down in the circle. This is the way 'flames' and 'anger' are shown in the performance.

4. Holding the same body posture, the *mudrakhya* mudra is used to bring the hands to an upright position, and shaking the little finger, ring finger and the middle finger together shows something growing.
5. The middle and the ring fingers are shaken while holding the mudra of *mukuram*; butterflies are shown in the performance with these finger movements.
6. Holding the hands in *suchimukha* mudra with the index fingers move rhythmically. This movement shows fireflies in the performance.

Mudra is nothing but kinetic energies. The physical form of a mudra is carved by the agency of hand movements. Mudra as a formation of hands does not have an independent status of meaning, but the existence of it in a performance is always combined with a range of kinetic modalities expressed in the eye movements, facial expressions of emotions (*rasa*)^x and the physical movements of the body. Mudra functions on multiple kinetic levels in *Kutiyattam*. It accompanies the rhythmic patterns of the body movements as a figurative embellishment; narrates stories; creates theatrical metaphors; and generates direct emotional experience. In a *Kutiyattam* performance, mudra practice creates objects and events and conveys emotions without depending on the linguistic narrative of the performance. Hand gestures show the use of various weapons in the battle; a swarm of flies travelling together and hovering over a fire; playing ball; and description of flowers, bees and trees in the garden (Madhavan 2010: 111-114). These are 'physicalized images' presented through a series of movements of the hands followed by feet, eyes and the body. Hands bring the emergence of the performative body in performance. Mudra leaves no recognizable traces written in a performance, but rather the occurrence of mudra hands causes the emergence of a fictive world in performance. The traces do not authorize the autonomy of disappearance of the 'real' in mudra practice. The mudra 'institutes the *habitus* for an as-yet nonexistent environment' in performance (Franko 1995: 243).

Mudra and the Kinetic Mimesis: Seeing Deep Valley and the Moonlight

Mudra is an embodiment of thinking; thinking not in the sense of abstract cognitive activity of an ego-logical subject, but as a Heideggerian notion of 'recollection of being' repeated in movements (Parkes: 1990: 245). In Cartesian philosophy, thinking is traditionally understood as the activity of the mind that is separated from the body. On the contrary, mudra makes thinking an embodied experience. David Michael Levin offers an illuminating reading on and a simultaneous clarification of the mudra practice in Tibetan Buddhism and the *embodiment of thinking*, a concept that Heidegger implicitly discusses in the context of thinking as a recollection of being (Parkes: 1990:245). According to western metaphysics, the human body is not capable of thinking and thinking only takes place in the mind, which is separated from the body. The body is evil, a source of sin, moral weakness, a site of perceptual illusion and cognitive error. Mind is unpolluted and free of evil only when it is separated from the body. This Judeo-Christian dualism of 'mind' and the 'body' finds its way into a systematic reassessment and a theoretical repositioning in Heidegger conceptualizing a

non-dualistic and embodied experience of thinking.

A number of Heidegger's useful illuminations of gesture and movements can be used in here to develop the remaining arguments in the present study. Heidegger observes hand as a peculiar thing, which is part of the bodily organism. It is an organism, which can grasp. But the *essence* of the hand is beyond the level of a grasping organism (paws, claws and fangs). Only who can speak, that is, think, can have hands. It does not only grasp and catch, or push and pull, but the hand reaches and extends, holds, carries and design. Making a connection between hand and thinking, Heidegger observes that 'every motion of the hand in every one of its works carries itself through the element of thinking [...] all the work of the hand is rooted in thinking' (Heidegger, 1968: 16). In a similar context to the embodiment of thinking, Merleau-Ponty observes that mudra is the 'knowledge in the hand' (1962: 144) and this knowledge cannot be accessed without the hand (body) being involved in the kinetic process of enactment. As he observes, the skilful typing is a 'knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and [which] cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort' (Parkes, 1990: 248).

In Tibetan Buddhism, Mudra is considered as idealized corporeal schematizations, the distinctive function of that helps the practitioner to get access to a wisdom carried by the body (Parkes, 1990:245). It is a process of recollection of the body's kinetic being. Mudra, therefore, is kinetics in the hand. In performance, mudra, being the movement energy of the hand, sees things, narrates events, interprets their meanings and experiences a range of emotions produced in the body. In *Kutiyattam*, for instance, mudra narrates the text, enacts the character's inner thoughts and feelings, speaks to other characters, shows objects in the play, denotes stage conventions and indicates various locations in the play.

Mudra is an embodiment of feeling; feeling not only on the level of emotions, but as a kinetic modality that evokes the mimetic symbols of experience through interpretation and resemblance of gestural discourse. The mudra of 'flame', for instance, is not a sign. Mudra resists any such classification of the representation of 'flame' in the linguistic sense because it is more of a 'corporeal schematization' and a 'kinetic evocative' of a deep experience of 'flame'. Mudra is neither a subject nor an object. It is the skeletal 'apparatus' and the 'optical mechanism' (Deleuze, 2006: 339) of the hands, operating between the performer and spectator and enabling both of them to 'see' the deep valley^{xi} and the moonlight^{xii} without representing the objects in the performance space. The actor sees her own hands simultaneously with the spectator, and the appearance of mudras and their gestural operation in a performance, on one level, makes the language and objects disappear from a performance due to nonverbal and stylized acting. On another level, gestural operations in a performance will reinvent the language and objects through a kinetic journey of the actor as well as the spectator mediated by the movements of the mudra hands as well as by the entire body. The kinetics of mudra practice in a *kutiyattam* performance, for instance, evokes the spectator's memory of the objects, events, things and landscapes through a series of corporeal schematization of the hand, that is, the body. The mudra becomes the technology of the optical

mechanism of the hand/body in performance generating a visually rich optical field of perception for the audience.

Mudra is visibility in this sense. It makes a world of objects visible only through the movements of the hands. It is performative utterance of the curves and lines of the *fingerature* of the hands that 'forms variable figures' of mimetic events (Deleuze, 2006: 339). Mudra connects the subjective and objective worlds of performance through movements. The formation of mudras in the hands generates certain bodily knowledge and awareness in the dancer's body that brings the visible world of stories, events, objects and persons in a performance. The body remembers and repeats through the embodied thinking of the gestural practice of the hands in kinetic energies. Mudra, therefore, is vision embodied in the hands.

ⁱ Dale Sanders investigates the origin of the term and offers not only an etymological survey in Sanskrit, Assyrian and Persian languages but also summarizes and evaluates various interpretations of the term in Buddhist iconography and Indian Esoteric thoughts, arguing that the notion and practice of mudra crossed the frontiers of India with Vajrayana Buddhism and spread to China and later to Japan.

ⁱⁱ In Hatha Yoga, 25 body positions are mentioned as mudras, which are combinations of breathing patterns and eye positions parallel to specific body postures.

ⁱⁱⁱ Offering an example of the discussion: Sanskrit has seven variations of inflection of nouns (*vibhakti*) indicating alteration of the form of words such as number, person, mood or tense. Mudra practice in general, in classical Indian performance tradition, uses different hand positions of the mudra to denote these five variations. The mudra called *mudrakhyam*, in *Kutiyattam*, is used to say different words such as 'with rama', 'for Rama' and 'because of Rama', for instance. 'With Rama' and 'for Rama' are shown with palm up position, whereas 'because of Rama' is shown with the sideways position of the hand combined with circular motion. Similarly, the same mudra with the same sideways position without circular motion is used to show 'Of Rama'. A full rotation of the wrist in 360 degree forming the *mudrakhyam* gesture in sideways position shows 'from Rama'. It is clear in this example that although the mudra hands stand for grammatical terms, the motion trajectories are the key elements that bring alteration of terms and therefore, a different meaning. This emphasizes the fact that the mudra practice delivers meaning through kinetic properties rather than performative semiotics.

^{iv} A sage who is believed to be the author of the *Natyasastra*, the seminal book on Indian Performance Studies, which was written or composed between 200 BC and AD 200. Written in Sanskrit, the text contains 6000 verse stanzas integrated in 36 chapters that discuss a wide range of issues in theatre arts, including dramatic composition; construction of the playhouse; detailed analysis of the musical scales; body movements; various types of acting; directing; division of stage space; costumes; make-up; properties and musical instruments and so on. The aesthetic theory of *rasa* is central to the *Natyasastra*. The term is widely used in recent debates in aesthetics, philosophy, neuroscience and performance practice as a performative mode generating multiple layers of meaning and experience in artistic practice.

^v The oldest existing Sanskrit theatre of Kerala has a continuous performance history since 900 AD, although historians and scholars claim 2000 years of traceable history of scholarship and practice. In *Kutiyattam*, Sanskrit plays are performed traditionally in the temple theatres known as *Kuthambalam*.

vi Names of mudras are different in different performance forms due to regional variations. None of the dance forms in India follows the mudras in exactly the way that they are classified in the *Natyasastra*. The same mudra is named differently in different dance forms in India. Bending the index finger half-way down while holding the palm upright is *arala* in *Bharatha Natyam* and *bhramaram* in *Kutiyattam*, *Kathakali* and *Mohiniyattam*, largely due to Kerala performance forms following a different lexical source book of hand gestures called *Hashtalakshanadipik* instead of the *Natyasastra*. Similarly, the little finger folding halfway downwards is known as *tripataka* in *Bharatha Natyam* and *Pataka* in *Kutiyattam* and *Kathakali*.

vii Dance choreography developed in the West in the eighteenth century through a complex interaction between two fixed horizontal planes of the floor and the paper as an initiative to preserve dance in notations. Susan Foster offers a historical and critical evaluation of the process, tracing the history of choreography as an attempt to discover the 'means of making the art of dance comprehensible on paper' (Foster, 2001: 18). The intention of Louis XIV in appointing his principal Dancing Master Pierre Beauchamps in the 1670s for this job was to assist the dancers to learn the dance 'without need of personal instruction' (Forster, 2001: 18). See more details in Susan Foster's (2011) *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthetia in Performance*, London: Routledge.

viii A term referring to the skeletal and muscular pattern of fingers in the hands. It denotes spatial arrangements of the hands in a gestural composition. Derived from two Sanskrit words, *hastha-karma* (the act of the hand) and *hastha-vinyasa* (the composition of the hands), the term is originated in the present study denoting the kinetic and geometrical dispositions of the hand gesture.

ix Training is elaborate and extensive in *Kutiyattam*. In traditional *Chakyar* families (actor families of *Kutiyattam* in Kerala) training begins at the age of seven or eight and continues for at least six to eight years to become a confident actor. During the training period, the boy actors may perform small roles in major repertory productions after at least three years of training. When *Kutiyattam* training was institutionalized in the 1960s at Kalamandalm, the university of traditional performing arts in Kerala, the same course duration was implemented in the course structure. The *Kutiyattam* acting course at Kalamandalam typically lasts a minimum of six years and a maximum of eight years before a student graduates as an actor. See more details of *Kutiyattam* training in Steven Sowler's (1982) *The Traditions, Training and Performance of Kutiyattam, Sanskrit Drama in South India* (Unpublished thesis), Berkeley: University of California and Arya Madhavan's (2010) *Kutiyattam Theatre and Actor's Consciousness*, Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi.

x Rasa is an Indian aesthetic theory developed in the *Natyasastra*, referring to the spectator's experience of watching a theatrical event. See note 4 for more details.

xi The actor portrays the enormity of the mountain Himalaya through gestural enactment in 'Lifting the Mountain Himalaya', a dramatic episode in a Sanskrit play in *Kutiyattam*, *The Wondrous Crest Jewel*, written by Sakthibhadra (AD 800). It is an hour-long nonverbal performance showing a detailed description of the mountains, valleys, forest and animals in the Himalayas.

xii In 'The stories of Krishna', a series of solo female performances depicting the stories of the God Krishna, the actress enacts the moonlight in the bank of River Yamuna in a subtle and romantic way through mudras. After a deep and intense lovemaking, the heroine mistakenly trying to grab a long white patch of moonlight, thinking that her garment is the moonlight, is the most wonderful moment in this episode.

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Biography

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