

## **EXPRESSING BODY, EXPERIENCE OF EMOTIONS**

B. HARIHARAN

---

**Abstract:** This paper argues that in *naatyam* (dramatics) the actor's body produces aesthetic cadence that peaks as emotional experience for the *sahrudaya*. The affect that a Kathakali performance produces is a state of sublimity of the mind, unattached to the cares of the world. It is the experience of supreme bliss or *Ānanda*. There is no emptying of emotions on the stage with the words spoken to which the audience might relate. This paper approaches the issue with reference to Kathakali, Kerala's own theatre.

Even as there is a lot of theorising that emerges about the emotive content and communication in theatre, specific emphasis on the body of the actor, modulating in relation to the many accompaniments, merits a closer understanding. Emotions take form in the varying intensities of those modulations that vibrate in relation to the timbre of the dominant aesthetic state the actor's body establishes.

The paper theorises the body of the actor and the emotional affects and discusses the implications of the rigorous training that prepares the body of the actor. To develop the proposed argument the paper discusses in some detail the tradition of the training of the actor in Kathakali and then examines the complexities involved in the productions with special reference to Kottayam Tampuran's *Kirmeeravadhom*, Balakavi Ramasastrikal's *Banayudham* and P. Venugopalan's *Krishnaleela*.

**Keywords:** body, emotional affects, body-consciousness, training, *sahrudaya*, Kathakali, female role, female character, *kalamandalam padmanabhan nair*

In *Kathakali*, Kerala's traditional theatre, the medium of the mind, body and word (sound) come together to actualise the performance. This paper is an attempt to argue that in *naatyam* (dramatics) the actor's body produces aesthetic cadence that peaks as emotional experience for the *sahrudaya*. The word *sahrudaya* does not indicate a passive viewer or audience or the collective response of a mass audience; it describes, in the

words of D. Appukuttan Nair an aesthetic sensibility termed *pratibha* or imaginative insight (“*Rasabhinaya*” 153). The nature of the *sahrudaya* needs emphasis here for Kathakali hinges on *sookshmaabhinaya* (acting that involves every living atom of the body). The affect that a Kathakali performance produces is a state of sublimity of the mind, unattached to the cares of the world. It is the experience of supreme bliss or *aananda*. Obviously, there is no emptying of emotions on the stage normally made possible with the words spoken to which the audience might relate. For what Kathakali exemplifies, is the simultaneity of experiencing the sum total of the affect of the training of the artiste manifest as *prana* (life breath).

In *Natyacharyante Jeevithamudrakal*, the biography of the legendary Pattikkanthody Ramunni Menon who shaped Kathakali into what it is today, Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair and Njayath Balan recall an instance that illustrates best the tenuous link between performance and life breath:

By the time his Kichaka finishes the ‘*Harinakshi*’ *padam* and leaves the stage, his disciples would be in the green room with a fan and a cup of coffee. He was very particular that his disciples hold the flaming torch [illuminating his face] for the ensuing death scene. He would indicate this while his disciples fan him. Sometimes he would add:

“Do you think that I ask you to hold the flaming torch so that my appearance on stage will be brilliant? No, (pointing to his body) when the life breath in this body ceases, you may not be able to see another like this” (47).

The passage that follows asserts the truth of what Pattikkanthody had told his disciples. ‘It can be asserted that no one else has enacted this scene with such exactitude. When we saw his Kichaka draw his breath in the throes of death, it created fear. When Pattikkanthody Asan was on his deathbed, the breathing was not much different. Science does not err. Kichaka dies not with his eyes closed; they bulge’ (47). To understand this performative complex it might do well to turn to the kind of training imparted in Kathakali.

In his book on Kathakali, Phillip Zarrilli has commented on the training of the actor and its bearing on the performance. He writes,

Perfection of the body is necessary to gain the flexibility, balance, control, and strength to shape the body to Kathakali’s unique and difficult style of movement, and to acquire the ability to perform vigorous roles and dances for periods of up to

two hours or more during all-night performances. Only when the fundamental techniques have been so well embedded into the neophyte's bodymind that such techniques are part of his performative body-consciousness, ready-at-hand to be used in the performative moment, can the maturing student eventually create characters, and be ready to give his individual artistic signature to a role' (Zarrilli 66). This specific emphasis on the performative body-consciousness of the actor expressive of the *tauryatrikam* (dance, music and instrumental music collectively) that embodies Kathakali grammar merits a closer understanding. Not surprisingly, emotions take form in varying intensities with respect to the resultant modulations that vibrate in relation to the dominant aesthetic state the actor's body establishes and maintains. The body-consciousness or the establishment and sustenance of an emotional or aesthetic state in a performance requires years of training and conditioning of the body. Even a cursory glance at the nature of training for the actor provides insights into the way the body is prepared to breathe life into the performance. In this regard, Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair's biography of his father is insightful about the rigour of training that shaped not just the performer but the whole system and structure of Kathakali training that followed.

For a sensibility that believes in the axiom that to spare the rod is to spoil the child, the rigorous training that shapes the aspiring student into a promising actor might be harsh and even cruel. The rigour of training and the punishments had once even led the young Ramunni Menon to contemplate suicide. And yet, it is the same training which enabled him to learn to use concepts like *Rasabhinaya* from *Natyasastra* and the art of breath control from renowned scholar-practitioners like Cheriya Kochunnithampuran and Bhagavathar Kunjunnithampuran of Kodungalloor Palace making his art even more expressive. The biography notes that this changed the grammar of Kathakali performances for such knowledge shaped the structure of Kathakali training at Kerala Kalamandalam and set in place a norm for the different dimensions of training and performance.

Phillip Zarrilli recognises the very nature of such a training programme and the way it shapes the actor. He argues that 'the training, structure of performance, and assumptions about the body, bodymind, and character or role which inform what it means 'to become' reveal a process and set of assumptions with some similarities to but also many differences from, that of most contemporary Western actors' (65-66). The method of training and the underlying assumptions about the body, mind, acting, or even the idea of theatre recognises the importance of conditioning the body in specific ways. The basic

training, for instance, extends close to ten years. As part of continuing the training one starts doing *kuttitharam* (small roles) and it is after doing all the small roles, and *idatharam* (medium roles), that one gets *adyavasanam* (full-length roles) in a production. A full-length role will be the achievement of a lifetime ‘where one’s technique has become second nature, and where one’s artistry in playing important roles is recognised as one’s own and is appreciated as such’ (66).

The kind of training of the body like *kalsadhakam* (footwork training), *kannusadhakam* (training of the eyes), body exercises with its roots in Kerala’s martial art tradition, and *uzhichil* (body massage) ensure physical health and help in breath control which, in turn, facilitates control over even the slightest twitch of the eyebrow or the management of energy levels with body postures. What breath control does is channel this vital energy to the specific part of the body used to render the word visual. The way the actor brings to life different gestures with the hands, for example, will depend on the energy levels he brings to bear in the formation of the gesture. The *sahrudaya* experiences here the reverberations of the word in the gestural mode only because of the activation of the energy spots in the body of the actor in relation to the *tauryatrikam*. This contributes significantly in *Padarthabhinaya* (elaboration of the meaning of each word in such a way that the *sahrudaya* sees the word). The root meaning of the word *abhinaya* (*abhi – nayikkuka*) is to bring that which is enacted in front of the beholder.

In her discussion of *sattwikabhinaya*, Sudha Gopalakrishnan draws attention to how the actor gives breath to specific parts of the body depending on the different kinds of expressiveness in demand. This mode of enactment has its precedence in Kerala’s theatre tradition in *Kutiyattam*. Sudha Gopalakrishnan explains how vital breath energises different nodes of the body to create specific effects: ‘For facial expression, the vital breath, *rasa vayu*, is infused. For expression through other parts of the body, *arakkuvayukodukkal* – meaning directing vital breaths to the hips in hip movement; *viralilvayukodukkal* – directing vital breaths to the fingers in *hasta mudras* (symbolic hand gestures); *kannilvayukodukkal* – applying vital breaths to the eyes for various expressions, are employed’ (“*Sattwikabhinaya*” 146). The centrality of this training in breath control is the crux of the observation made earlier regarding the enactment of Kichaka’s death. The eyes bulge in death because the actor focuses his vital breath there. The *sahrudaya* watches such a performance not for the content of the story, but relates to what the actor does on the stage with his body.

And so, unlike watching plays governed by the rules of the Proscenium stage in which we listen and recognise the meanings of what characters utter, and thus identify the nature of the utterance and understand the development of story and plot, Kathakali offers a different experience. Here the actor reveals in its fullness the multiple layers of *artha* (meaning) of each word, both manifest and latent, building on the *padam* and the music. The level of energy brought to bear on form, and to sustain the gestures creates a continuum of connotations for the *sahrudaya*, which informs the aesthetic experience. In *padarthabhinaya* as the *sahrudaya* sees the word in its entire context-shaping dimension creating emotional complexes, the actor maintains the *sthayibhava* (enduring emotional state). The challenge for the actor here is not to lose the *sthayibhava* even when he brings out the *bhava* of every word appropriate to the *padam* (dialogue) that he performs. This is testament to the way good Kathakali actors are bound to the *citta-prakaram* (acting grammar) knowing fully where they can have their own interpolations, their extent and when they should not be done.

Not surprisingly, it is only after the body has internalised the grammar and structure of expression that the actor gets ready for the stage. Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair aptly sums this up in his “Author’s Introduction” to the two-volume book *Colliyattom*. He writes, ‘The progress of the training is not from the mind to the body; it is from the body to the mind’ (*Colliyattom* np). In *Colliyattom* (*colli* means to sing and *attom* means dance) the actor learns the choreographed texts that lay down the *kathakalicitta* or foundations of the grammar of Kathakali acting. In an interview that is in the press, Margi Vijayakumar, who is today perhaps the most accomplished actor essaying female roles in Kathakali, had this to say about what the training in the *kalari* gives the actor and the *sahrudaya*: ‘If we see a Kathakali actor perform without the *kalari* <sup>1</sup> grammar on stage, the character will not emerge. We ask for and do not see the character’ (“The Actor’s Body is a Screen”). The plays of Kottayam Tampuran (17th century) (also known as Kottayam Plays) provide the *citta-prakaram* for an upcoming actor, as he must strictly adhere to its precise choreography. Zarrilli rightly observes, ‘It is the precise details of the complex performance score that teachers so severely correct, and “fix” during *colliyattom* classes’ (83). A discussion of this acting grammar will be incomplete without reference to *rasa* and *bhava*.

The oft-quoted *sloka* 37 from Nandikeswara’s *Abhinayadarpanam* serves well to describe the experience of *rasa* and *bhava* while theorising art experience. The same *sloka* is very useful to understand how the body expresses and experiences emotions even as Cartesian notions imbibed over the years set limits on our ideas of

bodies in performance. ‘*Yato hasta stato drishti yato drishti stato manah / Yato mana stato bhavo yato bhava stator asah*’ (Abhinayadarpanam 23). The literal rendering of the lines in English is as follows: ‘Where hand there eye where eye there mind / Where mind there *bhava* where *bhava* there *rasa*’. The verse does not indicate a cause and effect pattern or situation-response sequencing; it is neither deliberate nor conditional. As Zarrilli puts it, this summarises the ‘nonconditional state of accomplishment or being/doing-in-performance for both spectators and actors – the *bhava* of the actor and the *rasa* of the audience are ideally non-conditional states of being’ (91). He rightly contends that the ‘state-of-being is possible only for an accomplished master, while the conditional is typical of the neophyte’ (92). When the actor ‘is what he does at each moment’ (92) the expressive body co-ordinates, the mind, and the expression ‘are simultaneously present within the performer. The fifth element, *rasa*, applies to the audience’s state of engagement, and at an ideal performance is simultaneously present’ (91).

One cannot describe limits for such a state of engagement in terms of *bhava* leading to the creation of *rasa*; it is not oriented or functions as a causative towards the *sahrudaya* leading to an emotional response. *Bhava* is the breath-vitalised body expressing the dominant emotional state of the character. This is why the actor has to maintain the *sthayi* of the character even as he enacts the qualities of objects or qualities of other characters or their emotions in the course of bringing alive every word in the text. The *sthayi* establishes the quality of the character that the actor embodies in the course of the performance. The *sahrudaya*’s recognition of and engagement with this embodiment is *rasasvada* leading to *aananda*. As D. Appukkutan Nair sums this up in “The Philosophy of Kathakali,” ‘The action of the Kathakali performer is called *karayit*, and is helped by the imaginative and retentive capacities of his mind. The imagination of the performer brought out through action is *karayitripratibha*. This is met by the *bhavayitripratibha*, the imaginative insight of the connoisseur. The *aananda* so derived is more enduring. It is *manasikananda*, mental delight’ (4).

The challenge for the actor is to vitalise the performance channeling his breath at precise expressive surfaces of the body. At the same time, the *sahrudaya* reciprocates in an imaginative continuum the moment of living the experience of this non-conditional state-of-being. It is a challenge for the actor because the body has to become supple enough to internalise the *attakkathas* and bring into play suitable *bhavas* that put in place the conditions for the range of affects associated with the aesthetic experience. Based on a Sanskrit verse beginning ‘*acaryatpadamadathe*’ Kalamandalam Gopi Asan sums up the

growth of the artist, ‘ “A disciple gets one fourth [of what he learns] from his teacher; the second quarter from himself; the third part from his classmates; and the last quarter in the long run of one’s life.” The maturity of an actor is expected only in the last stage’ (Qtd. in Zarrilli 89).

Kottayam Tampuran’s (1675 – 1725) attakkathas that include *Bakavadhom*, *Kalyanasougandhikam*, *Kirmeeravadhom*, and *Nivatakavacha Kalakeyavadhom* provide a firm foundation for the Kathakali student to aspire to reach this level. There are other *attakkatha* as well which the student learns in the *colliyattam kalari* but gives some freedom for the actor. There are also attakkathas not taught in the *kalari*. This is a very broad three-fold classification for the purpose of the argument made here. The Kottayam plays provide a sound foundation for training the actor as these plays equip them to master the basic techniques in Kathakali. Tampuran himself had set the performance grammar for these plays so much so that ‘even the interpolations are specifically set’ (Zarrilli 83) In the second category, one has such works like Irayimman Tampi’s *Kichakavadhom*, *Uttaraswayamvaram*, *Dakshayagam* or even Balakavi Ramasastrikal’s (1745 – 1801) *Banayuddham*. In the third category, there is Unnayi Varrier’s (1665 – 1725) *Nalacharitham* in four parts. This is perhaps the best example that tests the mettle of an accomplished actor. P. Venugopalan’s popular 21st century text *Krishnaleela* is a contemporary example of this type of attakkatha. One can substitute many other texts but this selection provides a useful model to illustrate the argument here as it identifies a broad spectrum over three centuries within which all the human emotions play out their dramatic moments in the flickering light of the traditional brass lamp.

Now I propose to take up for discussion a few scenes from *Kirmeeravadhom*, *Banayuddham*, and *Krishnaleela* to show how the cumulative effect of the training of the artiste manifests as *prana* (life breath) in the performative complex that completes the aesthetic experience of the *sahrudaya*. There are three parts to *Kirmeeravadham*. A detailed presentation of the incidents, the dramatic sensibility and art of Tampuran or discussion of the entire performance is a paper in itself and so inappropriate here. The first part of the play focuses on the dilemma of the Pandavas who are in exile and the major players are Dharmaputra and Panchali. The second part focuses on Panchali, Krishna and the arrival of Sage Durvasa. The last part focuses on the Pandavas’ confrontation, deforming of the *rakshasi* (demoness) Simhika and killing of her brother Kirmira.

In the opening scene, Dharmaputra enters with Panchali. The *sthayi* for the *dhirodatta* (noble and brave) hero Dharmaputra here is sorrow as it recalls the deceitful game of dice that lead to the present state of exile. The opening verse ‘*Baalekel nee*’ (‘Listen, my beloved’) (*Kirmeeravadhom* 229) is rendered in a very slow tempo (*patinhapadam*) and the performer enacting it has to maintain the quality of the *dhirodatta* heroes. The challenge is to sustain the *sthayi* during this enactment as it prepares the emotional complex for the subsequent actions that unfold. After losing to the Kaurava princes in the game of dice, the Pandavas with Panchali enter the Kamyaka forest; the scorching summer heat drains all their energy and they are fatigued. The performance opens with Dharmaputra trying to console Panchali with these words. This is a scene marked by great poignancy as it expresses Dharmaputra’s pity and compassion for his tired wife as he tries to console her.

The remarkable quality of the scene is that his *karunam* (compassion) mixes in it slight strains of *sringara* (love) to establish the *stayi*. A discerning *sahrudaya* would be quick to recognise that the verse and the very slow tempo marks it apart from other verses that create *sringara* like that of Bhima addressing Hidimbi in *Bakavadham* which is still different from Bhima addressing Panchali in *Kalyanasougandhikam*. The onus is on the “corresponding” *sahrudaya* to recognise these “corresponding” nuanced *stayi* in order to experience bliss in the performance. The demand made on the performer is obvious, for only if the actor has achieved the precision that is required to play out this scene, will it be possible for him to render, for instance, the *sringarappadam* of Rugmangada in *Rugmangadacaritam*, which is not taught in the *kalaris*.

To return to the opening verse, the actor plays out the agony of Dharmaputra who sees his wife suffer. Panchali’s agony is that eighty thousand Brahmins have followed them into the forest and there are no means at hand to satiate their hunger. Obviously, the *sringara* acquires a different *bhava* that comes out in the not so emphatic dance steps, and do not express gaiety. On the other hand, the tenderness in the *stayi* expresses compassion that establishes Dharmaputra’s mental makeup that understands and responds to Panchali’s distress. Kalamandalam Balasubramaniam aptly sums up how the actor presents the hardships of exile and sympathy for Panchali in these words: ‘The actor should feel [the suffering they have experienced] inside, and the audience should feel it by looking into his face; however, the actor playing Dharmaputra should not overtly show any *bhava* in his face. He should only use his eyes to reveal the *bhava*. The inhering (*sthayi*-) expression is enough. No overt outside display of *bhava* is required’ (Qtd. in Zarrilli 89).



The drama of the whole scene hinges on the life breath invested on the playing out of the word *baale* that is transformed into an utterance in the sense that it encompasses the actions, consequences and feelings in strict compliance with the *citta-prakaram*. It thus transacts the Pandavas' moment in the forest. The performance of this word becomes an experience of this expressive moment for the *sahrudaya* as it reveals the emotional make-up of Dharmaputra that runs as the thread binding the "plot" and the emergent *bhavas*. For, the *karunam* in Dharmaputra's *sringara* encapsulates the memories of deceit, anger and thoughts of annihilating the Kauravas and the righteousness of the truthful hero. The actor communicates this complex psychological state with naturally coordinated bodily gestures in tandem with dance, music and instrumental music bringing in variations in breathing pattern. The performance of this scene is very challenging as the psychophysical state of Dharmaputra emerges fully in the expressive body.

What happens to the communication of complex psychological states with naturally coordinated bodily gestures when the male actors appear on stage as a young virginal woman and her maid? *Banayuddham* provides useful insights to address this question as this is a text taught in the *kalari* but it provides much space and freedom to the actor for interpolations and innovations. The question becomes even more interesting when we note that there is no separate training in the *kalari* to perform male and female roles. There are only minor changes to some hand gestures or steps and movements on stage for female roles. Margi Vijayakumar remarks that 'it is the way in which what is acquired is modulated to present female characters on stage. The *Aangikam* (gestures) here thus comes fully from the practice. The body is shaped to present female characters when one decides to become an actor who does such roles even though the basic training at the *kalari* is the same for both male and female roles.' In the same interview, he says it is important to 'mould, fine tune the training in the *Kalari* and make it suitable to enact female characters. And this is done very consciously' ("The Actor's Body is a Screen"). Balakavi Ramasastrikal was in his late teens when he composed *Banayuddham*. A brief outline of the text will help to set the scene for the discussion. Banasura is the son of Mahabali and he is looking for a suitable groom for his daughter Usha. Usha dreams of sporting with a handsome young man and recounts this to her maid Chitrlekha. The maid had sketched the portraits of many kings and princes and shows these to Usha to help identify her dream lover. Usha identifies her lover Aniruddhan who is Lord Krishna's grandson. Chitrlekha with her art brings the sleeping Aniruddhan from Dwaraka to Usha's bedchambers. Bana comes to know about this and he imprisons the

young prince. What follows is a fight between Krishna and Bana, Krishna defeats the King, and Usha marries Aniruddhan.

The fourth scene of the play opens with a sari dance of Usha and Chitralekha introducing the pair, which sets *Veera Lasyabhava* as the *sthayi* and this may be because a male actor dons the role. Unlike *Kirmeeravadhom*, in the sari dance that establishes the dominant emotion, the actors do not necessarily present the full dimension of all the words in the *padam* but create and sustain the *sthayi*. The renditions of music using different instruments, and the ball game that follows this reveals not just the flexibility of the male actors as they establish the relationship between two women, it shows how the actor's body thinks and remembers what it means to be woman. To create this world of make-believe the actor prepares consciously, telling himself about the female role. It is a natural conditioning that is in place by the time the actor enters the stage and is ready as the female character. Obviously, this comes with years of practice. A sequence as in this scene becomes possible again with modulation of breath and energising, for instance the hands, facial muscles and the feet transforming them to speak of a female bonding that sustains *sringara*. At the same time, it draws attention to the conditioning of the body that makes it possible to emote across the gender divide to present not the conventional figure of a woman. As Margi Vijayakumar says, 'What the actor shows is not at all related to our assumptions concerning woman. If an actor who performs a female role is employing the *Lasya Bhava*, he will be in practice showing *Veera Lasya*. It is not just *Lasya*, or an exposition of femininity' ("The Actor's Body is a Screen").

It is much more than the femininity of Usha or Chitralekha that emerges in the scene. The actor who presents Chitralekha captures youthfulness and tenderness with gestures and movements that visualise *sringara* in Usha. At the end of the game in which the two engage, Usha tires and Chitralekha advises her to sleep and rest. Usha wakes up suddenly and Chitralekha prods her to speak. What follows is a very exquisite *padam* that brings out the psychological state of a young woman who dreams of the man of her dreams. The *padam* opens with the words '*kamoparoopankamananvannunidrayil*' ('Into my dream came a youth like Kama') (*Baanayuddham* 700). The actor does not actualise the words of the *padam* with mere hand gestures; he evokes the psychological state of a young woman living in the presence of the divine who has received blessings from Goddess Parvati. The goddess had assured Usha that she would marry a handsome young man who would appear in her dreams.

In fact, the *Angikabhinaya* externalises the dream as Usha lies down on the lap of Chitralekha and sleeps. The challenge of the scene is that as the actor presents a young girl who is dreaming in her sleep, the *sthayi* has to remain. It is here that the actor gives breath to the body to ensure the sustenance of the dominant emotional state. The *sahrudaya*, for instance, recognises how the legs arch back as though in love making and it is after this that Usha suddenly wakes up. The flushed face indicates the fullness of the erotic as the actor has to show it and pretend to hide it from Chitralekha. The *padarthabhinaya* completes the meaning that emerges in *angikabhinaya* as the actor simultaneously breathes life into the surging emotions of a young girl who has her intimations of sexual awakening in a dream and suddenly wakes up when the young man in the dream is about to unfasten her waist-knot. A fully mature actor dramatises the interior life of a young girl who looks forward to the first flush of love and confides the same to another actor who takes in that interiority and completes the discourse of love in this sequence.

The *sahrudaya* experiences another dimension of love in P. Venugopalan's *Krishnaleela*. In the words of Kathakali performer Ettumanoor Kannan, '*Krishnaleela*'s text and performance is capable of affecting the heart and intellect through the eyes and ears' (135). The *attakkatha* develops a potential for story in the *Bhagavata*, which has Balarama and Krishna freeing their parents Vasudevan and Devaki from prison. In the *Bhagavata*, there is only a hint of Krishna's lament that he was not able to take care of his parents. The *attakkatha* dramatises this in the first scene and in the second, introduces a meeting between Yashoda and Devaki. Such a meeting is not there in the *Bhagavata*. A meeting between the mother and foster mother prepares the ground for a flashback rendering of Krishna's many childhood *leelas* resorting to the *citta-prakaram* of *pakarnnattom* (multiple transformational acting).

The flashback in the second scene comes alive with the enactment of Krishna's many childhood pranks and adventures that form the dramatic core of the actor – *sahrudaya* interface within the production. For Devaki is the *sahrudaya* and Yashoda the actor in this play within the play. The theoretical discussions in the preceding pages about *manasikananda* of the *sahrudaya* get a theatrical space in Devaki's responses to Yashoda's elaboration of Krishna's *leelas* in *pakarnnattom*. Only an actor who has matured into what Kalamandalam Gopi Asan refers to as the fourth phase will be able to perform in the *pakarnnattom* a whole range of stories centred on child Krishna's cosmic games in the world. The actor keeps returning to the *sthayi* of Yashoda after rendering each story reminding the *sahrudaya* in the performance and in the audience about the

impending maternal grief of separation as every story unfurls to elicit maternal feelings. The stories narrated include *Poothanamoksham*, Yashoda seeing the fourteen worlds inside Krishna's mouth, breaking pots filled with milk, butter, *Ulukhalabandhanam*, the complaints of all the women about his pranks to Yashoda, *Kaaliyamardanam*, *Govardhodharanam*, and *Rasakreeda* linking them as narrative responses to Devaki.

In a sense, in Devaki we see the ideal *sahrudaya* who responds to Yashoda's performance, as she experiences the *alaukika* (otherworldly) in the midst of recognising the anguish of Yashoda who is aware that she will not see Krishna again. Devaki relates to it, as she knows the anguish of what it means to live without the son. Devaki's *padam* beginning '*Mathavuneeyathre*' (You are his mother') (*Krishnaleela* 133) captures verywell the intensity of the response of the ideal *sahrudaya*. A discussion of emotional experience in Kathakali that began with acknowledging the body in *naatyam* conceptualises what may be termed *natyaleela*.<sup>1</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The translation would be "dramatic amusement." This word is my coinage. The translation here does not account for the element of play indicated in the word 'leela' that quotes part of the title of the last text I discuss.

## GLOSSARY

<i>Aangikam</i>	<i>Gestures</i>
<i>Adyavasanam</i>	<i>Full length roles</i>
<i>Alaukika</i>	<i>Other worldly</i>
<i>Ananda</i>	<i>Supreme bliss</i>
<i>Attakkatha</i>	<i>Literary text for a Kathakali performance</i>
<i>Cittaprakaram</i>	<i>Acting grammar</i>
<i>Colliyattom</i>	<i>Colli means sing and Attom means dance</i>
<i>Dhirodatta</i>	<i>Noble and brave hero</i>
<i>Idatharam</i>	<i>Medium roles</i>
<i>Kalsadhakam</i>	<i>Footwork training</i>
<i>Kannusadhakam</i>	<i>Training of the eyes</i>
<i>Kathakalicitta</i>	<i>Foundations of the grammar of Kathakali acting</i>
<i>Kuttitharam</i>	<i>Small roles</i>

Naatyam	Dramatics
Padam	Dialogue
Padarthabhinaya	Elaboration of meaning of each word in such a way that the sahrudaya sees the word
Padinhapadam	Dialogue rendered in very slow tempo
Pakarnnattom	Multiple transformational acting
Prana	Life breath
Pratibha	Imaginative insight
Rasa vayu	Vital breath
Sahrudaya	One capable of emotional response
Sloka	Verse
Sookshmabhinaya	Acting that involves every living atom of the body
Sthayibhava	Enduring emotional state
Tauryatrikam	Dance, music and instrumental music collectively
Uzhichil	Body massage

## REFERENCES

- Appukuttan Nair, D. (Rpt. 2009). "The Philosophy of Kathakali." *Kathakali: The Art of the Non-Worldly*. Ed. D. Appukuttan Nair and K. Ayyappa Paniker. New Delhi: Marg. 1993. 1 – 4.
- . "Rasabhinaya." *Kathakali: The Art of the Non-Worldly*. New Delhi: Marg. 149 – 156.
- Gopalakrishnan, Sudha. "Sattwikabhinaya." *Kathakali: The Art of the Non-Worldly*. New Delhi: Marg. 145 – 148.
- Hariharan, B. "The Actor's Body is a Screen." Forthcoming interview in *Nari Bhav: Androgyny and Female Impersonation in India*. Ed. Tutun Mukherjee and Niladri Chatterjee. Kannan, Ettumanoor. "Aranginde Vyakaranam Thettathe." *Harichandanam: Souvenir*. Trivandrum: Drisyavedi, 2009. 137 – 138.
- Nandikeswaran. *Abhinayadarpanam*. Trans. with Commentary. V. S. Sharma. Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1999.
- Padmanabhan Nair, Kalamandalam. *Colliyattom*. Vol. 1. Ed. P. Venugopalan. Vallathol Nagar: Kerala Kalamandalam, 2000.
- Padmanabhan Nair, Kalamandalam and Njayath Balan. *Natyacharyante Jeevithamudrakal*. Kottayam: Current Books, 2004.
- Ramasastrikal, Balakavi. *Baanayuddham. 101 Attakkathakal*. Ed. With Introduction S. K. Nair, Anandakuttan Nair and Akkitham. Kottayam: SPSS & NBT, 1979. 693 – 712.

Tampuran, Kottayam. *Kirmeeravadhom. 101 Attakkathakal*. Ed. With Introduction S. K. Nair et al. 227 – 248.

Venugopalan, P. *Krishnaleela. Harichandanam: Souvenir*. Trivandrum: Drisyavedi, 2009. 126 – 134.

Zarrilli, Phillip B. *Kathakali Dance-drama: Where Gods and Demons come to Play*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Note: The English translations from *Natyacharyante Jeevithamudrakal*, Ettumanoor Kannan's article, Padmanabhan Nair's *Colliyattom*, and *Abhinayadarpanam* are by the author.