

Giorgio De Martino
giorgio_de_martino@hotmail.com
(Paris 8 University)

Between Local and Global *Teyyam* Goes Cyber and Beyond

SUMMARY: The aim of this paper is to introduce the hypothesis that mutations and adaptive behaviors peculiar to *teyyam*, a trance-possession danced ritual that originated in Kerala (South India), might call into question or falsify our ideas about local and global praxis. This process involves also a martial art, *kalarippayattu*, the Internet, cognitive and neuroscience research on emotion and empathy, and further developments in the so-called “new technologies”. A secondary hypothesis is also advanced, according to which this mutation may also propagate itself by means of contagion, thereby spreading to other performances in the relevant geographical area.

KEYWORDS: *Teyyam*, dance, ritual, trance, possession, performance, Internet, cyberculture.

1. Introduction

In this paper I introduce the “fading boundaries” hypothesis that the local and global praxis, applied to *teyyam* and, consequently, to the physical areas of performance, the sacred groves, has been pushed quickly towards a new life through recent developments and diffusion of media and new technologies. As Kearney stated in his review (Kearney 1995) on the local and global question: “Special attention is given to the significance of contemporary increases in the volume and velocity of such flows for the dynamics of communities and for the identity of their members”. Twenty years later that velocity—not to mention the radical political changes from the beginning of the millennium—has highly increased. Whether one

likes it or not, the “local” of *teyyam* has moved “global”, meanwhile recreating, rather than recoding itself. This is the first step, because further developments in telepresence technology will be the next one. The identities and behaviors of the ex-untouchables that have used this “trance-possession device” to negotiate and survive will never be the same as in the past. Local and global will merge in a new interactive experience that will challenge our conceptions about what is real and what is fiction.

Teyyam (“god”) or *teyāṭṭam* (“god dancing”) is a Hindu public trance and possession dance,¹ now often considered to be a ritual art, and it is practiced by specific castes of ex-untouchables² who inhabit four districts (Kannur, Calicut, Kasargod and Wayannad) located in northern Kerala, a state in South India. The performance is practiced exclusively by males, who act also for the feminine characters. Only a woman, and after the end of the feminine cycle, chosen from between some specific families linked to the communities that own the right to perform *teyyam*, can dance the *devakūttu* in the role of an apsara, a celestial nymph

¹ “Trance” and “possession” are widely known western misleading words that I will use in this paper. The reader can temporarily accept the two words as they are useful to have a quick approach to understand that, during *teyyam* performances, some specific bodily and cognitive thresholds must be bypassed to reach a “possession” state. I have recently tried to explore this problem and I will try to be more precise and exhaustive later in the paper, mainly in connection with the newest technologies.

² “Untouchables” or “former untouchables”, also *dalits*—a Marathi word that means “oppressed”, by Gandhi termed *harijans* (sons of god) and Ambedkar “depressed classes”, for the Indian government SCs (Scheduled Castes), are the people that practice *teyyam*. This social condition is linked to the Hindu belief of the danger of being polluted by someone “without colour”, an *avarṇa*, and this means also that they were “unapprochables” for the high castes. The caste system in India was officially abolished in 1947, after Independence. As explained by Marar (Marar 2010: 17–18) ten “castes” of ex-untouchables are allowed to perform *teyyam*.

(Philomina 2009: 15–16, Anju 2014). The word *teyyam* seems to have a long history, and forty years ago was explained by Clothey in this way:

One Tamil term descriptive of the Divine Dimension is *teyyam*. This is a somewhat abstract neuter word, embodying all that constitutes Divinity. It is Otto's numen, except that it is not limited to the moment it is experienced. It is the Sacred; all other form of divinity are manifestation of it. (cf. Clothey 1978: 10–11)

The author gives a long explanation, that is impossible to be cited here, pointing out that the term was used extensively in a greater south Indian area, not only in Kerala. His statements join what was underlined by Freeman:

The political powers which *teyyam* worships, describes and recognizes as having deep ideological significances are located not in the colonial or modern periods, but in that of the traditional kingdoms of medieval Malabar. These kingdoms were largely dismantled by the close of the 18th century, so it seems reasonable to conclude that *teyyattam* was developed in this current form and flourished at some period prior to this dismantling. (Freeman 1991: 38–39)

The literature on *teyyam* often shows the difficulties, for westerners, to approach this extremely complex danced ritual, and it is interesting to notice that Pallath (Pallath 1995), an ex-priest from a converted family, rediscovered his roots through *teyyam*, giving a new interpretation of it using the psychoanalytical theories of Carl Gustav Jung. Other researchers (Pillai 1994) suggest that the beginning of a profound mutation of *teyyam* began just after Indian Independence, when, it seems, some new *teyyam*'s characters arose.

2. On the origins of *teyyam*

The origins of *teyyam* are not known. Freeman points out that “[...] the absence of any absolute chronology makes it very difficult to anchor reconstruction of *teyyam* worship in the past to any secure time-frame” (Freeman 1991: 37–38) but Tarabout (Tarabout 2005:188)

quotes the first clear description by Fawcett (Fawcett 1901: 188–322) published at the beginning of the 20th century. Similar South Indian danced rituals, even if not always, were badly pointed out as being “diabolical” as early as in the 19th century and published in Thurston (Thurston 1912)³ with the legend: “Malayan devil dancer with fowl in mouth”,⁴ but the characterization “devil dancer” was often used by Thurston to describe a wide group of exorcist dance rituals. There are several hypotheses on the origins and functions of *teyyam* and this performance is supposed to be, in some way, related to many other ritual performances of Kerala-Malabar, including *kathakali*, *mutiyettu*, *tirayāṭṭam* (Aubert 2004: 200, note 14.) and *nañnyārkūttu*. This latter dance is supposed to be linked to *devakūttu* (Paniker 2005: 44–46), the only form of feminine *teyyam*. The original area where it developed being far greater, *teyyam* seems also related with another well-known trance-possession ritual, namely *bhūta kola* or *bhūtārādhane* (Nambiar 1996), which is practiced in south Karnataka,⁵ bordering north Kerala. *Bhūta kola* is supposed to share

³ The untouchables that practiced *teyyam* were supposed to be expert in magic, black magic and exorcism. A free downloadable copy of Thurston’s book (Thurston 1912), with illustrations, can be found on the website of Gutenberg Project—<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/35690/35690-h/35690-h.htm> (last accessed: December 2016).

⁴ During my fieldwork I was able to take a picture like the one chosen by Thurston. My hypothesis was that some visual schemes and kinetic sequences of *teyyam* have been transmitted over time, maintaining the same iconic and energetic structure, up until the present day.

⁵ S. Nambiar (cf. Nambiar 1996) correlates both performances, seeing them as “theatrical performances with spirit mediumship”. Later on different hypothesis intrigued B. Nambiar, who offered in 2008 a lecture on this topic: “Myth, Spirit, Ritual: Bhuta Rituals of Tulu Nadu” at the Bangalore International Centre. See “The Hindu” (8 August 2008): “Theyyam and Bhuta rituals are two sides of a coin” <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-karnataka/theyyam-and-bhuta-rituals-are-two-sides-of-a-coin/article1307471.ece> (last accessed: December 2016).

many elements with *teyyam*, even if in recent scholarly literature (Ishii 2013 and 2015) *teyyam* is not cited in relation with the *bhūta* cult. It is worth noting that in Karnataka the presence of “hero stones” is supposed to demonstrate a link with *teyyam*’s characters, as alluded by Kurup (Kurup 1982: 243–250), who published the first scholarly research in English on *teyyam* (Kurup 1973), and enjoy wide diffusion and influence both within and outside Kerala.⁶ In recent decades the visual and written corpus of research on this performance has been increasing rather considerably and at a constant rate⁷ while *teyyam* has approached—but not reached—the uneasy⁸ but noteworthy status of ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage), created by UNESCO—at last, as the performance is of such interest to so many different disciplines, from anthropology and theatre to history and economics.

2.1. More information on the performance

The performance is spectacular and it has become of great interest to tourists, being highly appreciated by both Indians and foreigners alike. The Museum of Folklore in Chirakkal (Kannur) is almost completely dedicated to *teyyam*. Recently, through the Kerala Folklore Academy, the museum published a useful book, in some way a short dictionary of *teyyam* (Trikaripur 2013), full of pictures, maps of the *kāvus* and with a glossary. It displays a wide range of mannequins

⁶ A short description of *teyyam* by Kurup (Kurup 1986) can be read on this blog: <http://vijaybabu.blogspot.it/2004/05/theyyam-ritual-dance-of-kerala-dr.html> (last accessed: December 2016).

⁷ See Kurup 1977 and 1979, Ashley 1979 and 1993, Pillai 1994, Pallath 1995, Gründ 1996, Singleton 1997, Nair 2003, Koga 2003 and 2007, Chandran 2006, Damodaran 2006, 2007 and 2009, Philomina 2009, Vadakkiniyil 2009, 2010 and 2012, Marar 2010, Gabriel 2010, Komath 2013, Brilliant-Giroux 2014, Pereira 2015.

⁸ In Paris, 12 April 2010 a meeting on the “perverted effects” of the ICH have been organized by “Maison des Cultures du Monde” and UNESCO See: http://www.maisondesculturesdumonde.org/sites/default/files/fichiers_attaches/7ejourneepci.pdf (last accessed: December 2016).

with complete costumes from the performance and a unique collection of clay heads with several examples of make-ups. The geographical area where *teyyam* is performed hosts hundreds of known and often less-known danced “folk” rituals. In fact, for decades, *teyyam*, even if sometimes performed by award-winning artists such as N. R. Kannan Peruvannan⁹ (Marar 2010) has experienced an eventful and discontinuous diffusion—both within and outside of India. Apart from scholarly research devoted to the topic, *teyyam* has been made known to the public at large through the testimony provided by travellers (Fawcett 1901, Dubost 1971). Recently, given that *teyyam* is also a rather colorful performance, it has been targeted by specific photographic research (Seth 2000),¹⁰ and until more or less forty years ago it had rarely been seen outside of Kerala if not as a guest performance in meetings and festivals. The situation has changed in recent years (Payyanad 2001: 11–12),¹¹ and as a consequence of the the media revolution, *teyyam* currently has on-line calendars¹² as well as several dedicated Facebook pages, blogs and numerous videos that can be seen on Youtube. Sometimes congresses have been organized for a restricted public,¹³ and exhibitions of *teyyam* paintings, as the performance

⁹ “Peruvannan” is not a name, but an honor offered to extraordinary *teyyam*’s artists.

¹⁰ Photographer Pepita Seth has been working on this subject for more than thirty years.

¹¹ <http://indianfolklore.org/journals/index.php/IFL/article/view-File/657/810> (last accessed: December 2016).

¹² <http://www.travelkannur.com/theyyam-calender/> or <https://www.keralatourism.org/theyyamcalendar/> (both last accessed: December 2016).

¹³ The Folklore Fellows of Malabar Trust organized in Kannur (17–23 April 2010) an international theoretical and practical workshop on *teyyam*. The meeting, held by a panel of Indian specialists, offered lectures on the historical, mythical, political, social, musical and ritual aspects of the performance, and also suggestions on multiple ways to observe it. Indigenous medicine experts, *teyyam* and martial artists participated actively in the workshop. <http://web.archive.org/web/20091208111249/>

has also acted as a source of inspiration for artists, both foreign and Indian,¹⁴ take place within and outside of Kerala. But, more important, via the new media, devotees and admirers can now attend the ritual via the Internet wherever they are. During the performances it is nowadays quite easy, as I could see in December 2014, to see dozens of smartphones recording the whole action.¹⁵ New technologies have radically changed the meaning and the perception of “local and global”, and this would seem to be the case also for an ancient dance-trance possession¹⁶ ritual. Indeed, as Trikaripur (Trikaripur 2013: 12–13) remarked, despite the fact that the public is currently allowed to witness this ritual, it was not the case in the past. Trikaripur divides practitioners, usually called *komarams* (dancing priests who are also oracles), into those who refused to act in public, presented as more spiritual *teyyam* performers, and the others. The basic scheme of the performance unfolds in the following way: in a *kāvu*, hold by a specific family in charge of a near sacred grove, an assistant applies make-up (some characters featured in the *teyyam* wear a painted masks)—and it is considered as a form of “writing” recognizable by the god, the goddess or hero—to the dancer’s face (Pallath 1995: 67–69) before the performance,

http://folklorefellows.com/site/?page_id=15 (last accessed: December 2016).

¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rj8Eji7dVpg> or <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/theyyam-fires-her-imagination-gives-it-colour/article6961329.ece> (both last accessed: December 2016).

¹⁵ As stated by Radakrishnan (The Hindu, March 2013) in his article: “Art lovers across the world will be able to witness Theyyam performances on their computers and mobile phones with the spectacular ritual art form going online”. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/theyyam-goes-global-with-live-webcast/article4472727.ece> (last accessed: December 2016).

¹⁶ The use of the word “possession” for *teyyam* is not correct, as it is a Western term that does not correspond to the way Indian people see what happens during the performance.

while he lies on his back. The costumes, some of them quite heavy,¹⁷ are a fundamental part of the ritual and are owned by the performers. Pallath (Pallath 1995: 62, 64, 66) and Nair (Nair 2003: 37–38), in their books, offer drawings of the costumes with important explanations of all the elements that compose them. Certain elements of the costume are edible. Some parts of the costume are made of wood or metal—e.g. the mirror, swords, shield, bow and arrow, or the attributes of each god such as Śiva's *triśūla* and they are prepared together with the roosters that will be sacrificed during the ritual. I saw, at the beginning of 2015, performances without sacrifice and with something like a disco-dance exhibition at the end of the ritual. While the make-up is being applied, the priests and the assistants prepare the shrines and the performance space. Before the beginning of the performance songs (*tottams*) that recall the events connected to the life and actions of the god, goddess, or the hero are sung. Music is essential to the performance, drums and other instruments are always used to help the performer enter into a state of trance, becoming a divinized ancestor, god or goddess. Possession,¹⁸ or I should rather say “migration” of the divinity toward and into the body of the dancer,¹⁹ is linked to wearing a specific crown and to the action of looking in a mirror by the dancer. Indeed, most of the literary sources claim that, in the past, more than 400 characters were performed, but

¹⁷ As Kurup informed me during a private conversation, some costumes are extremely dangerous. In the past performers could even die owing to the sheer weight of the costumes.

¹⁸ Many characters and stories of *teyyam* betray an inversion of the social roles. The ex-untouchable performer, when possessed, is considered not as a god, but god himself and he touches high castes members, such as Brahmins, when they ask for blessing. If nowadays officially the castes do not exist anymore, in the past an untouchable could be easily and immediately sanctioned even to death if the prescribed distances were not constantly observed.

¹⁹ The opinions of my informants on this issue was often that the divine energy, god, goddess, hero, was already present in the body of the performer, and that the ritual only evoked it.

currently, however, the number has been reduced to approximately 80 or 100. The dancer performs one or more dance sequences accompanied by the priest and his assistants, and interacts with the devotees and the public by means of choreographies that are both pre-established, and improvised. At the end, seated atop a special stool, he acts as an oracle for everyone who needs advice, during which time another *teyyam*'s performance usually begins. The dance can be seen in very quiet places such as village shrines, but it can also take place in unexpected places, which is precisely the context in which I experienced my first *teyyam*. The shrine of Müttappan, a transgressive hero, exists also in the center of Kannur, between the main road and the railway station, where people pass all the day and it is easy to hear the horn-honking taxis during the performance. The length of a typical *teyyam*'s performance can vary from one hour to weeks and its execution is structured around the traditional Malayalam sidereal calendar in connection with the lunar mansions, which was inherited directly from the Babylonian system through the Greeks (Tarabout 1986: 68–77, Wohlschlag in Aubert 2004: 381–383). The astrologer is always present, but in the background, as many *teyyam*'s performances can be requested and programmed after an astrological consultation.

Indian authors are often engaged in reconstructing the history, meaning, social importance and multiple roles of the performance (Damodaran 2010 and 2011: 105–118),²⁰ and the foremost Western scholars focus on the ritual. Freeman describes it as “a related set of religious beliefs and practices centered on the cultural proposition of divine possession” (Freeman 1993: 112). He distinguishes also between the word *teyyam* referring to the deities, and the mode of worshipping them, *teyāṭṭam*, i.e. the dance, considering that such danced rituals in that geographical area date back almost two millennia (Freeman 1999a). Another preeminent specialist of Kerala, Tarabout,

²⁰ <https://damodaranmp.wordpress.com/2011/07/21/family-makes-a-master-a-case-study-of-the-malayans-of-north-malabar-kerala/> (last accessed: December 2016).

published an update (Tarabout 2005) on the mutations of *teyyam* as a noteworthy element in the globalized India, and recently contacted to find out if he still agrees on his statements of 2005, he confirmed his hypothesis. Further emphasis on the relevant ecological and historical elements were pointed out by Damodaran (Damodaran 2006 and 2009), as well as some important elements, viz. fertility rites, have been recently highlighted by Arafath (Arafath 2015). As explained by Tarabout:

What is more, from the 1940s onwards, *teyyam* began progressively to undergo a complete redefinition in the public eye to the point that their spectacular figures have nowadays become emblematic of Kerala culture in tourist publications. (Tarabout 2005: 193)

His statement, as underlined by Freeman (Freeman 1999a), reveals that *teyyam* must not only be seen as a process, but also as a project. The statement is also supported by research of Damodaran (Damodaran 2006 and 2007 and 2009), and Komath (Komath 2013)—this author being himself a *teyyam* performer—in his work discusses historical and economic aspects of the performance during its mutations. Last but not least, some recent papers (Kurivila 2016) emphasize the last incoming mutations of *teyyam* and Kerala in connection with cyberspace and new media. Not a hazard as Freeman (Freeman 2013), before them, wrote about the growing influence of the media and the Internet on *teyyam*. Keeping with these claims, my first hypothesis is that *teyyam* is facing a further adaptive transformation that will affect our perception of the local and the global. This seems linked both to the new technological developments and to the incoming young generation of people, born within these social techno-mutations. This revolution will have important consequences on behaviors, beliefs, and on humans' choices, decisions and actions. New media and new technology will radically change our local/global perception of this performance.

3. Take a walk on the wild side: A few words on “trance” and “possession”

In the *teyyam* context it is quite important to clarify some concepts about “trance and “possession” as a plethora of articles and books,

from anthropology to religious studies, hypnosis,²¹ consciousness studies, psychiatry etc., have been published on this field of research. It is useful to provide a very brief explanation on these two phenomena that can be observed all over the world, and why it is still useful to use them for *teyyam*. In a way, the two words can also be linked to research on shamanism²² and to the western research on the so-called ASC (altered states of consciousness, another well-known misleading word),²³ a field of studies that has been developing for a long time (Winkelmann 1986, Ooashi *et al.* 2002, Kawai *et al.* 2001, Pekala and Kumar 2000, Pekala 2002, Cardeña and Winkelman 2011). My engagement was, generally, to find the best way to manage them in my research and inside the context of my fieldwork, but also focused on the way the two words apply to the local/global transformations besides the old question on the “theatrical” and ritual aspects of *teyyam*.²⁴ I agree with ethnoscenologists when they look

²¹ In his phenomenological approach to clinical hypnotic trance Pekala (cf. Pekala 2000: 43) writes: “Despite the popularity of the term “trance” among clinicians to describe the subjective effects associated with being hypnotized, heretofore there has been no means to operationalize that definition.”

²² Two specific characters of *teyyam*, a male hero, Müttappan, performed every day, and the unique form of feminine *teyyam*, the *devaküttu*, performed every two years, present specific shamanic elements.

²³ It will be useful to quote from a paper by Lewis (Lewis 2003: 20): “Altered States of Consciousness is an umbrella term applied in the study of psychological, sociological and religious phenomena that are regularly encountered experientially in the study of trance, possession, and shamanism, all of which have complex and problematic links with music. Beginning with trance, and stressing the pervasive sexual imagery invoked, this paper reviews the role of ASC in these three areas in the anthropology of religion.”

²⁴ It is well known that the theatrical-spectacular side of possession performances has been underlined since the 1950s by Leiris (Leiris 1958). One of the greatest difficulties researching on *teyyam* poses is to categorize it. When in 2011, in Paris, I had a private conversation with Freeman, I asked him why he still had not published a big book after thirty years of research. His answer was: “Well... I continuously discover new things!”

at such performances like *teyyam* as “incarnations de l’imaginaire” (imaginary embodied), a general definition they use for western and non-western performances that is on the way to be used and applied to many fields, from theatre to cognitive science. Being rooted on the edge of interdisciplinary research that intersect theatre and dance studies, now also neurosciences, it points out also that particularly trance and possession in *teyyam* have to be observed, analyzed and understood by specific training and techniques developed, since the 1960s, by the avant-garde theatre. It is important to notice that *teyyam* danced rituals are supposed to make also the audience entering in a “trance” state, shared with the performer (Pillai: 1994: 112). As asserted by Lapassade (Lapassade 1976) about the hidden links between trance and society, it is worth remembering about the growing political importance of *teyyam* and *teyyams*’ communities (Menon 1993, Vijisha and Raja 2016), but also their importance for philosophy (Anthony 2016), aesthetics (Vinod 2014) and, obviously, theatre (Sandten 2013, Krishnan 2015).

As already stated, *teyyam* is practiced by ex-untouchables, who still remember Kerala as a “madness of castes” as it was told to me by one of my informants (quoting Vivekananda when he visited the Malabar-Kerala area in 1892)²⁵ and, as I can argue, “trance” in *teyyam* seems to be a method to renegotiate the never-ending social conflicts between those specific family groups and communities that are legal owners of the danced ritual (Menon 1993). *Teyyam* can, in this approach, be considered as oral literature engraved in bodies, meanwhile “possession” appears as the “incarnation de l’imaginaire” of a superior shared authority that makes negotiations of social conflicts possible and fixes them, even if for a limited period of time. These negotiations are supposed to have existed for centuries, and Nair (Nair 2013: 88–89) claims that:

²⁵ It is also honest to consider that, for some indigenous people, like the Palyans, not involved in *teyyam*, Kerala has been a sure place to survive. Fleeing from human sacrifices, which they were used for by the rulers of Madurai (Tamil Nadu), they migrated to Kerala (George 2009: 159–162).

Divinity in Kerala instead of creating distances between the chieftains and commoners was actually used to bridge them and promote social harmony as evidenced in the ritual dance form called Theyyam. This dance form brought together all the sections of society through specific *avakasam* to propagate social equality and also enforce the same by invoking divinity.

If those kinds of negotiations have affected the social interactive finite space in the past, now the sudden arrival of the recent technological development is pushing *teyyam* and Kerala state (Aiswara 2016)²⁶ toward a larger shared techno-social space. This mutation will drag ex-untouchables, devotees, performers and scholarly research (Bailey *et al.* 2009, Hutchinson *et al.* 2013)²⁷ towards new ways of conceiving themselves between the local and global, the center and periphery.

3.1. Trance, ecology and performance: The “sacred groves”

The performance is profoundly linked with the *kāvus*, i.e. the sacred groves,²⁸ areas that—all over India—have a special importance and meaning, and which the Indian government, for many years, has begun to identify, categorize, protect and save. The sacred groves are now almost an autonomous field of studies (Uchiyamada 1995 and 1998 and 2002, Kent 2009 and 2013) with a specialized bibliography that can be found on the Internet. Pillai (Pillai 1994: 98–122 and 110–111) underlined the relation between *teyyam* and the environment and

²⁶ See <http://www.singularities.in/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Journal-Vol-3-Issue-1-Final-02-01-2016.pdf> (last accessed: November 2016).

²⁷ See Bailey *et al.*: <http://rsta.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/367/1898/2793.short> Hutchinson & Vincs: <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/96286/> (both accessed: November 2016).

²⁸ *Kāvus*—other names also “stanam, mundya, palliyara, kottam, ara, kazham” (cf. Chandran 2006: 75)—are spaces that embrace both the shrines and the sacred groves of the ex-untouchables, as they were forbidden to enter high castes temples. *Kāvus* are at risk of disappearing, as at the beginning of the 19th century there were supposed to exist 30.000 *kāvus*, but now the number is about to be reduced to 1.500. See <http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/article1437561.ece> (last accessed: November 2016).

over time this literature grew rapidly and in 2007 a paper on the “Botany of teyyam” (Raji and Raveendran 2007 and 2011)²⁹ was presented at the Kerala Science Congress in Kannur. Behind the term “sacred grove” there is a whole mythological and scientific world, still to explore and save. Finally, it may be important to notice that we do not know anything about a possible use of psychoactive substances in *teyyam*, but further research could offer some surprise on this subject. Informants explained to Freeman about the *kāvu* as a ‘pleasure garden’:

In these pleasure gardens (aramam) and retreats, the gods and goddesses sometimes take a wiff of air full of fragrances from the flowers and groves. This is the meaning of the saying that these are places harboring a religious conception (sankalpam) [...] The kavu is the place where they can ramble. They cannot always stay in the temple. In the pleasure garden they will swing and sport. It must be that sometimes they are only conceptually present in the temple, while most of the time they are actually in the kavu. (Freeman 1999b: 262–263)

This essential element of *teyyam* is often hidden behind the strong, colorful impact of the performance and studying the *devakūttu*, I realized how much it was important. During an interview with a scientist specialized in forest and ecology he laughed hearing of my interest in the “archaic” performance, and he suddenly told me: “Well, with the *devakūttu*, as scientists, we have a problem. In fact, the dance is performed on the Tekkumbad Island surrounded by the mangroves, in the salted water of the sea. For an unknown reason, in that *kāvu* where the dance is executed, there is a source of sweet water that should not

²⁹ Quoting from the article: “The paper says that Theyyam is closely related to trees, agriculture and medicinal plants and Thottam Pattu, the song part of Theyyam, narrates rich diversity of local plants and animals as well as fruits and vegetables. The names of common Theyyams (folk deities) such as Ayiramthengil Bhagavathi, Elangikkal Bhagavathi and Checkippara Bhagavathi indicate their relationship with specific trees and plants. Medicinal food and vegetable crops planted in the remote past find scientific evidence in Korathi Thottam. See <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-kerala/analysing-the-botany-of-a-ritual-art/article1789930.ece> (last accessed: November 2016).

exist there. May be the sea water is filtered by the mangroves' roots? Who knows?"

4. What is *teyyam*? Fieldwork and research context

I carried out fieldwork in Kerala, from August 2009 until May 2010, and again on two separate occasions in December–January 2012–2013 and 2014–2015 (cf. De Martino 2012). I collected the information on *teyyam* through observation of performances, survey of literature, and interviews with performers, experts and devotees, or travelling with local guides to the villages where the ritual was performed. In its early stages my research was focused on the social roots of the so-called altered states of consciousness and the “self-possession”³⁰ of the dancer-actor in relation to eastern and western way of acting and Indian aesthetic of fight arts. The first fieldwork began with teachings on *kalarippayattu*, Kerala’s martial art, which has enjoyed worldwide diffusion during the last forty years jointly with an energetic conception of the body (cf. Mishra and Chouhan 2005, Oschman 2000 and 2015, Sieler 2015). During my initial fieldwork I discovered that this martial art is deeply connected with *teyyam*, and also that between the danced rituals presented in the Kerala-Malabar area, numerous performances are linked with several different martial arts, which are in turn connected with traditional medicine and survival methods. Other research could be focused, as already pointed out by Freeman (Freeman 1998 and 1999a and b) on the importance and the influence of tantrism (cf. Freeman 1997) on *teyyam*.³¹ I soon

³⁰ In dance-theatre studies one of the main problems (and this issue can also be understood in terms of a technical issue) is the threshold inherent in the “to be or not to be” syndrome. Are you playing Hamlet or are you Hamlet? Put succinctly: who possesses whom, and what is “possession” and “self-possession”?

³¹ “This process is concretely conceptualized as the absorption of the god’s being into that of the performer, and the acts of smearing are, on certain nodes of the body, believed to correspond to the *nadi* and *chakras* of tantric physiology” (cf. Freeman 1997: 12).

realized that I needed to better understand the links between *teyyam* and *kaḷarippayattu*³² (Zarrilli 1998: 212–213, 306), since a great number of *teyyam* performers had a previous training in this martial art, often having attained that status of *gurukkal*, that is an accomplished and certified master of *kaḷarippayattu* (cf. Zarrilli 1998). This martial art is considered to be one of the most ancient in the world and it is also connected both with Ayurveda and Siddha-Tamil medicine. Currently this combat art is daily used by actors during their training (Zarrilli 2005 and 2009). Zarrilli, as a result of the research he has conducted since the end of the 1970s, has probably been the most important Western sponsor of this process. He not only participated, sponsored and organized workshops on *kaḷarippayattu* in that period (Sharma 1989), but also has developed an interdisciplinary method of “psychophysiological” acting, crossing and melting together several oriental martial arts with western techniques. He is the author of a seminal research that has extremely changed the local/global perception of *kaḷarippayattu* in which *teyyam* plays a prominent role, and he is also cited by Smith (Smith 2012: 137–138) in relation to various correspondences between *kaḷarippayattu*, *teyyam*, special emotional states and possession.³³ As a result, a supposed link exists between these fighting methods—widely known to be available as a form of trans-castes’ knowledge, but apparently reserved for high-caste warriors—and a disturbing possession performance restricted to polluting

³² As in the case of majority of martial arts, *kaḷarippayattu*, the practice (*payattu*) of the *kaḷari*, is more than a set of fighting techniques. During the 16th century, the period of their greatest development, the *kaḷaris*, with one provided per village, were at the same time warrior training grounds and places for worship and school education. In the 1930s, the remnants of the techniques still taught in the *kaḷaris* were systematized and partially reinvented, in order to form what is nowadays known as *kaḷarippayattu*, a system of physical education that still has deep links with both regional medical traditions as well as the performing arts (Tarabout 1986, Zarrilli 1998).

³³ Within the same pages Smith cites Freeman’s explanations about the correct words, in Malayalam, to describe possession in *teyyam*.

untouchables. It is unclear how this relation works, but it is clear that this web of intercaste knowledge that has lasted for centuries and still exists, will be affected and transformed by new communication technology. The question is not “if” but: “how it will happen?” We are all overtaken by the speed and pervasiveness of new technologies that we cannot master, a fact that will increasingly condition our lives. It could be unfair to think of a body-costume of *teyyam* as a “wearable computer”, but it can become real and I believe the future devotees will be able to participate in some unusual way in the danced ritual. All these questions compelled me, in the context of my research, to look for unseen connections in relation to local-global interacting frameworks, and, owing to the rapid developments in the Internet, I was also led to examine Keralese diaspora through the world, in addition to cyber culture (Cavallaro 2004, Bailey *et al.* 2009) broadly conceived and neurosciences.³⁴ My second hypothesis is that *teyyam* has begun a new life on the web with the help of new technologies, but that we still do not know the ways in which this challenge will appear and interact with technology. After a while the need to better frame the research forced me to summarize the situation in a schematic form that I am presenting to the reader in what follows:

1900–1912:

Teyyam is seen as a “diabolical” dance (but not always), first description by F. Fawcett in 1901.

Teyyam is known as a form of exorcism.

First photo (anonymous, 1901). Thurston (1909) publishes one of the best known B/N images of a *teyyam* dancer priest that R. Freeman will put of the first page of his 2013 paper.

Foreigners were usually not allowed to see and participate in *teyyam* performances and rituals.

³⁴ During a private conversation with *teyyam* scholar Dinesan Vadakkiniyil in Kerala he expressed considerable interest in the possibility of recording and measuring emotional involvement of the public during performances, through the use of specific technology devices used for experimental tests in cognitive psychology.

1920–1940:

In this period *teyyam*, even if politicized, still does not seem involved in radical changes.

An important, recurring element of *teyyam*, *kaḷarippayattu*, the martial art of Kerala, is rescued from the past and will progressively influence the actors' training.

1940s–'50s:

V. Williams (1944) still writes on *teyyam* as “a subhuman practice”.

After the Independence (1947) *teyyam* is presented with other hundreds of performances, as a “folk dance” of the new image of India.

Kerala Marxist government becomes interested in *teyyam*.

After the Independence and the abolition of the caste system, as far as we know, no new characters and roles of *teyyam* appeared.

1960s–'70s:

Tourists and travellers witness *teyyam*'s performances, the diffusion of the so-called “counterculture” improves the diffusion of many Indian performances.

K. K. N. Kurup (historian) publishes the first scholarly book on *teyyam* (1973).

Growing interest in *teyyam* in Europe and USA, also after the development of Performance Studies (R. Schnechner).

1980s:

G. Tarabout (anthropologist) in his PhD on Malabar (1986) mentions *teyyam* performances.

W. Ashley (performance studies) conducts the fieldwork in Kerala from the 1970s for his MA thesis on *teyyam* (1993, unpublished).

R. Freeman (anthropologist) began in 1984–85 his fieldwork on *teyyam* that will lead to a PhD (816 pages) in 1991.

An Indian theatre company which tried to use *teyyam* for entertainment purposes was taken to the Tribunal. The leaders of the caste “owners” of the deities and characters refused to see their *teyyam* on stage as a “show”.

Teyyam performances are shown sometimes abroad (Paris 1989).

Increasing research on *kāvu* and sacred groves.

1990–2013:

Growing literature on *teyyam* and sacred groves (Induchodaan 1996).

H. Sadasivan Pillai 1994, *The Use and Functions of Rituals in Modern Malayalam Theatre: Their Relevance to the Ritual Concepts in the Theatres of Antonin Artaud and Jerzy Grotowski*.

J. J. Pallath, who comes from a family converted to Catholicism, collects new information on *teyyam* (1995).

G. Tarabout publishes an update on *teyyam*'s mutations (2005).

T. V. Chandran publishes *Ritual as Ideology: Text and Context in Teyyam* (2006).

Dinesan Vadakkiniyil's PhD thesis: *The Poiesis of Rite and God in Malabar, South India* (2009).

T. Gabriel's *Playing God: Belief and Ritual of the Muttappan Cult of North Malabar* (2010).

R. Freeman makes the link between *teyyam* and Internet (2013).

Research on sacred groves and several theses and papers on the important mutations occurring in *teyyam* performances and performers.

5. *Teyyam* as a project: Internet local/global, and the fall of the thresholds

Even as this ritual undergoes a process of internationalization, it is still considered by experts to be endangered.³⁵ Indeed, despite the creation of institutions such as the “Thottam International Centre for Theyyam Studies” or the production of relevant literature and research, the growth of existing documentation on the performance, or the increased interest on behalf of UNESCO, which translates into efforts at patrimonialization, the risk of progressive destruction is real. It is also worth considering that most of the eventual shifts and diffusion through theatrical

³⁵ <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kozhikode/Plea-to-save-the-dying-art-form-of-theyyam/articleshow/25719180.cms> (last accessed: November 2016).

version of the performance were refused by the community owners of the sacred characters, and indeed this issue led to various legal pursuits as discussed by Ashley in his dissertation (Ashley 1993), even if sometimes *teyyam*'s elements have been integrated in a theatrical project (Singleton 1997, Panikkar 2001). My third hypothesis is that the developing research on telepresence, methods and devices that can recreate the real sensation of "being there" and that enhance emotional-kinesthetic experience and participation, will soon modify the way *teyyam* performance interacts with devotees. This recoding through the web and the new media will affect the perception of *teyyam*, which will be able to shift from Keralese shrines to virtual reality worlds. To give an idea of this imagine a master of *teyyam*, living in India, who can teach a child of his family in Canada giving him precise "lived" physiological sensations to learn. At last, it is impossible to imagine now if *teyyam*, being a door placed between the "fading boundaries", will also be affected by the post-human movement (Marchesini 2002 and 2009, Dixon 2016),³⁶ but this option is worth being seriously taken into account and waiting for further research.

Another important factor of a further mutation of *teyyam* is the incoming new generation of ex-untouchables that can study and travel, bearers of a strong and unpredictable cultural change. I have seen in Kerala groups of cultivated students (males and females) who, after coming back from universities abroad to their villages, dismissed western clothes and actively participated in the performance, drumming or facing a fire walk, being aware of their role. My hypothesis was also arrived at due to the fact that as an ex-dancer schooled in cognitive psychology research on human movement, I have been obliged to make a review of what happened during recent decades in this field. There is a growing, vast landscape of the art and tech experiences that makes interdisciplinary bridges between art and science, a field that now counts hundreds of articles and books.

³⁶ See Dixon: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14794713.2016.1163833?needAccess=true> (last accessed: November 2016).

The literature on this subject focuses on many topics. One of them is the emotional and perceptual interactions between the performers and the public, but also those between a body posture and cognitive functions. It also focuses on the brain areas involved and, obviously, on consciousness and the specificity of the dancer's consciousness. There is also another topic that is important for *teyyam*'s survival, and that is its delocalization beyond the usual concepts of local/global: the already cited "telepresence". Leeb (Leeb 2006) shows that with a dedicated brain-computer interface, a person in a wheelchair can make it move just by thinking about the action, the same happens if the person wants to walk, looking at the screen, inside a virtual city. The industrial fallouts of the discovery (i.e. handicap) were obvious and developed during these last years, side by side with psychology, robotics and artificial intelligence also. Beside the strict scientific laboratory research developments, a mass of parallel research and experimentations developed in the tech-art communities,³⁷ from scholars to performers and researchers. These topics have also been strongly influenced—more than twenty years ago—by the discovery of the MNS (mirror neuron system, cf. Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia 2008, and Ferrari and Rizzolatti 2015),³⁸ that influenced research and interaction between theatre and science (cf. Sofia 2009 and 2013, Falletti and Sofia 2011). As Rizzolatti wrote (Rizzolatti 2006: 54): "A special class of brain cells reflects the outside world, revealing a new avenue for human understanding, connecting and learning". As Freeman has remarked (Freeman 2013: 135–164) a "visual turn", new media and the Internet are influencing *teyyam*, and, on the web, many communities are working at the intersection between art dance, new media and science

³⁷ See <http://dance-tech.net/> (last accessed: December 2106).

³⁸ Basically: when I do an action, some specific groups of neurons will fire, but the observer of my actions will have specific coded similar reaction to the action. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3898692/> (last accessed: November 2016).

(cf. Menicacci and Quinz 2001, Popat 2002 and 2005 and 2013),³⁹ in a continuous exchange of information that is having deep social impact. For decades as a matter of fact dance researchers have been studying the ways technology interacts and change bodies and choreography. *Teyyam* has often been presented as a “ritual art”, but, as it seems, the performance is no more obliged to exist only in the “old” sacred spaces. I argue and hope for it that meanwhile developing an international globalized status (Klein and Noeth 2011), influencing our local/global perception praxis, *teyyam* will also modify our ideas on trance and possession. It has been officially performed also in Dubai,⁴⁰ and a shrine of Mūttappan-teyyam (Gabriel 2010), a transgressive hero who can freely travel, while the other gods are clued to the sacred groves where they reside, now exists in New Delhi. The performance, as emphasized over twenty years ago by Ashley (Ashley 1993) but recently also by Freeman, is undergoing continuous recoding in tandem with the incoming new generations of performers. Struggling to survive, less bloody and with fewer animal sacrifices than it was in the past,⁴¹ constrained between oblivion and transformation, hoping to be recognized as intangible cultural heritage, *teyyam* is gathering strength to become, with the aid of new technologies, a traveling sacred space connected with ecological issues through the link with the sacred groves. Future academic research should take these important changes into account, thereby further probing the local and global perception of *teyyam*.

³⁹ <http://www.dance-tech.net/> (last accessed: December 2016).

⁴⁰ An example from Youtube searching “Theyyam dubai”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jc-tXUQhemU> (last accessed: December 2016).

⁴¹ During my most recent fieldwork in Kerala I was able to see an expurgated *teyyam*. A ticket had to be purchased, no animal sacrifice, and also noisy sparkly teenagers participating in the performance with disco-style music.

References

- Aiswarya, P. K. 2016. Traditional Myths in the Construction of a New 'Kerala Space': Cyber Imagining of Kerala and the Play of Power. In: *Singularities—A Transdisciplinary Biannual Research Journal*, 3(1): 81–86. <http://www.kahmunityenglish.in/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Journal-Vol-3-Issue-1-Final-02-01-2016.pdf#page=162> (last accessed: November 2016).
- Anju, M. 2014. Deēvakkūtt: Women Representation in Ritualistic Art Performance in Kerala. In: *Research Scholar Journal on-line*, 2(1): 290–301. <http://www.researchscholar.co.in/downloads/43-anju.m.pdf> (last accessed: November 2016).
- Anupama, C. 2013. *Ecological Studies on Select Sacred Groves of Malabar*. PhD thesis University of Calicut, published on-line by Shodganga: <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/6349> (last accessed: November 2016).
- Arafath, Y. P. K. 2015. Saints, Serpents, and Terrifying Goddesses: Fertility Culture on the Malabar Coast (c.1500–1800). In: A. Winterbottom and F. Tesfaye (eds.). *Histories of Medicine and Healing in the Indian Ocean World, Volume Two: The Modern Period*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan: 99–124.
- Ashley, W. 1978. Teyyam: A Performance in the Process of Secularization, ADG/CORD-Congress on Research in Dance Conference: Reports/Program. In: *Dance Research Journal*, 11(1/2): 57–70.
- _____. 1979. The Teyyam Kettu of Northern Kerala. In: *The Drama Review*, 23(2), *Performance Theory: Southeast Asia Issue*: 99–112.
- _____. 1993. *Recoding: Ritual, Theatre, and Political Display in Kerala State, South India*. MA dissertation (unpublished), New York University, NY.
- Ashley W. and R. Holloman. 1982. From Ritual to Theatre in Kerala. In: *The Drama Review*, 26(2): 59–72.
- _____. 1990. *Teyyam*. In: F. P. Richmond, D. L. Swann and P. B. Zarrilli (eds.). *Indian Theatre: Tradition of Performance*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press: 131–150.
- Aubert, L. 2004. *Les feux de la déesse—rituels villageois du Kerala*. Lausanne: Payot.

- Bailey, H., M. Bachler, S. B. Shum, A. Le Blanc, S. Popat, A. Rowley and M. Turner. 2009. Dancing on the Grid: Using E-Science Tools to Extend Choreographic Research. In: *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London Series A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, 367 (1898): 2793–2806.
- Brillant-Giroux, V. 2014. *Aspirations de la relève et nécessité de convaincre dans le culte du Teyyam*. MA dissertation, Montreal: Montreal University.
- Bourguignon, E. (ed.). 1973. *Altered State of Consciousness and Social Change*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- . 1989. Trance and Shamanism: What's in a Name? In: *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 21(1): 9–15.
- . 2004. Possession and Trance. In: *Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology*. New York: Springer: 137–145.
- Cardeña, E. and M. Winkelman (eds.). 2011. *Altering Consciousness: Multi-disciplinary Perspectives*. Santa-Barbara: ABC-CLIO.
- Chandran, T. V. 2006. *Ritual as Ideology: Text and Context in Teyyam*. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. New Delhi: D. K. Print World.
- Clothey, F. W. 1978. *The Many Faces of Murukan: The History and Meaning of a South Indian God*. The Hague: Mouton-Walter de Gruyter.
- Damodaran, M. P. 2007. *Tradition Binds People Together: A Case Study on the Teyyam Performance of North Malabar, Kerala*. Project Report (unpublished). Chennai: University of Madras.
- _____. 2009. Identity through Nature-Man Interaction: A Synthetic Definition Based on the Teyyam Performance in North Malabar. In: *Journal of Human Ecology*, 26(3): 191–196.
- _____. 2010. The Wonder That Is Teyyam. In: *Bi-Annual Journal of Indian Art, Culture, Heritage and Tourism*, 1(1): 28–37.
- _____. 2011. Family Makes A Master: A Case Study of the Malayans of North Malabar, Kerala. In: *Voice of Intellectual Man*, 1: 105–118.
- De Martino, G. 2008. *Théorie des moments, Tango, Transe: recherches pour une ré-conceptualisation de l'idée de transe et de bioénergie*. MA dissertation (unpublished), Paris: Paris 8 University.

- _____. 2012. *Une perspective sur le Teyyam dans la recherche de l'acteur*. MA dissertation (unpublished), Paris: Paris 8 University.
- Dixon, S. 2016. Cybernetic-Existentialism. In: *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, 12(1): 11–30.
- Dubost, P. 1971. Danses rituelles du Kerala. In: *Le Nouveau Planète N°21: rites théâtres et possession*. Paris: Planète.
- Falletti, C. and G. Sofia. 2011. *Nuovi dialoghi tra teatro e neuroscienze*. Roma: Editoria & Spettacolo.
- Fawcett, F. 1901. Nayars of Malabar. In: *Madras Governmental Bulletin*, III(3): 188–322.
- Ferrari, P. F. and G. Rizzolatti (eds.). 2015. *New Frontiers in Mirror Neurons Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman, J. R. 1991. *Purity and Violence: Sacred Power in the Teyyam Worship of Malabar*. PhD thesis (unpublished), University of Pennsylvania.
- _____. 1993. Performing Possession: Ritual and Consciousness in the Teyyam Complex of Northern Kerala. In: H. Brückner, L. Lothar, and M. Aditya (eds.). *Flags of Flame: Studies in South Asian Folk Culture*. New Delhi: Manohar: 109–138.
- _____. 1997. Possession Rites in the Tantric Temples: A Case Study from Northern Kerala. In: *DISKUS Internet Journal of Religion*, 2(2). http://basr.ac.uk/diskus_old/diskus1-6/FREEMAN.TXT (last accessed November 2016).
- _____. 1998. Formalized Possession among the Tantric and Teyyams of Malabar. In: *South Asia Research*, 18(1):73–98.
- _____. 1999a. Dynamic of the Person in the Worship and Sorcery of Malabar. In: J. Assayag and J. Tarabout (eds.). *La possession en Asie du Sud: parole corps, territoire, Puruṣārtha*, 21. Paris: EHESS: 149–181.
- _____. 1999b. Gods, Groves and the Culture of Nature in Kerala. In: *Modern Asian Studies*, 33(2): 257–302.
- _____. 2003. The Teyyam Tradition of Kerala. In: G. Flood (ed.). *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell: 307–326. <http://cincinnatitemple.com/articles/BlackwellCompanionToHinduism.pdf>.

- _____. 2006. Shifting Form of the Wandering Yogi: The Teyyam of Bhairavan. In: D. Shulman and D. Tragarajan (eds.). *Masked rituals and performance in South Asia*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.
- _____. 2013. Arresting Possession: Spirit Medium in the Multimedia of Malabar. In: U. Hüsken and A. Michaels (eds.). *South Indian Festivals on the Move*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 135–168.
- George, P. J. 2009. Wedded to Life. The Paliyans of Kerala. In: G. N. Devy, G. V. Davis and K. K. Chakravarty (eds.). *Indigeneity: Culture and Representation: Proceedings of the 2008 Chotro Conference on Indigenous Languages, Culture, and Society*. Vol. 1. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.
- Gründ, F. 1996. *Teyyam du Kerala, Tchiloli de São Tomé: une approche ethno-scénologique*. PhD (unpublished), Paris 8 University.
- Gabriel T. 2010. *Playing God: Belief and Ritual of the Muttappan Cult of North Malabar*. Sheffield: Equinox.
- Ishii, M. 2013. Playing with Perspectives: Spirit Possession, Mimesis, and Permeability in the Buuta Ritual in South India. In: *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 19(4): 795–812.
- _____. 2015. Wild Sacredness and the Poiesis of Transactional Networks: Relational Divinity and Spirit Possession in the Buta Ritual of South India. In: *Asian Ethnology*, 74(1): 87–110.
- Kawai, N., M. Honda, S. Nakamura, P. Samatra, K. Sukardika, Y. Nakatani and T. Oohashi. 2001. Catecholamines and Opioid Peptides Increase in Plasma in Humans During Possession Trances. In: *Neuroreport* 12(16): 3419–3423.
- Kearney, M. 1995. The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*: 547–565.
- Kent, E. F. 2013. *Sacred Groves and Local Gods: Religion and Environmentalism in South India*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Klein G. and S. Noeth. 2011. *Emerging Bodies: the Performance of World-making in Dance and Choreography*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Koga, M. 2003. The Politics of Ritual and Art in Kerala: Controversies Concerning the Staging of Teyyam. In: *Journal of the Japanese Association for South Asian Studies*, 15: 54–79. <https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/>

- article/jjasas1989/2003/15/2003_15_54/_article (last accessed December 2016).
- Koga, M. 2007. Validity of Sanskritization Model: In the Case of the Teyyam Ritual in South India. In: *Shūkyō kenkyū*, 81: 143–164.
- Komath, R. 2013. *Political Economy of the 'Theyyam'—A Study of the Time-Space Homology*. PhD dissertation. Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/30551> (last accessed: November 2016).
- Krishnan, J. 2015. Adaptation As Intersemiotic Translation: A Study Focusing on the Visual Text Kalyattom, an Adaptation of Othello. In: *Best IJHAMS*, 3(2): 47–52.
- Kurup, K. K. N. 1973. *The Cult of Teyyam and Hero Worship in Kerala*. Indian Folklore Series 21. Calcutta: Indian Publications.
- . 1982. Memorial Tablets in Kerala. In: S. Settar and G. D. Sontheimer (eds.). *Memorial Stones: A Study of Their Origin, Significance and Variety*. Dharward: Institute of Indian Art History, Karnatak University: 243–250.
- . 1986. *Teyyam: A Ritual Dance of Kerala*. Thiruvananthapuram: Department of Public Relations, Government of Kerala. <http://vijaybabu.blogspot.it/2004/05/theyyam-ritual-dance-of-kerala-dr.html> (last accessed: November 2016).
- Lapassade, G. 1976. *Essai sur la transe*. Paris : Editions Universitaires.
- Leeb, R., C. Keinrath, D. Friedman, C. Guger, R. Scherer, C. Neuper and G. Pfurtscheller. 2006. Walking by Thinking: The Brainwaves Are Crucial, Not the Muscles!. In: *Presence*, 15(5): 500–514.
- Leiris, M. 1958. *La possession et ses aspects théâtraux chez les Ethiopiens de Gondar*. Paris: Plon.
- Lewis, I. M. 2003. Trance, Possession, Shamanism and Sex. In: *Anthropology of Consciousness*, 14(1): 20–39.
- Marar, T. V. G. 2010. *Theyyam Arts in Malabar*. Kannur: Samayam Publications.
- Marchesini, R. 2002. *Post-human: verso nuovi modelli di esistenza*. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.

- . 2009. *Il tramonto dell'uomo: La prospettiva post-umanista*. Bari: Dedalo.
- Menicacci A. and E. Quinz (eds.). 2001. *La scena digitale: Nuovi media per la danza*. Venezia: Marsilio.
- Menon, D. M. 1993. The Moral Community of the teyyattam: Popular Culture in Late Colonial Malabar. In: *Studies in History*, 9: 187–217.
- Mishra, J. N., and P. K. Chouhan. 2005. *Marma and its Management*. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia.
- Nair, S. 2003. *Theyyam Charisma*. Kannur: AUM Communications.
- Nair, K. K. 2013. *By Sweat and Sword. Trade, Diplomacy and War in Kerala through the Ages*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Nambiar, K S. 1996. *The Ritual Art of Teyyam and Bhūtārdhane Theatrical Performance with Spirit Mediumship*. New Delhi: Navrang—Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.
- Nambiar, B. 1995. Photographing Teyyam. In: *India International Centre Quarterly*, 22(2/3): 132–134.
- Nyssen, H. and S. Wespieser (eds.). 1996. *La scène et la terre. Question d'ethnoscénologie*. Paris: Maison des Cultures du Monde-Babel.
- Oschman, J. L. 2000 (revised ed. 2015). *Energy Medicine: The Scientific Basis*. Edinburgh: Elsevier.
- Oohashi, T., N. Kawai, M. Honda, S. Nakamura, M. Morimoto, E. Nishina and T. Maekawa. 2002. Electroencephalographic Measurement of Possession Trance in the Field. In: *Clinical Neurophysiology*, 113(3): 435–445.
- Paniker, N. 1992 (revised ed. 2005). *Nangiar Koothu*. Documentation of Kutiyyattam Series N.2. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal: 44–46.
- Pallath, J. J. 1995. *Teyyam: An Analytical Study of the Folk Culture, Wisdom and Personality*. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.
- Panikkar, K. N. 2001. “Teyyateyyam” Once a God-dancer, Now a God-head. In: *Indian Literature*, 45: 143–165.
- Payyanad, R. 2001. Teyyam and our Times. In: *Indian Folklife*, 1(1): 11–12.

- Pekala, R. J. and V. K. Kumar. 2000. Operationalizing Trance I: Rationale and Research Using a Psychophenomenological Approach. In: *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, 43(2): 107–135.
- Pekala, R. J. 2002. Operationalizing Trance II: Clinical Application Using a Psychophenomenological Approach. In: *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, 44(3–4): 241–255.
- Pereira, Filipe J. 2015. *A Performance como Ritual—da Arte como Veículo de Jerzy Grotowski ao Theyyam do Norte Malabar*. MA dissertation, Coimbra University, Portugal. <http://hdl.handle.net/10316/29746> (last accessed: November 2016).
- Philomina, K. V. 2009. *Folks Arts of Kerala*. Kannur: Sreekandapuram.
- Pillai, H. S. 1994. *The Use and Functions of Rituals in Modern Malayalam Theatre. Their Relevance to the Ritual Concepts in the Theatres of Antonin Artaud and Jerzy Grotowski*. PhD, Kottayam, Mahatma Gandhi University. http://ietd.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/606/13/13_appendix%20i.pdf (last accessed: November 2016).
- Popat, S. 2002. The TRIAD Project: Using Internet Communications to Challenge Students' Understandings of Choreography. In: *Research in Dance Education*, 3 (1): 21–34.
- Popat, S. and S. Palmer. 2005. Creating Common Ground: Dialogues between Performance and Digital Technologies. In: *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, 1(1): 47–65.
- Popat, S. 2013. *Invisible Connections: Dance, Choreography and Internet Communities*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Pradier, J. M. 1998. *Ethnoscénologie: la chair de l'esprit*. Paper on-line, UQAM. <https://effetsdepresence.uqam.ca/upload/files/articles/ethnoscenologie.pdf> (last accessed: December 2016).
- . 2001. L'ethnoscénologie. Vers une scénologie générale. In: *L'Annuaire théâtral: revue québécoise d'études théâtrales*, 29: 51–68.
- Raji, R. and K. Raveendran. 2011. Worship and Possible Conservation of Plants with Special Reference to Hindu Cult. In: *Journal of Ecobiology*, 28(2): 159–162.

- Rizzolatti, G. and C. Sinigaglia. 2008. *Mirrors in the Brain: How Our Minds Share Actions and Emotions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rizzolatti, G., L. Fogassi and V. Gallese. 2006. Mirrors in the Mind. In: *Scientific American*, 295(5): 54–61.
- Sandten, C. 2013. *Kaliyattam* (the Play of God) by Jayaraj—Polymorphous and Postcolonial Poetics in an Indian Othello-Adaptation. In: J. Gohrisch and E. Grunkemeier (eds.). *Postcolonial Studies across the Disciplines*. Amsterdam—New York: Rodopi: 305–322.
- Seth, P. 2000. *Reflections of the Spirit: The Teyyam of Malabar*. New York: Dialectica.
- Sharma, K. D. 1989. The Calcutta International Theatre, Dance, and Martial Arts Seminar and Festival: A Week of Revelation and Confusion. In: *Asian Theatre Journal*, 6(2): 194–201.
- Singleton, B. 1997. K. N. Panikkar's Teyyateyyam: Resisting Interculturalism through Ritual Practice. In: *Theatre Research International*, 22: 162–169.
- Smith, F. M. 2012. *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sieler, R. 2015. *Lethal Spots, Vital Secrets—Medicine and Martial Arts in South India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sofia, G. (ed.). 2009. *Dialoghi tra teatro e neuroscienze*. Roma: Edizioni Alegre.
- . 2013. *Le Acrobazie dello Spettatore. Dal teatro alle neuroscienze e ritorno*. Roma: Bulzoni.
- Tarabout, G. 1986. *Sacrifier et donner à voir en pays Malabar, les fêtes de temple au Kerala (Inde du Sud): étude anthropologique*. Paris: EFEO.
- . 2005. Malabar Gods, Nation-Building and World Culture: On Perceptions of the Local and the Global. In: C. J. Fuller and J. Assayag (eds.). *Globalizing India: Perspectives from below*. London: Anthem: 185–209.

- Trikaripur, S. A. 2013. *Mooring Mirror: A Mooring Mirror between Man and God*. Chirakkal–Kannur: Kerala Folklore Academy.
- Uchiyamada, Y. 1995. *Sacred Grove (Kaavu): Ancestral Land of 'Landless Agricultural Labourers' in Kerala, India*. PhD. London School of Economics & Political Science, London.
- . 1998. The Grove Is Our Temple: Contested Representations of Kaavu in Kerala, South India. In: L. Rival (ed.). *The Social Life of Trees: Anthropological Perspectives on Tree Symbolism*. Oxford: Berg: 177–197.
- _____. 2002. Projecting Textual Identities on the Forest of Kuravas in Kerala. In: *Puruṣārtha*, 23: 111–129.
- Thurston, E. 1912, *Omen and Superstitions of Southern India*. London: T. Fisher Unwin.
- Vadakkiniyil, D. 2009. *Teyyam: The Poiesis of Rite and God in Malabar, South India*. PhD dissertation (unpublished). Bergen University.
- _____. 2010. Images of Transgression: Teyyam in Malabar. In: *Social Analysis*, 54(2): 130–150.
- Vijisha, P. and E. G. V. Raja. 2016. Existence of Untouchability towards Maari Theyyam—A Traditional Art Form of Kerala. In: *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(03): 260–263.
- Vinod, A. R. 2014. *Visual Aesthetics of Form and Colour in Theyyam and Padayani*. PhD thesis, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/25900> (last accessed December 2016).
- Zarrilli, P. (ed.). 1995 (second edition 2005). *Acting (Re)considered: A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. London: Routledge. [https://eclass.uop.gr/modules/document/file.php/TS235/Acting%2B\(Re\)considered.pdf](https://eclass.uop.gr/modules/document/file.php/TS235/Acting%2B(Re)considered.pdf) (last accessed: December 2016).
- . 1998. *When the Body Becomes All Eyes: Paradigms, Discourses and Practices of Power in Kalarippayattu, A South Indian Martial Art*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press India.
- _____. 2009. *Psychophysical Acting: An Intercultural Approach after Stanislavski*. New York: Routledge.

Winkelman, M. 1986. Trance States: A Theoretical Model and Cross-Cultural Analysis. In: *Ethos*, 14(2): 174–203.

Wohlschlag, D. 2004. Le calendrier malayālam. In: A. Laurent. *Les feux de la déesse—rituels villageois du Kerala*, Annexe I. Lausanne: Payot: 381–383.