



The Dramaturgy of the Body in the Indian Theater as a Visible Poetry

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ABSTRACT – The Dramaturgy of the Body in the Indian Theatre as a Visible Poetry – This article intends to analyze the concept of *dr̥śya kāvya* (visible poetry) from the Indian scenic tradition, as a proposal to a dramaturgy of the body. Starting from the impact that the Asian scenic tradition caused in the European theater in the 20th century, we will examine some concepts and acting techniques from the Indian classical dance-theater (specially Orissi and Kathakali), which are based in the translation of the word into physical gesture. We also question the relevance of this discussion to a theater seeking to distance itself from a logocentric model, in an intercultural perspective.

Keywords: **Actor's Craft. Interculturalism. Indian Classical Dance-Theatre. Kathakali. Orissi.**

RÉSUMÉ – La Dramaturgie du Corps dans le Théâtre Indienne come Visible Poésie – Cet article vise à analyser le concept de *dr̥śya kāvya* (la poésie visible), de la tradition théâtrale indienne, entant que une proposition de dramaturgie du corps. À partir de l'impact que le traditions du spectacle asiatiques ont provoqué sur le théâtre européen au cours du XX siècle, nous allons examiner certains concepts et techniques de jeu de la théâtre-danse classique indienne (plus précisément, Orissi et Kathakali), basé sur la traduction poétique du mot dans le geste corporel. Nous allons se questionner sur la pertinence de cette discussion pour un théâtre qui cherche à se démarquer d'un modèle logocentrique, dans une perspective interculturelle.

Mots-clés: **Travail de l'Acteur. Interculturalisme. Théâtre-Danse Classique Indienne. Kathakali. Orissi.**

RESUMO – A Dramaturgia do Corpo no Teatro Indiano como Visível Poesia – No presente artigo, discute-se o conceito de *dr̥śya kāvya* (visível poesia) da tradição cênica indiana como proposta de dramaturgia do corpo. Partindo do impacto que as tradições cênicas asiáticas provocaram no teatro europeu no século XX, são analisados alguns conceitos e técnicas de atuação do teatro-dança clássico indiano (em particular, Orissi e Kathakali), baseadas na tradução da palavra em gesto corporal. Questiona-se também a relevância dessa discussão para um teatro que busca distanciar-se de um modelo logocêntrico, numa perspectiva intercultural.

Palavras-chave: **Trabalho do Ator. Interculturalismo. Teatro-Dança Clássico Indiano. Kathakali. Orissi.**

Introduction

Antonin Artaud (1984, p. 51-53) defines the scene's "concrete physical language" – "[...] that is addressed, first of all, to the senses instead of being addressed primarily to the mind as the language of words does" – as a "poetry of space"; and cites the Balinese Theatre as an effective example of the poetry he sought. Indian classical¹ tradition, in its turn, defines theater as *drśya kāvya* – literally meaning visible poetry – distinguishing it from literature. Drawing cross lines between these concepts, this article discusses the dramaturgy of the body in the Indian classical dance-theater as a theme, to reflect upon the relationship between physical action and words in the art of the actor.

Besides revisiting concepts such as "lyrical actor" and "body-orchestra" (Vescovi, 2007, p. 166-167), "credible body", "credibility" and "readability" of the action (Ruffini, 1996, p. 8 10), which provide a broader theoretical contribution for the subject, the discussion arises from the singular intercultural experience of this article's authors, acquired in over twenty years of research between the East and the West, particularly in the practice of the Indian classical dance-theaters Kathakali, a male style original from Kerala, and Orissi², a style from the state of Odisha. This research began at the Teatro Tascabile di Bergamo (TTB), one of the historic Italian theater groups. It is recognized as an important theater-laboratory on the art of the actor in Europe, which stands out for the Eastern theater's theoretical and practical study³ and for the street theater performances⁴. Following theater-laboratories emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, the Italian group is a significant example when it comes to adopting Eastern techniques for the development of its own theatrical language strongly based on the idea of *drśya kāvya*.

Asian Theatres Influence in Europe's Theatre-Laboratories

According to Mirella Schino (2012), the concept of theater-laboratory, far from being a point of reference or representing a model to be followed, is a certain kind of mental orientation that characterized certain groups emerged in the second half of the 20th century in Europe. Its most emblematic examples are the Teatr Laboratorium of Jerzy Grotowski, the Centre

International de Recherche Théâtrale of Peter Brook and the Odin Teatret of Eugenio Barba. The meaning of *theater-laboratory* is related to some key words: *training*, actor's permanent activity, independently of preparations for specific performances; *body*, understood as the physical expression commonly associated to a symbolic language; *pedagogy*, denominating autonomous processes of the actor's training and, for more mature groups, the transmission of practical knowledge.

Based on these keywords, it is possible to establish a direct connection between theater groups emerged in Europe in the second half of the 20th century and the period of the Great Reform⁵ of the Western theater in the beginning of the same century. Such connection is a feature of the theater-laboratory tradition. The person who inaugurates this lineage is, certainly, Stanislavski, especially regarding the work accomplished in his theatrical studios. Afterwards, some other names emerge and, as the Russian master, they were concerned with issues beyond performances preparation: Vakhtangov, Meyerhold, Copeau, Decroux, Appia and Craig (Schino, 2012).

Since the early 20th century, the protagonists of the Great Reformation of the Western performing arts started to question the hegemony of text in the theatrical phenomenon and to pursue the idea of a total art, in which all performance elements were in harmony. This movement sought in the East one of its main sources of inspiration, because in Asian performing arts, the actor is the core of the performance and combines, in his/her performance, word, action and musicality. After the first attendances of European audiences to Asian performances by the end of the 19th century, the Eastern dance-theater provoked, during the 20th century, so many and such significant reflections that it is no exaggeration to say that the contact with this spectacular reality changed the way of thinking the performing arts in the West (Savarese, 1992).

We can consider that the interest in the Asian theater, especially regarding the art of the actor, is also a common trait that has run through and along the theater-laboratories' researches from the Great Reform up to the present days. While the glimpse of the Eastern theater served as a counterpoint to the Great Reform protagonists in criticizing the European logocentric bourgeois theater, the Asian one represented a source of learning staging

and performance precise techniques for groups of the 20th century's second half.

The beginning of the interculturalism in the performing arts was, however, marked by the lack of the real knowledge about realities whose vision provoked the thought. This is so because the seminal intercultural experiences of the protagonists of the Great Reform of the Western theater were based on fleeting contacts with the Asian performing art on European stages. Very properly, Savarese (1992, p. XXXII) defines the reflections arisen from such contacts as “sort of fruitful misunderstandings”. These would say more about European artists who saw in the Eastern theater the materialization of their own theatrical utopia, than about Asian theaters they had watched.

Similarly, in the introduction of the book on Yoga, Mircea Eliade (1996, p. 9) points to the broad horizon and, at the same time, to the limits which confront us when we approach the knowledge of an “exotic spirituality” and states that:

The discovery of India is still in progress, and nothing entitles us to suppose that it is nearing its end. For the analysis of a foreign culture mainly reveals what was sought in it or what the seeker was already prepared to discover. The discovery of India will not be accomplished until the day the creative forces of the West shall have run irremediably dry.

The “discovery of India”, as described by Eliade (1996, p. 9), is characterized by attitudes and approach methods that respond to particular problems of the European culture in its different historical moments. Despite this limitation, which characterized the entire European Orientalism, the knowledge of Asia has evolved, mainly in the 20th century, allowing that certain ethnocentric attitudes were overcome. The current relationship of Europe (and more recently of the United States) with the so called Third World is, however, historically associated to the colonialist expansion, which began in the 16th century and ended in the 19th and 20th centuries with nationalist movements for independence. The European interculturalism arose from these colonialist assumptions, contaminated by the Orientalism,

[...] that is, a way of relating with the East based on the special place it occupies in the Western European experience. The East is not only adjacent to Europe, it is also where the biggest, the richest and the oldest European colonies are based; it is the source of European languages and civilizations; it is the main competitor in the cultural field; it is one of the most recurrent and rooted symbols of the Diverse. And yet, the East contributed, by contrast, to define the image, the idea, the personality and the experience of Europe (or the West) (Said, 2004, p. 11).

As well as the knowledge about the Indian thought advanced in Europe, contacts with Asian performing arts became increasingly intense. Over the last fifty years, great artificers of European performing arts, such as Jerzy Grotowski and Eugenio Barba, created more profound and lasting ties with Asia. These involved many trips – some of them of extended periods –, experience exchanges and artistic collaborations. The search for technical improvement detached from performance preparation found inspiration in the traditional Asian theater actors' training. Other groups that emerged in the period, such as the Teatro Tascabile di Bergamo, influenced by these experiences, followed the same course.

The approach of TTB to the forms of the Indian classical dance-theater began in 1977 and was impelled, at first, by the necessity of “achieving techniques” of the art of the actor (Vescovi, 2007, p. 84). Over the decades, from a deep theoretical and practical research, which included annual study periods in India with its actors, Renzo Vescovi, TTB's director, conceived certain performance notions strongly influenced by the plunge into the practice of Indian theater. These became keynotes for the group's work in developing its own theatrical language.

Learning directly from Indian gurus, especially the styles Orissi (with Aloka Panikar) and Kathakali (with John Kalamandalam)⁶, the Italian actors of the TTB provided Vescovi with the basis for the development of two complementary concepts: the lyrical actor and body-orchestra. Here, it concerns us to emphasize, based in such notions, and inspired by the art of the Indian actor, how Vescovi approaches the body language to the poetic language:

The ‘lyrical’ actor constructs his/her specific density as the Eastern actor does. One of the main features that sets up such density is perhaps the art of

movement of the *body-orchestra*, organized accordingly to the technique of counterpoint, or of concert.

What, perhaps better than any other parallel, may illustrate the notion of *body-orchestra* is a possible analogy with the poetic organization of language. According to Jakobson's famous definition – about the conscious use of formal characteristics of poetic language, particularly the rhythm and phonosymbolism – the lyrical actor enhances the organizational capacity of his/her own body dancing energy, and grants it to the audience by setting different levels of elaboration of his/her various body parts in a simultaneous match. Concretely, this happens by dividing body segments into their minimum units, aiming at a progressive structuring doubly articulated (from phonemes to words and from these to speech) (Vescovi, 2007, p. 166-167, emphasis added)⁷.

***Dṛśya Kāvya* and Poetry of Space**

A specific protagonist of the Great Reform was Antonin Artaud, who left a strong mark on the theater history, not for carrying out performances, but for his writings about a “possible theater” (Taviani, 1995, p. 31). Artaud did not form a theater-laboratory, but proposed the construction of the human beings from the body, releasing it from its automatism through “theatrical tools” (Ruffini, 2012, p. 90).

At a conference at Sorbonne in December 10th, 1931, Artaud (1984, p. 50-51) wondered:

Why is that in theater, at least in theater as we know it in Europe or rather in the West, everything specifically theatrical, that is, everything that defies expression in speech, in words [...] is relegated to the background? [...] Why is it that the Western theater (I say Western because fortunately there are others, like the Oriental theater, which have managed to retain intact the idea of theater, whereas in the West this idea, like everything else, has been prostituted) cannot conceive theater under another aspect other than a theater of dialogue?

Entitled as *Mise en Scène and Metaphysics*, in *The Theater and Its Double* (Artaud, 1984), the text is marked by Artaud's revolt against the logocentric view that became a determining factor in the Western theatrical tradition from Aristotle until the 19th century and that subjugated the scene – “[...] peripheral place of redundant exteriority, of body sensuality, of insta-

bility, in short, of theatricality” – to the text – “refuge of the immutable sense of interpretation and soul of the play” (Pavis, 1998, p. 487-488).

Artaud (1984, p. 51-52) claims “a physical and concrete place” with its own language for the scene, “a specific concrete and physical language of the stage”. In his view, this is the “material and substantial language by which theater may be differentiated from speech”, and defines this language as “poetry of space”:

[...] I say that there is *a poetry of the senses*, as there is a poetry of the language, and that this physical and concrete language to which I allude is truly theatrical only insofar as the thoughts it expresses transcend the spoken language. [...] This language designed for the senses must be concerned from the beginning with satisfying them. [...] And this allows the replacement of the poetry of the language by a *poetry of space* which will be resolved precisely in the realm of all that does not belong strictly to words (emphasis added).

As an example of his conception of “poetry of space”, Artaud (1984, p. 52-53) cites the Balinese Theatre, which he attended in August 1931, in the Paris Colonial Exposition. When Artaud identifies in the Balinese theater – and, by extension, in the Eastern theater – the “poetry of space” he had been seeking, the “misunderstanding” is revealed as particularly “fruitful” (taking up previously quoted words by Savarese⁸) if compared with the concept of *dr̥śya kāvya* (visible poetry) described in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, famous Indian philosopher Abhinavagupta’s⁹ remark about the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Kulkarni, 2003).

Nāṭyaśāstra is one of the oldest and the most important treatises on Indian classical dance-theater, whose authorship is attributed to the mythic Bharata Muni. When it was written is not known exactly (the date of its composition is extremely controversial, ranging from the 5th century B.C. to the 6th century A.D., according to different scholars), nor who the author is (there is no historical evidence of Bharata Muni and it is likely that the *Nāṭyaśāstra* had been written for centuries by several anonymous authors)¹⁰. There is not many historical information about the *nāṭya* – the Sanskrit theater described in it. We know, however, that ancient Sanskrit dramas were staged in different parts of India, and *Nāṭyaśāstra* is the record of a much older scenic tradition than the treaty itself¹¹ (Rangacharya, 1998). *Nāṭyaśāstra* was the main reference of Indian artists and scholars, who are

protagonists of the movement known as *revival* (renaissance), which re-invented Indian classical dance-theater tradition in the first half of the 20th century¹².

Aristotle, in the *Poetics* (1987, p. 207), affirms that the performance is “the most exciting, whereas the least artistic and the least to do with the art of poetry” because “the power of tragedy is felt even apart from representation and actors”. Abhinavagupta, in the text restored by Kulkarni (2003), states, on the contrary, that when poetry is not staged, the full aesthetic pleasure, or *rasa* (literally, taste), is not accomplished. Nevertheless, there may be some aesthetic pleasure only in reading if poetry, through its vivid and elegant descriptions, acts as a drama staged in the viewer’s mind. The Indian philosopher considers the *nāṭya* – the Sanskrit theater described in *Nāṭyaśāstra* – as *drśya kāvya*¹³ (visible poetry): a kind of poetic composition aimed at the eyes and the ears, and not only at the ears as a written poetry (considering that the written word, even though it is read with the eyes, is a graphical representation of the spoken word, uttered by the mouth and perceived by the ear). The concept of *drśya kāvya* combines the visible and the poetic so that the mixture’s flavor is different from the taste of each of two elements separately.

The nāṭya – the-theater-that-dances-words – and the naṭa - the-actor-who-dances-words

According to *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Rangacharya, 2003, p. 43), Gods’ actions are naturally fair, but men’s actions require a conscious effort. Therefore, all the details of these actions must be strictly prescribed. This sort of care with the details becomes even more important when men try to play the role of gods and heroes on the stage. The appropriate behavior for this type of acting is the *nāṭyadharmī*, in which all actions are coded and have a precise symbolism. In *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the movements of the various parts of the body (Rangacharya, 2003, p. 83-90), the walking (Rangacharya, 2003, p. 101-11) and the body postures are detailed as in a dance choreography. One example of these body postures are the 108 *karaṇas* (Rangacharya, 2003, p. 23-31) that describe poses depicted in statues and decorations of various temples in India, such as the Konarak in Odisha and the Citambaram in Tamil Nadu.

This description of actions' choreography reveals a specific trait of the Indian theatrical culture, which does not establish a clear difference between the concepts of actor and dancer. The words *naṭa* and *naṭaka* are usually translated as actor and drama respectively. Both words derive from the Sanskrit root *nrit*, whose meaning is dance. *Nāṭya* designates a spectacular reality that is much closer to a "danced theater" than to a "spoken theater". Thus, *nāṭya*'s translation should be not only "the art of theater", but rather "the art of theater-that-dances" (Savarese, 1992, p. 173).

The art of *naṭa*, as described in *Nāṭyaśāstra*, includes the use of voice. This treatise contains chapters that address "verbal representation and prosody" (Rangacharya, 2003, p. 116-119) and "rules on the use of languages" (Rangacharya, 2003, p. 138-147). Nevertheless, in Orissi and Kathakali, actors do not speak on the scene, as well as in most current styles of Indian classical dance-theater¹⁴. The poetic text becomes song's lyrics sung by the singer of the small orchestra that shares the scene with the dancer. The choreographic composition mechanism of these theater-dance styles is a stylized pantomime with logic similar to the sign language of deaf people: every word of the song's lyrics corresponds to a coded gesture, a *hasta*¹⁵, which has a precise form and meaning, expressing an idea, a sense, like a living ideogram.

Artaud (1984, p. 53-54), in *Mise en Scène and Metaphysics*, refers to a kind of "non-corrupted pantomime" as "a form of poetry of space":

And I would like to speak for a moment about that other aspect of *pure theatrical language* which has nothing to do with speech, that language of *signs, gestures and attitudes which have an ideographic value* as they exist in certain pantomimes that have not been corrupted. By *pantomime that has not been corrupted*, I mean a direct pantomime in which the gestures, instead of representing *words or sentences' bodies* as in our European pantomime, which is already old with only its 50 years old [...] *represent ideas, mental attitudes, aspects of nature in an effective, concrete manner*, that is, by always evoking natural objects or details, like that Oriental language in which night is represented by a tree on which a bird has already closed one eye and starts to close the other (emphasis added).

It has already been pointed out how Artaud's fruitful misunderstandings¹⁶ on the Balinese theater have no direct relationship with the reality of the Asian theater. However, precisely because of the fertility of his thoughts,

it will be allowed an exercise of checking if his concept of “non-corrupted pantomime” could be applied to the Indian classical dance-theater. When referring to this pantomime as “pure theatrical language” with “signs, gestures and attitudes which have an ideographic value” that “represent ideas, mental attitudes, aspects of nature in an effective, concrete manner”, the statement would be correct. However, it would be inaccurate to assume that this language does not represent “words, sentences’ bodies.”

In Indian classical dance-theater, the relationship between the gesture of the actor and the text sung by the singers is so close, we could say that for the Indian actor/dancer the word is essential. In his/her action, text intertwines with music and with all the other elements of the scene. Nāṭyaśāstra assigns central importance to the word, contrary to the common sense that often describes the Eastern theater as a theater of the body.

One (an actor) should be very particular about words, because words are the body of dramatic art. Gesture, costumes and makeup, along with the expression of emotions, are secondary as they only clarify the meaning of words. The Śāstra-s are made up of words; they depend on words; so there is nothing more important than the word. Word is the source (root) of everything (Rangacharya, 2003, p. 116).

In *dr̥śya kāvya*, the actor creates a new visible sense that is combined to the sound sense of the poetry’s words, through a coordinated work of the whole body in accordance to the song’s rhythm and melody. This intimate relationship between gesture and word is not a contradiction to the fact that this silent language points to word boundaries. We agree with Quilici (2015, p. 56-57) when he states that the physical language based on non-verbal signs, as pointed by Artaud in his writings on the Balinese theater, cannot be easily translated into a logical and discursive language. Such language proposes the interaction with a certain meaning emptiness that welcomes experiences which are not necessarily grasped by words. In Indian classical dance-theater, however, that body language cannot prescind words, but instead weaves, using them, new meanings related to the ineffable.

The silent spaces, experiences lacking encoding, consciousness stains that emerge from language cracks and fissures are valued as they are. It is from this experience that one chooses the language, that is, the language will germinate this emptiness (Quilici, 2015, p. 57).

Reading the Action, Believing the Action – the dramaturgy of the body in the Indian classical dance-theater

Facing so many possible approaches to the notion of the dramaturgy of the body, a distinction between two aspects in the actor's action – as proposed by Ruffini (1996) – is suggested: readability and credibility. This distinction is of immediate semantic evidence and can be considered implicit in researches on the art of the actor at least since the 20th century. “On the other side of the footlights, the spectator reacts *by reading* the meaning of the [actor's] action, but also reacts *by believing* the logic of the action on the scene” (Ruffini, 1996, p. 10). Credibility and readability are independent aspects present in the actor's action; it is not about establishing a hierarchy between them, but to understand that the pathways that lead to one and to the other are autonomous. “Readability is a semantic issue, while credibility is an organic one. It is not to be explained; it should be experienced” (Ruffini, 1996, p. 12).

According to Ruffini (1996, p. 11), the 20th century theater historiography privileged the pathway of readability, for instance, through an interpretation of Stanislavsky's psychotechnics, more as an analysis of the character, than as a stimulus to the actor's organic nature. He also states that this privilege almost canceled from historiography a “[...] science of the actor, not aimed at constructing codes, but at the reconstruction of life, despite the scene's codes and conventions” although this “science of the actor” has certainly existed.

It is possible to affirm that “the actor's ‘credible body’ corresponds to the pre-expressive level” (Ruffini 1996, note 4, p. 11), in which the actor constructs his/her presence, regardless of what it expresses, or of the will to express something (Barba, 1993). For Ruffini (1996), the pre-expressive level, or the credible body, is a consciously objective pursued by actors of Eastern scenic traditions, whereas for the Western actor, this goal may not necessarily be deliberated.

The language of the *hastas* (gestures)¹⁷, in Orissi and Kathakali, as well as in other styles of Indian classical dance-theater, presents an interesting feature in the relationship between readability and credibility: the great majority of spectators, whether in India or in other countries, is not able to

understand what the actors *say* through the *hastas* nor what the singers say, because the texts sang are usually in Sanskrit, a dead language, that hinders the readability of the actions. On the credibility's pathway, however, the watcher is captured by the actor's presence, by the accuracy of his/her actions. The density of the poetic language, embodied in the actor's body, allows different reading levels for diverse spectators, according to their own cultural references.

The Sanskrit word that defines this type of activity is *abhinaya*, formed by the prefix *abhi* (towards) and the root *ni* (to lead). *Abhinaya* defines the expressive means used by the actor to lead the author's words to become *drśya kāvya* (visible poetry). And, they are divided into four parts: *āṅgika abhinaya* (body movements), *vācika abhinaya* (voice use), *āhārya abhinaya* (costumes and makeup) and *sāttvika abhinaya* (mental states) (Gomes, 2007).

From all *abhinayas*, the *āṅgika abhinaya* is key for the Indian actor/dancer. This is so because the relationship with the word is manifested in sign language. The body brings costumes into life, and feelings are demonstrated in body actions. The *āṅgika abhinaya* is divided into two categories: *nṛtta*, pure dance without narrative content – whose readability is limited to pure aesthetic fruition; and *nṛtya*, expressive dance, which tells a story and expresses a specific state of mind – its readability is related to the spectator's reading level.

The language of *hastas* (gestures)¹⁸ is a language like any other, with its own words and syntax. The relationship of this language with the poetic text is not mechanical, but complex and articulated. In different styles of Indian dance-theater, this language is articulated with very specific characteristics like a specific dialect. For our reflection, the styles Orissi and Kathakali are taken as examples.

Poetry in Action in Orissi

One of the main texts used as the basis in Orissi choreographic compositions is *Gītagovinda* – *The singing shepherd* – a lyric-dramatic poem of the 12th century by Jayadeva. Composed in Sanskrit (though controversies point to an original version in proto-Bengali language), *Gītagovinda* is one of the great texts of the Indian literature, besides being the inspiration

source of medieval and contemporary Vaishnavism (Boccali, 1982; Miller, 1984; Vatsyayan, 1981).

Gītagovinda tells about the romantic meetings and disagreements between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, as an allegory of the love between the human soul and the divinity (Boccali, 1982; Miller, 1984). The shepherdess and the god are the most representative protagonists of *bhakti* (devotional love), a religious movement of popular origin centered on the personal nature of the deity's devotion (Khokar, M.; Khokar, A., 2011). Kṛṣṇa is Viṣṇu's incarnation in charge of saving the world from Kali Yuga – the age of darkness and destruction. In Gītagovinda, in addition to being a deity, Kṛṣṇa presents himself in his dramatic hero role (*nāyaka*), and is complemented by the heroin (*nāyikā*) Rādhā, his favorite lover among the shepherdesses (Miller, 1984).

The first steps of this poetic text's function transposition, from ritualistic to a support for artistic performance, happened in the context of the temple of Lord Jagannath, another form of Viṣṇu, as well as Kṛṣṇa (Khokar, M.; Khokar, A. 2011). The ritual without witnesses was held in its early days by god's servants (the *maharis*) in the *sanctum sanctorum*, moved to the temple's dance hall (*nāṭyamandapa*) in solo performances with major use of gestures. Finally, a more spectacular version was presented in festivals around the temple, with boys (the *goti puas*) acting as Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā and the other shepherdesses. It is possible that, to some extent, the Gītagovinda was designed to be performed (Khokar, M.; Khokar, A., 2011; Miller, 1984; Vatsyayan, 1981).

Orissi was re-created in the core of the Indian dance *revival* movement¹⁹ based on several references: sculptures and embossments of temples, paintings, manuscripts and classic treatises (Nāṭyaśāstra; Abhinaya Chandrika and Abhinaya Darpana Prakasha), folk dramas and especially the dance of *maharis* (god Jagannath's servants in the temple Puri, Orissa) and *goti puas*, boys dancing with female costumes. The technical systematization of Orissi began in 1940 and the recognition of it as a classical style took place in the 1950s, thanks to the collaboration of numerous teachers, students, scholars, dancers, organizations and institutions. The pioneering contribution in this process came from the *gurus* Pankaj Charan Das, Kelu Charan Mahapatra, Deba Prasad Das and Mayadhar Raut, who have in

common the direct influence of *maharis*, *goti puas*, and the artistic training in the theatrical company Annapurna (Khokar, M.; Khokar, A., 2011). Since then, Orissi lost its ritualistic function to become an artistic fact. In a classic format performance of this style, a single actress-dancer wearing in traditional costumes plays all the characters in the story, while the side of the scene is occupied by musicians of the small orchestra composed of *pakhawaj* (two skins drum), *harmonium* (a small pump organ), *sitar* (string instrument), *manjira* (pair of cymbals) and *venu* (transverse flute) (Raut, 2007).

The routines of Orissi expressive dance (*nr̥tya*) use overlapping metaphorical resources; the poetic word is translated into the poetic body through a formalized and coded body language. This translation come into being by combining the techniques of *padartha abhinaya* – song lyrics translated into gestures, word by word – and of *sāñcarī bhāva* – improvisation moment, which uses the body language to follow the general meaning of the text, but not literally (Vescovi, 2007). Both techniques have as main feature the *hastas* – hand gestures. As well as these, other parts of the body – the head and eyes – have coded positions, form and meaning, which are established in classic treaties.²⁰ Also, as part of the Orissi body vocabulary, there are postures, attitudes and ways of walking to represent gods and heroes (Kṛṣṇa playing transverse flute; Kāma shooting love arrows; Gaṇeśa shaking his trunk; Rāma wielding his bow), feminine beauty care (looking oneself in the mirror, braiding the hair, putting the sign on the forehead, wear the sari), animals, musical instruments, and others.

Gestures (*hastas*) used in Orissi are classified as gestures with one hand (*asamyuta*) and gestures with two hands combined (*samyuta*). In addition to their significance and unique shapes, these gestures can acquire dozens of other meanings, according to their use – the so-called *viniyogas* (Coomaraswamy; Duggirala, 2003). Typically, the technique of *padartha abhinaya* is used in the sung parts, and the *sāñcarī bhāva* is developed in instrumental parts or in moments of chorus repetition (Vescovi, 2007). Each musical composition in Orissi follows a *rāga* (musical scale) that denotes specific features, such as a feeling or a season, providing the precise atmosphere for the scene (Martinez, 1997).

To illustrate the relationship between text and action in the Indian classical dance-theater, consider a choreography of Orissi privileging *nr̥tya* (expressive dance) created by one of the founders of the style, the *guru* Ma-yadhar Raut. Known as *Yahi Mādhava* (Go away, Mādhava), the choreography became some real *pièce de résistance* of this classic style repertoire. The poetic text that gave rise to the choreography corresponds to the Eighth Part of the *Gītagovinda*, entitled *embarrassed* (Miller, 1984) or *discovered* (Boccali, 1982) *Kṛṣṇa*, in which Rādhā's jealousy – the god's favorite lover – reaches its apex.

In *Yahi Mādhava*, Rādhā is the ultimate expression of *khaṇḍitā nāyikā*²¹ – the offended heroine – in the entire *Gītagovinda*. Rādhā's entrance on the scene, wielding the oil lamp with which she seeks Kṛṣṇa in the night darkness, is accompanied by the instrumental introduction of the song. A small *hastas* (gestures) composition continues without the accompaniment of the song's words. It could be translated as: why is Kṛṣṇa not here with me? Then, Rādhā falls asleep in a stylized resting pose. The synchrony between music and action becomes explicit when the sudden flute intervention causes a surprise reaction in the actress-dancer, as if Rādhā was awakened by the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, who is approaching. But as soon as she sees him, Rādhā notices the reason for his absence. Kṛṣṇa's body reveals signs of the previous night of love with another woman, which the actress-dancer describes with a series of gestures. The arrival of the hero marks the space and dialectic convention established between the two characters. In an imaginary way, Kṛṣṇa remains positioned diagonally across the proscenium, towards where the actress-dancer moves. From this preamble, the choreography continues with the technique of *padārtha abhinaya* (word by word translation). It presents different moments of the offended heroine who mistreats the hero/lover while as a fervent devotee – as an expression of *bhakti*²² – Rādhā preaches to the god Kṛṣṇa to come help her in this desperate moment. As an example of *sāñcarī bhāva* (improvisation) in *Yahi Mādhava*, besides Rādhā's entrance on the scene, there is the moment when the heroine mistreats the lover, throwing at his feet the gifts she had prepared for him (scented water, flower garland etc.) (Vescovi, 1981).

Each stanza of the Chant XVII, in which the choreography and the song *Yahi Mādhava* are based, is concluded with the chorus: *Yahi Mādhava*,

yahi Keśava, ma vada kaitava vadam. The translation from Sanskrit of this verse is: Go away, Mādhava, go away, Keśava, do not to say false words (Jayadeva, 1982). The same verse is repeated twice in the song's chorus and, in each time, the dancer performs a different composition of gestures, revealing several translation possibilities of words into gestures. Thus, in the first time, the expression *Yahi Mādhava* (Go away *Mādhava*, Kṛṣṇa's epithet, related to spring) is translated by *sūcī hasta*, indicating Kṛṣṇa in menacingly manner. The expression *yahi Keśava* (go away *Keśava*: Kṛṣṇa's epithet, related to the episode in which the demon Keśī is killed) is translated by the two hands in *catura hasta*, expressing destruction. The expression *ma vada* (do not tell) is translated by *patāka hasta*, with a hand over her mouth and the other waving negatively, denoting speech impediment. *Kaitava* (liars) is translated by *kartarīmukha hasta*, denoting the serpent's tongue with the two ends. *Vadam* (words) is translated by *probhodika hasta*, to mean speech, what comes out of the mouth. In the verse's repetition, variant gestures and meanings are used for the same words. For example, the pose of Kṛṣṇa playing the flute is used to translate the epithet *Keśava*.

Not only in Orissi, but in several Indian classic dance-theater styles, all the attitude of the actress-dancer is shaped by pre-established forms. As well as Savarese said (1992, p. 340), one of the secrets of Asian dance-theaters is not in the movement virtuosity, like the turns and leaps in Western classical ballet, but in the cessation of the movement, "is not the movement, but the final pose [...] that decides on its beauty and vitality". Or, as Clarice Lispector observes (1999, p. 162.) in her *Notes on Hindu dance*: "The dancer makes hieratic and squared gestures, then stops. Pausing in many moments is also part of it. It is the dance of plopping: movements stop things. The dancer goes from one immobility to another, giving me time for stupefaction".

In Orissi, especially in choreographies that privilege *nṛtya* (expressive dance), the passage of a gesture to another – which includes coded positions of head, eyes, torso, arms, hands, legs and feet – determines the finishing quality of each pose. This technical rigor is what enables the gestures' readability for connoisseurs of the *hastas'* language (as it may happen in India, among critics, experts and the passionate audience), and their credibility for a lay audience (the majority, even in India), returning to the terms' distinc-

tion proposed by Ruffini²³. Even when it is not possible to decode the meaning of the *hastas* related to contexts and characters of the Indian literary, philosophical and religious tradition, there is beauty, vitality and stupefaction that make the gestures credible to the sensitive spectator.

As in other styles of Indian classical dance-theater, in Orissi, it is the body that speaks. However, this language is not prose, but poetry. Poetry frees both the gesture and the word that inspired it for a range of meaning possibilities. This same idea is present in Paz (1982), who expands the idea of poetry beyond the literary style, and the word beyond its semantic value, making the word poetic, a free conception that can be applied to any work of art. This freedom is the poetry itself, which in this respect differs from prose:

In prose, the word tends to be identified with one of its possible meanings at the expense of the others: bread to mean bread; and wine to mean wine. This operation is analytical and is not done without any violence, since the word has several latent meanings, there is a certain potential of direction and meaning. The poet, however, never goes against the word's ambiguity. In poem, the language retrieves its primitive originality, mutilated by the reduction prose and everyday speech imposed to it. [...] The word, finally released, shows all its entrails, all its senses and allusions, as a ripe fruit or a rocket about to explode in the sky. The poet sets his/her matter free. The prose writer imprisons it (Paz, 1982, p. 26).

Take, for example, the gesture used in the chorus of *Yahi Mādhava* – described above – to translate the word lie: the gesture used alludes to the serpent's tongue with two ends, symbolizing the opposite of the truth, which is univocal; or yet, it could suggest that, for love, the lie can be as lethal as the reptile's poison. The relationship between word and gesture raises something that is not given: a poetic image.

[...] the statue's stone, red color in the painting, the word of the poem is not simply stone, color, word: they embody something else that transcends and surpasses them. Without losing their primary values, their original weight, they are also like bridges that lead us to the other side, doors that open to another world of meanings, which are impossible to be expressed by the mere language. Being ambivalent, the poetic word is fully what it is – rhythm, color, meaning – and yet, it is something else: image. Poetry converts the stone, the color, the word and the sound into images. And this second feature, the fact that they are images, and the strange power to

arouse in the listener or spectator constellations of images, turns into poems all the works of art (Paz, 1982, p. 27).

Body and Word in Kathakali

In Kathakali's *āṅgika abhinaya* (acting with the body)²⁴, the work with the face is extremely refined and elaborate, even in relation to other Indian styles. Movements of the eyes (*netrabhinaya*) and of other parts of the face – such as lips, cheeks, and eyebrows – are used on a voluntary, accurate and coded basis to express feelings (*rasabhinaya*). Orissi, for example, has specific exercises related to *netrabhinaya* as the gaze direction, as well as the rhythmic movements of the eyes are also very important in this style. Regarding the *rasabhinaya*, however, there is not in Orissi style such precise and specific directions for the movements of the facial muscles, as there is in Kathakali. In this style, the coordination between gesture and pupils' movement is essential in the expression of *hastas*. The look of the Kathakali's actor is one of the most important resources, not only to direct the spectator's attention, but also to express the meaning of words.

Despite the extreme formalization, there is great interpretive freedom in the musical and body language of Kathakali. The *padam* (texts) of Kathakali are composed in verse, sung by singers and embodied by the actor through the expressive dance (*nṛtya*). Each verse is repeated a certain number of times to allow the actor to express its meaning. The number of these repetitions is not fixed, so the time spent to perform each word's gestures may vary within certain limits according to the development of its meaning. The actor may *play* with the action's rhythm within the rhythm of the music, constructing, this way, his personal interpretation.

Even in a *padam* (text)²⁵ we have the freedom to interpret, but without breaking the music. We cannot interfere with the music. You have to read in between the line. So, in each line you have to read and fill with something. Like that, even in a *padam* you have the possibility to interpret new things. [...] You have to follow [the rules] strictly in the school, in the *kalarī*²⁶. But when you go to the stage, there must be something new, because you are an artist. You are not a machine (Nambudiri, 2007, p. 92).

Musicians must be able to follow the actor making, at every moment, the necessary changes to add value to the gestures. Music is always present and has strong connection with the dramaturgy. The *rāga* (musical scale),

the *tāla* (rhythm) and the *kāla* or *laya* (time) of the music are determined by the *bhava* (feeling) in every scene, at every moment. A change in the dramatic action determines a musical change. The musical accompaniment of Kathakali is composed entirely of percussion instruments: two drums – *chenda* and *maddalam* – and two cymbals – *chenkala* and *ilattalam* – the latter are played by two singers, solely responsible for the melody. The work of Kathakali's musician is not limited only to music, it also implies the scenic action. The interplay between musicians and actors must be complete. For a perfect symbiosis between the singers' voice and the actors' gestures, the first, besides singing, must interpret the characters' speeches, and the latter must act dancing, even when sitting. All gestures, actions, facial and eyes expressions are performed strictly within the rhythm in continuous dialogue with the drums, which help to illustrate the meaning of the actions and enrich their effect. When both the actor and the musician are able to create the right level of harmony, we have the impression that the drums' sound emanates from the actor's body.

I could say that more than the actor the drummer must be good. [For that some actors want to play only with] a specific drummer. Like that they can convey the meaning better, it is easier. [...] When I move the hand, [the drummer] has to know that I will look there. By the whole body he gets the signal, he gets the meaning. Like that he can give me the good sound effect. [...] The drummers have to follow the actor. Kathakali kottal is drumming for Kathakali; Kathakali pattu is singing for Kathakali. So, the first thing is the acting, the actor (Nambudiri, 2007, p. 91).

When we use words in everyday life, we use a number of non-verbal signs – breathing, eye movements, gestures, intonations – linked to mental processes acting within us that express meanings beyond words. The actor's craft is based on this non-verbal language. This is because the spectator will only understand the words' deeper meaning if the actor is able to construct an artistic language analogous to everyday life's nonverbal communication, if he/she is able to express at the same time what the words say and what they cannot say. If we look at the issue from this point of view, we note that the Kathakali actor's craft does not differ, in its essence, from that of an actor who uses his voice to say the words of a text. The difference is the language level: in Kathakali, and in other forms of Indian classical theater, in

addition to the language of words sung by the singer, there is also the plan of gesture/body language dialoguing with the words sung.

When a word is represented with the *hastas*, there are three levels of meaning: the first is the *karta*, the subject of the representation, the denotative meaning of the word; then the *karma*, the action that reveals its intrinsic nature, its main features; finally, there is the *kriya*, the specific actions of the subject in the drama's context. Let's take an example to explain how these three semantic levels are developed in practice. Composing the image of the lotus flower, the actor first shows the flower that blooms: he begins the movement with hands closed, then opens them slowly, joining the wrists and putting his fingers as if they were the petals of the flower. The actor looks at the flower represented by his hands and conveys with his eyes and face the happiness that this vision causes, he smells the flower and delights with its scent. At this moment, his eyes make rapid movements, as if they accompanied the movements of a bee flying around the flower until it lands on it, sucks its nectar and flies away. In this case, the *karta* is represented by the hands in the shape of a flower; the *karma* by its blossoming and by the actor who looks and feels its perfume, while the *kriya* (in the flower's case is passive) are the bee's actions represented by the actor only with his eyes (Gomes, 2007).

The possibility of developing more widely or not these three levels of expression is linked to the importance a specific word has within the discourse and the story. The small details of expression, of facial and eye movements, in tune with the gestures, amplified by the prodigious performance technique of Kathakali, are the instruments to interpret, along with the musicians, ideas and feelings that the actor's imagination suggests. This is so because, as stated by Meyerhold, "[...] it is not just about movements, and not only about words, but also about the brain... The brain has to be in first place because it is the real engine of the action's goal, the brain is what guides, what determines the sequence of movements, their accent and everything else" (Mejerchol'd, 1993, p. 18).

When you use your mind there will be some emphasis. That can be in different levels. If you do one *mudrā*²⁷, in your mind that emphasis will be different time to time. Otherwise the lotus flower will be always the same. But depending on how your mind works, the flower will be different. That is all I can say: the more details of the flower, the smell of the flower... Like that –

if your mind is working, if the people are receiving it – you can develop the *mudrā* (Nambudiri, 2007, p. 101-102).

Beyond the linguistic resources, the *abhinaya* (acting)²⁸ of the Kathakali actor presumes the harmonic motion of the whole body. The idea of involvement of the actor's whole body in the action, claimed by Meyerhold when he states that “[...] every move, even the little finger's, should immediately be reflected in every part of the body” (Mejerchol'd 1993, p. 95), is put into practice with the technique *anusarikiuka*. This word means to follow, to obey and, in Kathakali, it is used to indicate that the body must follow the gesture to give it a greater emphasis.

It should not be something mechanical or exaggerated. In this gesture, the body must do *anusarikiuka* with a small circular motion. When you do it [the gesture] without the body's collaboration, you do it just for the sake of doing it. The gesture must be aided by a small movement of *anusarikiuka* [accompaniment] of the body. Without putting too much air here [points to the chest], without stiffness. You need to relax your body (Nair, 2007, p. 104).

The command of all these techniques, however, is not enough to express the characters' inner life. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Rangacharya, 2003, p. 76) says that emotion is necessary to properly represent the behavior of men, their sorrows and pleasures. Only time can allow an actor to conclude his/her formation, with his/her maturity, his/her observation of life, and also with his/her contact with the masters, with the attendance of many performances and with the formation of his/her aesthetic taste.

Theater as Poetic Word

To conclude our reflection on the dramaturgy of the body in dialogue with the notion of *dr̥śya kāvya* (visible poetry), let us take Paz's considerations (1982, p. 27), previously highlighted²⁹, on the properties the “poetic word” has of generating images, unlike the prose. The density of the poetic language incorporated in the body of the Indian classical dance-theater actor/dancer allows different reading levels for a diversity of spectators, according to their own cultural references. This given density is one that approximates non-verbal theatrical language to the “constellation of images”

raised by the poetic word, and by all the works of art that transcend the verbal language, as described by Paz (1982, p. 26-27).

When considering the dramaturgy of the body as an interrelationship between word and action in the art of the actor, as Paz (1982) puts it, we are attributing to the actor the quality of the poet. The lyrical actor transforms his/her body orchestra³⁰ into poetic language, into poetic word, into credible body³¹ that moves away from readability, reason and from prose. The suggestion of bringing closer the art of the actor and poetry comes via *drśya kāvya* (visible poetry). This is a notion developed in Indian classical dance-theater and structured in *abhinaya* (expressive means used by the actor to carry the words of a poetic text to the spectator), which, in the case of Orissi and Kathakali, favors the *āṅgika abhinaya* (expression through the body). From other pathways, the same suggestion refers to Artaud (1984, p. 52), to his intuitions about the Balinese theater on the “poetry of space”. It indicates that the materiality of the body and of the actor’s gesture compose a language intended more to the senses than to the reason.

Transiting between the Western theater and the Asian theater, we could state that the Indian classical dance-theater had already found, many centuries ago, what Artaud (1984, p. 95) demanded from the Western theater of his time, namely:

The point is not to do away with speech in the theater but to change its function, and above all to reduce its role [...] to change the function of the speech in the theater is to use it in a concrete and spatial sense and of significance in the concrete realm; it is to manipulate it like a solid object and that sets things in motion, first in the air, next in a realm which is infinitely more mysterious and more secret [...]

Could the approach to the dramaturgy of the body in the Indian classical dance-theater propose themes for reflection on the contemporary Brazilian actor’s craft? Could these Eastern acting techniques, apparently so distant from us, be relevant for the theater we do here and now? These are questions that cannot waive the close relationship between research and biography, which is a characteristic of the artistic research. Our personal experience with the Asian theater – strongly marked by the relationship with a specific European theater-laboratory – and the baggage of accumulated knowledge developed the sensitivity that allows us to formulate this ques-

tioning under certain assumptions. Considering the European theatrical interculturalism as a fundamental reference – aware of the European approach's value and limitations – however, at the same time, we wonder how a Brazilian researcher could use these references to think about a possible intercultural relationship between Brazil and India. This, by considering that Asia and Latin America occupy a similar place in the European imagination as representatives of otherness.

In our practical and theoretical research over the last twenty years, we have been searching for an intercultural perspective for the actor's craft that allows us to incorporate Asian performing traditions into Western techniques. With this, we are certain that the richness of the artistic and spiritual heritage is not only relevant, but may be critical to a theater that moves away from a logocentric model.

The modern Western theater, as pointed out by De Marinis (2011, p. 9), is, in its essence, intercultural. That is so, because it springs from the meeting-confrontation of different personal, professional and socio-anthropological identities (artists and spectators). Another aspect of modern Western theater's essence is the transculturalism, as it tends to overcome (when it produces an actual experience) cultural source data, raising questions about the coded identities – individual and collective.

As we have seen, the attempt to bring closer seemingly distant concepts and different cultures is not new in the theatrical context. For now, this article intends to be just a provocation/invitation that may lead to many other developments, contributing to the contemporary discussion about the dramaturgy of the body in the theater both in West and East, in Europe and Asia, in Italy, India, Brazil, in the world.

Notes

- ¹ The use of the word *classical* referring to the Indian traditional art is questionable once it refers to the ancient Greeks' and Romans' art and culture. It is, however, adopted by Indian scholars, who also created criteria to classify the Indian performing demonstrations as classic (*margī*), when they are grounded in ancient treatises tradition – especially Nāṭyaśāstra – or popular (*deśī*) when they do not have such references. Currently, this classification is officially de-

terminated by the Sangeet Natak Akademy – a government institution of performing arts promotion. The Orissi and Kathakali styles are considered classics, alongside with others such as Bharata Natyam, Manipuri, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Mohini Attam and Sattriya (Kothari, 2010).

- ² The names Orissi and Odissi refer to the same Indian classic dance-theater style and can equally be found in specialized literature. In this article, it will be considered the Orissi nomenclature used by Ashish Khokar and Mohan Khokar (2011) and Mohan Khokar (1979), renowned researchers and authors of reference works on the subject, especially the book *The dance Orissi*.
- ³ “They are experts in dancing the Kathakali, with a mastery that makes them to be accepted as experts even in India” (Barba, 1993, p. 218).
“[...] when referring to a 'serious' way of discussing Asian theaters, the TTB is one of the names that comes suddenly to mind” (Schino, 2004, p. 15).
- ⁴ “[...] one of the greatest experts in Europe” (Schino, 1997, p. 316).
- ⁵ According to Schino (2012, p. IX, 196), Great Reform, or *Wielka Reform*, as Polish scholars and theater people say, is the term that seeks to “express the radical changes that took place in the theater in the first three decades of the 20th century”. Some protagonists of the period are Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Craig, Appia, Copeau, Fuchs and Reinhardt, also known as “pedagogue directors”, more interested in research, in studios, schools and ateliers, than attracting the public, and who “established poetic and practices which cannot be confined to one or more spectacles”.
- ⁶ TTB has been working for many years with another Indian dance, Bharata Natyam (with Usha Raghavan). The group conducted experiments with other Asian scenic forms, such as Kuchipudi Indian dance (with Satya Priya Ramana), the Balinese Theatre (with I Made Djimat) and Beijing Opera (with Pei Yan Ling). Nevertheless, Orissi and Kathakali were the starting point of research and remain as main references.
- ⁷ The translation of this and all texts in a foreign language cited in this article is ours.
- ⁸ Cf. p. 157.
- ⁹ Philosopher of Hindu art and religion, who lived in Kashmir (India) between 950-1020 A.D.

- ¹⁰ In this article, we refer to the translations of Nāṭyaśāstra by Aya Rangacharya (2003) and Manomohan Ghosh (1995).
- ¹¹ For further information on the Nāṭyaśāstra, cf. Gomes (2005).
- ¹² During the British colonization, Indian dances, considered obscene, were persecuted and even banned. In the early 20th century, when many of these traditions seemed lost or degenerated, amid the process of independence of India, it arose an Indian culture rescue movement, in which the dance *revival* played an important role. From the 1930' on, the Indian dance-theater has been reinvented by intellectuals and artists, with strong reference to Nāṭyaśāstra tradition and other ancient treaties (Khokar, 1979).
- ¹³ *Dṛśya*: visible, evident, to be seen, worth seeing, beautiful, pleasurable; [...] any visible object [...]. *Kāvya*: endowed with the qualities of the sage or poet, derived from the wise, prophetic, inspired, poetic; [...] poem, composition with a coherent theme of one single author [...] (Monier-Williams, 1994, p. 280, 491).
- ¹⁴ The most representative exception in relation to this aspect of non-use of the spoken voice in Indian theater is Kuttiyattam, considered the closest Indian theatrical form to the Sanskrit theater described in Nāṭyaśāstra. Original of Kerala, the Kuttiyattam is one of the most important influences for the creation of Kathakali.
- ¹⁵ The Indian classical dance-theater uses gestures of tantric ritual to create a language of coded gestures. Tantric cult uses techniques of ritual concentration and of interaction with the divine-based in ritual gestures called *mudrā* (seal, form) and in words called *mantra* (hymn, invocation). In performing arts, these gestures, stripped of their ritual effectiveness, are designated as *hasta* (hand) (Padoux, 2010).
- ¹⁶ Cf. p. 157.
- ¹⁷ Cf. note 15.
- ¹⁸ Cf. note 15.
- ¹⁹ Cf. note 12.
- ²⁰ Cf. note 1.

- ²¹ The Nāṭyaśāstra establishes fourteen kinds of dramatic heroes (*nāyakas*), and eight of heroines (*nāyikās*) (Coomaraswamy, 2000).
- ²² Cf. p. 166.
- ²³ Cf. p. 164.
- ²⁴ Cf. p. 165.
- ²⁵ Dialogue or soliloquies sung by singers and accompanied by musicians, while they are interpreted by actors with *hasta* (gestures). Along with the *sloka* (preludes), they constitute the text (*attakkatha*) of a story in Kathakali.
- ²⁶ *Kalari* is the name given to the space for classes and training of Kathakali.
- ²⁷ In this context, the word *mudrā* is used as a synonym for *hasta*. Cf. note 15.
- ²⁸ Cf. p. 165.
- ²⁹ Cf. p. 171.
- ³⁰ Cf. p. 158-159.
- ³¹ Cf. p. 164.

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