

ARCHITECT-ING AS WORLD BUILDING  
Knowing the world through Kaliyāṭṭam of Malabar coast, India

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**Abstract**

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Kaḷiyāṭṭam is a natureculture<sup>1</sup> expression and feeling of the Malabar coast, India. A human-turned-deity, the Teyyaṃ in Kaḷiyāṭṭam critiques the subject-centric and eye-centric worlds. This thesis attempts to illustrate this concept through architectural lenses. In Kaḷiyāṭṭam, subjects are open, continuously overflowing and expanding, blending all virtual and actual entities into reality. Kaḷiyāṭṭam questions the limited reality that polarizes the world into either subjects or objects by othering and distancing the world from the self. This thesis proposes a philosophy of architecture called architect-ing. This term explains architecture as the act of inhabiting a space

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<sup>1</sup> The term natureculture was coined by Donna J. Haraway to express that culture and nature are inextricably interwoven and are in a complex entangled relationship remaking each other. The concept dissolves the boundaries of nature and culture and breaks the dichotomy of nature and culture (Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*).

and mapping different modes of existence triggered by the interactions and relations between the subject (or the I) and the rest. Understanding architect-ing as world-building illustrates architecture-making in Kaḷiyāṭṭam as an emergent, habitual procedural process. Knowing the world through Kaḷiyāṭṭam shows that architecture is integrally kinetic and plural. A procedural architect-ing process builds a more inclusive world by shifting focus into relationships that encourage the co-existence of multiple mutually inclusive diverse realities.

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Amrita Vinod

For my Amma, who stood up for me, always.

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<sup>2</sup> All the images, videos and illustrations are from the authors documentations from February 2020 to February 2023.

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## PROLOGUE

4 a.m. on my watch in the morning, February 2020: Teyyaṃ bit the throat of a living fowl, tore the bird, and strewed its feathers, flesh, and blood all around. Pieces of flesh and blood flashed in front of my eyes, and I stepped four steps back in reflex from the first row. I smelled blood and flesh more than anyone. I froze, but the people around me were moving.

This is the time of Uṛayal in Kaḷiyāṭṭam, where the Teyyaṃ reaches the peak of his rage. Puli marañña thoṅṭaccan Teyyaṃ fell unconscious! Devotees carried the unconscious Teyyaṃ, and the crowd dispersed within seconds. The recital goes on “Nariyayi veṣam marañnu pōyi,”—Kari turned himself into a tiger.

This is the story of the Teyyaṃ: A Janmi (an upper-class-landlord) brought two Adiyannar(s) (a term used to refer to lower caste working class when the caste system<sup>3</sup> was strong in Kerala) to agricultural land for work. Kāri, their son, was an exceptional child who had extraordinary charisma. He learned martial arts (Kalari) and skills that could transform his appearance according

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<sup>3</sup> According to John Nesfield, caste is "a class of the community which disowns any connection with any other class and can neither intermarry nor eat nor drink with any but persons of their own community" and to Herbert Hope Risley, "a caste may be defined as a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with specific occupation, claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same professional callings and are regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community" as per the reference in *CASTES IN INDIA: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development* by B. R. Ambedkar—the paper presented at an Anthropology Seminar taught by Dr. A. A. Goldenweiser Columbia University, 9th May 1916. Text first printed in: *Indian Antiquary* Vol. XLVI (May 1917) and Text source: *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 1. Bombay: Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1979, pp. 3-22. Edited by Frances W. Pritchett, has consisted only of numbering the paragraphs and fixing a few typographical errors (Pritchett)

to his needs. Kāri came to be known as Kāri Gurukkal in his community— guru means guide or mentor. At the time, the King of Aḷḷaṭam (regions of North Kerala) suffered from madness, and the ruling class offered Janmi half the wealth of the Aḷḷaṭam king if he could make Kāri attend to this problem. Janmi, flattered by this offer, asked Kāri to do the needful, i.e., to bring a tiger's mane and tail, which were the prescribed remedies. Not being mindful of warnings from his deities, Kuṛatti, Guḷikan, and Poṭṭan Teyyaṃ(s)<sup>4</sup>, Kāri transformed into a tiger form and procured medicines from the forest. However, he could only return to his human form only when someone sprinkled rice water on him and beat him with a broom washed in cow-dung water— and for this, he trusted his wife to help him. But she was terrified by his tiger appearance and couldn't recognize him. In pain and vexation, he tore her apart and returned to the forest forever. After the King's recovery, he refused to reward both Janmi and Kāri. Later, Kāri's curse put the King back into his mental illness, and to alleviate it, the King had to pay the debts and please Kāri. From then, Kāri Gurukkal lived and was worshiped as Puli Marañña Thoṭṭaccan Teyyaṃ (Madayi). Thaha Madayi sketches this story in the novel *Oru Dalit Daivathinte Jeevitharekha*.

If I can recollect: His tiger-like gait, furious nature, and the sacrifice of a fowl with bare hands and teeth told the same mythical story. The fowl was the substitute for his wife, and he was blinded with anger and agony of betrayal—it maddened him to the extent that he saw his enemies, the betrayers, in everyone around. He attacked everyone. I was seated in the front row of the crowd, but I was asked to be more cautious by people around me as Teyyaṃ could see the women who betrayed him in me. I became a part of the Kaḷiyāṭṭam, both consciously and subconsciously.

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<sup>4</sup> Teyyaṃ means God or a deity. Kuṛatti, Guḷikan, and Poṭṭan are different deities or Teyyaṃ(s) worshiped in northern Kerala like the Puli marañña thoṭṭaccan Teyyaṃ.

This experience came a long way within me and is the primary motivation for this thesis work.

My experiences in Kaḷiyāṭṭam are a significant part of the thesis thinking process, and this thesis is effectively a product of those experiences and what I learned academically later in graduate school, to be specific, the fashion and architecture research and studio by Prof. Vikramāditya Prakāsh, the course Eye + Mind and an Interdisciplinary Praxis Lab led by Prof. Phillip Thurtle at the University of Washington. I draw concepts from philosophy, performance theory, and architectural theory in my attempt to illustrate what I learned about architecture through Kaḷiyāṭṭam.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

February 2020: The Paḷlipraṃ śrī putiya Bhagavati temple on the Malabar coast of Kerala was in a festive mood that night. Devotees were whirling around, and a musical recitation ran amidst the babble of conversation in the background.

Nearing midnight, I saw a gradual movement in the crowd in a particular direction. I flowed with the people, and we arrived at an open ground in front of the shrine—a structure similar to a stand-alone Garbhagriha (the innermost sanctuary of a temple where the idol is consecrated). As the people moved, they created organically arranged 'seats' for themselves; some standing, some seated in the front closer to an intangible fence defining a space around the shrine to welcome someone. The firelit temple ambiance, the rituals performed in front of the shrine, and the changing tone of the group recital of songs conveyed an awaited arrival.

I sat on the ground in the first row, holding my phone as a camera. My friend Athira warned me, "Step back! You are not familiar with Puli marañña thoṅṅaccan Teyyaṃ; he might attack you." I stood behind her, three rows back. Athira explained that the divine entity, the Teyyaṃ, in his furious trance-like state, may attack people in his proximity. I couldn't imagine such a god-like being. My eyes were wandering, observing people in a perpetual murmur, their actions and the atmosphere around them.

The space around the shrine was in preparation, and there were recitals in the background backed with percussion instruments led by singers to the left of the shrine. There was a truncated

pyramidal-shaped mound made of mud, not more than two feet high, close to the Tara (foundation) with lamps and flowers. I knew that the Tara was a revered seat of deities. A Pīṭhaṃ (a seat or a pedestal for placing an idol) was put toward the center of the stage-like space. The entire place was decorated with flowers, tender coconut leaves, and red pigments.

Finally, from a temporary structure made of bamboo and coconut leaves towards the backside of the shrine, the Teyyaṃ walked out, moving his legs in an uneven rhythm. He paused for a minute and saw his reflection in a mirror handed to him by a person following him. His body moved while he stared at his reflection. In a split second, he turned away from the mirror and continued his steps forward, which were heavier and faster than before.

As he moved to a well-lit area, I could see him better from a distance. A half-oblong-shaped double curved ornate headgear was more than thrice the height of his face. It corresponded to the deep red face painting, lined with black and various shades of crimson. Minute details on the headgear, with silver and gold bead-like embellishments and symbols drawn on the face with multiple shades of red, multiplied the grandeur of his appearance. On his upper body, he wore a red full-sleeved cloth with ornament-like elements resembling necklaces, garlands, and bangles. As he moved closer, I saw artifacts resembling traditional weapons in his hands. He had thick rings (cilampū) around his ankles, complementing the deep red pleated cloth lined with dark crimson and black lines below his waist. His appearance was utterly unfamiliar to me.

He kept moving in circles in front of the shrine, murmuring. Three other Teyyaṃ(s) (Kuratti, Guḷikan, and Poṭṭan Teyyaṃ) accompanied and followed Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ without deviating

much from their circular movements. They seemed to speak among themselves in a language unknown to me.

Over the next few hours, the tempo of the music and footsteps escalated, body movements became heavier, and facial expressions slowly became vociferous and violent. Suddenly, with a tiger-like gait, Puli marañña thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ ran into the crowd seated in the front, screaming at the highest pitch. I jumped backward reflexively. He attacked many in the front rows, and one person who refused to step back was beaten. His people stood behind him to control him in this fierce state, preventing him from doing further harm.



Figure 1. Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ, February 2020

The Teyyam reached his zenith at about 4 am when he bit the throat of a living fowl and tore it apart. The head of the fowl was in his mouth, but the body still moved in his hand (see Figure 1). He tore the body with his hands and threw the pieces everywhere. His fierce animal-like figure ran into the crowd, and to my surprise, many people moved with him. Lost in the crowd, I moved closer, but before I understood what was happening around me, I saw Thoṇṭaccan Teyyam falling into a semi-conscious state with the fowl's head still in his mouth. People who stood next to him held him and took him a dozen steps backward.

The recitals continued, and the other three Teyyams sacrificed many more fowls. This time it was not by tearing them apart with their bare hands but by slitting their throats with knives and allowing the blood to drain out. Within the next few minutes, people around me started approaching the Teyyam(s)— it was the time when the divine entity talked to his people. The crowd dispersed within the next few hours, and the Teyyam(s) dissolved into a stream of people like commoners.

Through this master's thesis, I intend to learn about Kaḷiyāṭṭam from an architectural point of view to ask: What is the architecture of Teyyam in Kaḷiyāṭṭam? How is architecture created through mediation and transduction across generations? What can be inferred about the nature of architecture production, lives, and operations in the community from the world of Teyyam? This thesis is effectively a conversation between my experiences in Kaḷiyāṭṭam and existing scholarship from an interdisciplinary point of view.

## 1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Some of the earliest references to Teyyaṃ are found in colonial historiography. Historians misunderstood Teyyaṃ in many ways, and that is reflected in their interpretations. William Logan's *Malabar Manual* described Teyyaṃ as a ritual occasionally performed during the fifth month of pregnancy (Logan 174). Scholars like CA Innes and Evans in the *Malabar Gazetteer* and J. A. Hammerton in *The Manners and Customs of Mankind* saw Teyyaṃ as a form of devil dance (Innes and Evans 124; Hammerton). Henricks William Wiser wrote, "This should not be suffered to continue even for a moment" (Wiser 27). Colonial historians saw this "devil dance" as a destructive, barbaric, superstitious practice worthy of destruction in the name of progress. As a part of the 'civilizing' mission, the British in India banned Teyyaṃ in the 19th century (Wiser 28).

Teyyaṃ or Kaḷiyāṭṭam is the cultural expression of North Malabar, 'performed' during months of Tulāṃ and ending in Edavaṃ—which corresponds to the period from October to June<sup>5</sup>. Teyyaṃ(s) are performed in Pulayar communities and other communities like Malayan and Vannan in Kerala—to name only two. "Teyyaṃ is a mixture of several elements such as dance, story, and song" (Jayarajan 7). Jayarajan cataloged many such different types of Teyyaṃs of Malabar in his monograph *Teyyaṃ: A Devine Dance Tradition of Kerala* and identified 'rapid cultural osmosis' in and out of Teyyaṃ. Freeman, in the article *The Teyyaṃ Tradition of Kerala*, highlighted the concept of cultural osmosis in different words like this: "Historically, Teyyaṃs literally enshrine the legacy of the way local deities, often themselves the apotheoses of human ancestors, have alternatively constructed or come in terms with caste Hinduism, as their lives are liturgically

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<sup>5</sup> Apart from names like Kaḷiyāṭṭam, Kōlam and Thira for the act, both the deity and the act sometimes gets referred as Teyyaṃ; this thesis uses Kaḷiyāṭṭam for the act and Teyyaṃ for the deity.

recounted and ritually enacted from a largely subaltern religious perspective” (Rich and Flood 307). Teyyaṃ has been learned and practiced through multiple generations helping to situate Teyyaṃ and people within the socio-cultural networks of the region.

From a folkloristics point of view, Payyanad<sup>6</sup> observed that folklores, including Teyyaṃ, require a regional, contextual approach. Teyyaṃ, as a part of folklore, is by nature a communication that exists only in relation to other folklore through different genres like satires, jokes, songs, etc. (Payyanad), and thus, one needs to search for the underpinnings of ideas in Teyyaṃ superimposing all available mediums of knowledge.

Teyyaṃ had been under historical lenses in post-colonial research in Kerala. While Karippath wrote that Teyyaṃ is a ritualistic agile dance of a deity performed in groves in the local jungle (Kāvū) amidst rhythmic drumbeats and the jingling of bronze anklets (cilampū) (Karippath), Sanjeevan Azheekode<sup>7</sup> read Teyyaṃ as a worship tradition which includes faith, rituals, songs, rhythm, dance, and an oracle known as Tīra, Kōlam, or Kalīyāṭṭam in different localities (Azheekode). Vishnu Namboothiri differentiated Teyyaṃ from major Hindu ways of worship; According to Namboothiri, Teyyaṃ is a ritualistic dance in the North Malabar that is a differentiated form of worship tradition in comparison to idol worship of Hinduism (Namboothiri, *Folklore Dictionary*; Namboothiri, *Teyyaṃ*; Namboothiri, *Teyyaṃ Thira Thottangal*)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Raghavan Payyanad wrote a detailed account of Teyyaṃ from a folkloristic point of view, that included analysis of myths, stories, interviews, line drawings, and sketches with detailed explanations of structures in Teyyaṃ—rituals, recitals, worship, sacrifice, stories, myths, worldviews, and their regional variations.

<sup>7</sup> Azheekode’s Malayalam book *Theyyathinte Jathivazhakkam* discussed the social dynamics and the responsibilities which each community—within the hierarchical power structure—hold in all stages of Teyyaṃ.

<sup>8</sup> Vishnu Namboothiri, through decades of documentation, created a catalogue of Teyyaṃs, with explanations of ritual rites and songs. Like Namboothiri, Deepu P. Kuruppu also focused on the stories and songs of Teyyaṃ—called Tōṭṭam Pāṭū—and their interpretations in relation to the myths and history.

A significant number of documentaries, curated photo documentations, and even travel promotions are available based on Teyyam. Observations on Teyyam align with the other existing literature—Rajagopalan and Komath noted: “Teyyam is an alchemy of feudal mores- performing communities, rural patrons, nostalgia and a strong call of the roots in a global culture that plays itself out year after year when Teyyam dominates the cultural calendar of the year” (Rajagopalan and Komath 71). While they stitched photographs of Teyyam with writings drawn from their documentation, Seth<sup>9</sup> presented her photo documentation with a narrative of her experiences in Kerala, where she lived from 1979-85. Seth wrote, “People who live in close proximity with nature not only become deeply conscious of how greatly their survival depends on their benevolence but aware of how closely they share their world with other beings and forces” (Seth 12). Teyyam is a part of life in Malabar, evident from the photo documentaries and observations of these experts.

Historians have debates questioning the antiquity of Teyyam. Kurup found that Teyyam is a cult with an uninterrupted continuity of 1500 years (by referring to hero-worship in Sangam literature). Its origins can be traced to rituals and practices of ‘primitive’ societies (Kurup, *The Cult of Teyyam and Hero Worship in Kerala*) where people cherished the memory of the heroes and the worship of their spirits, which developed into a folk dance (Kurup, *Teyyam of Kerala*). Chandran averred that Kurup’s observation was an attempt to historicize hero deities and wrote that Teyyam originated in close association with the fertility cult and showed a remarkable power of assimilation from various other cultic practices<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Notable works on Teyyam by Pepita Seth are *Motions of Spirit, the Teyyams of Malabar, Reflections of the Spirit: The Teyyams of Malabar* and her next work is *In God's Mirror: The Teyyams of Malabar*.

<sup>10</sup> Chandran worked on the formations and transformations of Teyyam, reflecting on its history, and analyzed ritual as ideology. In his book *Ritual as ideology, text, and context of Teyyam*, raised doubts on the word “worship,”; He found it misleading, as it is doubtful whether the innocent victims or heroes in history were absorbed into cults either to satisfy the urge of worship or to perpetuate the memory or the message of those events in which they lost

Pallath<sup>11</sup> wrote that Teyyaṁ has a central place in the life of Hindu Pulayars<sup>12</sup>, and every single event in the life of the Pulayars is celebrated either with Teyyaṁ or in the context of it (Pallath 57). For instance, Kenthron Pāṭṭu is a ceremony where Teyyaṁ is performed for child-bearing, Kannalkalam Pāṭṭu is at the fifth month of pregnancy, Arangattu Mangalam is when a male child is around fifteen years (an initiation ceremony after which the boy starts to work in the fields), and Koolikettu is performed one year after death. These are a few of the many life events celebrated with Teyyaṁ in Pulayar’s life. Apart from these, other Teyyaṁ(s) are also performed annually, like Poṭṭan Teyyaṁ. Pallath found Poṭṭan Teyyaṁ unique, and it embodies the ethos of the Pulayar social life, affirming substantial co-relations between people, nature, and their worldviews through Teyyaṁ. While concurring with the common understanding of Teyyaṁ as one of the popular religious ritual art traditions in North Kerala, Markose understood Poṭṭan Teyyaṁ as a symbolic resistance of Pulayars to an upper caste hegemony in Kerala. The Teyyaṁ works as a social mirror and a medium for social change (Markose 98)<sup>13</sup> (Rich and Flood). Both Pallath and Markose focused on Pulayar communities with a special focus on their primary deity, Poṭṭan Teyyaṁ.

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their lives. In the book, Chandran, by quoting Victor Turner, looks into the specific cultural formations of Teyyaṁ—the dominant forms of a cultural-aesthetic ‘mirror’ in which it achieves a certain degree of self-reflexivity (Turner 16). This book clarifies the rapid transformation of folk culture and the shifting meanings of their forms, which highlights the need for extensive critical study of Teyyaṁ from different disciplines.

<sup>11</sup> J.J Pallath investigated the changes in the symbolic realm of the Pulayar community in Kerala resulting from social changes due to religious conversions.

<sup>12</sup> A caste group that occupied the bottom rung of a strong caste hierarchy in South India

<sup>13</sup> In *Ritual and Rhythm of Life, A study of Teyyaṁ in North Malabar* Markose analyzed Poṭṭan Teyyaṁ as a symbolic discourse. Detailed description of Tōṭṭam-Pāṭṭu (the musical rendering during Teyyaṁ), rituals, and photographs of Poṭṭan Teyyaṁ through anthropological lenses exposed complex relations of symbols and space-delineation with the life of the Pulayar community in Kerala.

Dineshan Vadakkiniyil<sup>14</sup> described Muttappan Teyyam and found that “[t]his particular Teyyam has the potency to de-territorialize and reterritorialize, continually reinforcing itself, asserting its autonomy and transgressing its boundaries” (Vadakkiniyil 130). Vadakkiniyil proved this by illustrating the relationship between power and ritual worship, the politics of devaluation of Teyyam as ‘art’, and the assertion of autonomy within caste structures. Interpreting Teyyam solely as ‘art’ makes it empty and a part of the system, an artifact representing national identity, and it reveals the paradox of Teyyam, i.e., that it has the potential to resist powers, yet at the same time, it has been co-opted within the state’s structure (Vadakkiniyil 131). On the same note, Monacha found differences between ritual and art in the context of Teyyam and urged readers to observe Teyyam devoid of politics and religious ties (Monacha). However, Teyyam was formed in the hierarchical social structure that existed in Kerala, and the disruptions of such social structure have enabled the translation of the Teyyam into many contemporary social stages. For instance, the presence of Teyyam forms in rallies, protests, and tourism<sup>15</sup>.

Menon wrote that the success of communism in Kerala lies in its realization of shared symbols and values— which includes Teyyam—between both landowners and cultivators without significant alterations in the power structures (Menon), proving politics as another realm where the history of Teyyam becomes a social tool<sup>16</sup>. For this same reason, upholding Marxist views, the Communist political party uses Teyyam as a protest or a symbol of resistance against the

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<sup>14</sup> Vadakkiniyil wrote about Muttappan Teyyam in relation to the changing socio-cultural dynamics of North Malabar in the article *Images of Transgression, Teyyam in Malabar*.

<sup>15</sup> Ramakrishna Monacha in his book *Thulutheyyangal*, (Malayalam), discussed Thulu Teyyams, which are performed in Thulu Nadu or the southern coastal Karnataka region— a regional variation called Boota Kola (Kuliyar, Pathaliyamma, Kundora Chamundi are among the few mentioned by Monacha).

<sup>16</sup> Dilip Menon, in the book *Caste, nationalism, and communism in South India: Malabar, 1900-1948*, focused on the social history of communism in Kerala.

exploitative caste system that existed in Kerala and incorporated forms of Teyyam intending to symbolize their ideologies. Teyyam forms are used in campaigns, protests, advertisements, travel, and tourism. They are celebrated through photography and videography, boosting the living socio-cultural narrative threads behind them. For the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in Kannur, Teyyam serves as a major cultural movement, binding the party to the people ('On Its Red Attire, CPM Pins a Political Strategy'). Teyyam also appeared outside of a worship context during a 1981 Communist Party rally in a small village in Kerala—the rally featured Teyyam dancing after speeches made against capitalism, corruption, and suppression (Ashley *et al.*). Posters, rallies, and celebrations in Kerala continue to take up forms of Teyyams as a Marxist-inflected representation of protest and resistance against caste hierarchies.

By contrast, scholars such as Pallath have remarked that the copious use of Teyyam symbolism undermines Teyyam's sacredness. Although, they do concede that Teyyam is an ancient form of art that can act as a medium of communication, resistance, and protest (Pallath). In addition, Chandran noted that with the accelerated process of democratization, fading beliefs, and changes in mass culture, the artistic expressions of the Teyyam have not survived—and it means that the Teyyam remains as a hollow shell (Chandran). In contrast, Ashley and Holloman found the appearance of Teyyam in the 1981 Communist Party rally as a conscious effort to strip the ritual of its efficacy by demonstrating that it could be performed without rituals, beliefs, or offerings. Rally organizers wanted Teyyam to be a job, an art form, a way of making money, and not an act of belief or faith. They also underscore that these examples are not meant to point out corruptions or impurities in Teyyam; rather, it is to illustrate the open-endedness of the

“traditional” material (Ashley et al.)<sup>17</sup>. In their analysis, Teyyaṃ falls into neither of these categories.

Post-colonial literature on Teyyaṃ, from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, both in Malayalam and English, dealt with its ethno-anthropological, folkloristic, historical, socio-political, and performance theory aspects. I focus on an architectural study using Teyyaṃ, a discussion that has not gained attention even today. Scaffolding this research with the existing scholarship, I intend to commit to an interdisciplinary theory and history lens in my research on Teyyaṃ. This thesis aspires to start architectural conversations on Teyyaṃ, identifying its potential and relevance in the present world.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

This master's thesis is not only an effort to decolonize architectural thinking using Kaḷiyāṭṭam but, more importantly, it is an attempt to elucidate the reflections of processes in Kaḷiyāṭṭam on architectural thinking and production, criticizing the colonial structures in the post-colonial world. This effort is to think through Kaḷiyāṭṭam— a nature-cultural expression that has survived multiple environmental and socio-cultural onslaughts and is still thriving in a Eurocentric, anthropocentric post-colonial world— by letting our inability to comprehend the world of Teyyaṃ and the ways of knowing within it to haunt ourselves to the extent where it

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<sup>17</sup> In the book *Indian Theatre*, Wayne Ashley and Regina Holloman wrote that, outside of festivals, Teyyaṃs have also been performed during Kerala Tourist Week as entertainment, as a part of the folk-dance festival during Republic Day celebrations, at the opening ceremonies of the 1982 Asian Olympics in New Delhi, and at the Village Art Festival in Kerala.

does not let us un-see the need to be open towards different worlds created by multiple cultures and their amalgamations across the globe.

Working with the existing scholarship, I draw attention to architecture making, the nature of architecture production in Kaḷiyāṭṭam, and critique the subject-centric and eye-centric world<sup>18</sup>. Structured around four major questions, this research work asks: What does it mean to inhabit space in Kaḷiyāṭṭam? What is architecture, and what is the nature of architectural production in Kaḷiyāṭṭam? In light of the analysis, what do the inferences talk about Śvabhāv, i.e., the nature of architecture-making in the world-building process?

Born and brought up in Kerala, I grew up experiencing Kaḷiyāṭṭam and listening to stories of Teyyam. My identity as an outsider of Teyyam performing communities may call into doubt my authority to do any research related to Teyyam. Who has the authority to talk about Teyyam, and who does not? Does being a member of the community alone gives one the right to talk about Teyyam? What makes one able to think and write about Teyyam? Stating my stance and methodology as clearly as possible, I draw from my experiences in Kaḷiyāṭṭam and documentation done over three years between 2020 and 2023— both Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyam and Poṭṭan Teyyam (the clan deity of Pulayar community in Kerala)— in addition to the existing literature regarding both the Teyyams. I think of myself as a responsible listener and a sentient being who can feel and attempt to understand architecture making in Kaḷiyāṭṭam.

Through this thesis, I amplify voices of architectural thinking and world-building processes in

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<sup>18</sup> In the following pages of this thesis, I-centric, self-centric and subject-centric are interchangeably used and are the same. Similarly, both the terms eye-centric and vision-centric refer to the same.

Kaḷiyāṭṭam, and with their help, critique the subject-centric and eye-centric perspectives in architecture. Hence, this work can be understood as a step towards actualizing Spivak's call to be “open to learning from below, opening our minds to be haunted by the aboriginal” (Spivak 189)<sup>19</sup>.

I do not intend to represent anyone, nor do I give into the vicious subject-object conundrum asking who or what represents whom? In fact, in the second chapter of this thesis, I critique the self-centered eye-centric approach in architecture theory, where everything turns into a representation of some ‘thing.’ Understanding everything either as a subject or an object polarizes and divides the world, compartmentalizes, and assumes the world as ‘static,’ missing the integrally dynamic temporal nature of life. I refrain from this danger and question the sheer existence of a defined subject or an object. How is the subject or object formed, and how is that process influencing architecture-making and world-building in Kaḷiyāṭṭam? Being able to feel and listen responsibly can help to perceive the dynamic architecture making—architect-ing as a world-building in Kaḷiyāṭṭam. Responsible listening and feeling in this context refer to being aware of the openness of the subject and the ability to maintain a maximum level of open-ness possible to the interactions in Kaḷiyāṭṭam. By allowing oneself to do this, the act of listening becomes a way of ‘holding together,’ which will question the binary division of subject and object, opening a different philosophy of architecture— architect-ing as world-building.

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<sup>19</sup> Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*. Harvard University Press, 2012, p.189.



Figure 2. Urayal of Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ, February 2023

Understanding the architecture of Teyyaṃ as either the attire— the wearable forms— or as only the physical space created by body movements in Kaḷiyāṭṭam falls into the subject-object conundrum and representation arguments of the ‘I’- and eye-centric world. Chapter two illustrates this by analyzing the existing theories that build bridges between fashion and architecture. This thesis proposes a philosophy of inhabitation, diverting from the world of subjects and objects— architect-ing— to think about the nature of architecture-making in world-building.

One obvious eye-centric observation from a subject-centric stance is that the camera capturing the visuals of Teyyaṃ (see Figure 2) and the researcher as an observer who intends to produce subjective interpretations and representations of Kaḷiyāṭṭam objectifies Teyyaṃ, the ‘subject’ of this thesis work. I would urge the reader to break the assumption that there exists an inaccessible pure reality from a subject-oriented stance and to acknowledge the existence of multiple realities

traversing beyond the arguments of ‘biases’ and binaries. Considering each photograph and video as gateways to plural realities aids in knowing multiple worlds and their confluences. The research understands that the see-er immersed in the visible by their body—itsself visible— does not appropriate what they see. The see-er only merely approaches it by looking and opening into the world (Merleau-Ponty 124). Through documenting and analyzing Kaḷiyāṭṭam, my attempt is not to capture ‘the’ reality but to engender a ‘reality’ among the reader, author, and the Teyyam to think about an inclusive philosophy of architect-ing.

Who can bring out ‘the truth’ about Teyyam? In the post-colonial world, the chance of finding someone who can represent all Teyyam performing communities and give objective answers is nonexistent. Believing in the existence of pure meanings and that one can decode the ‘true’ meanings of drawings, actions, and colors (representations) in Kaḷiyāṭṭam is a question that is born out of postulation of a world of inert facts, which is a product of human subjectivity filled with hubris (Connolly 35). For me, there exists no ‘pure’ meaning, and my efforts in this thesis do not intend to discover one. Rather, it is an attempt to conceptualize a more inclusive philosophy of architecture through Kaḷiyāṭṭam of the Malabar coast because their voices of architecture-making and world-building have gone unheard due to the grave ignorance of ‘the modern.’

As a note to the reader: this thesis is not a late orientalist<sup>20</sup> account of Kaḷiyāṭṭam because this work does not represent the other, romanticize, categorize, or stereotype Kaḷiyāṭṭam. My first-

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<sup>20</sup> Edward Said’s orientalism is: created body of theory and practice that projects images of the orient, i.e., the East, towards the West. “The Orient is watched, since its almost (but never quite) offensive behavior issues out of a reservoir of infinite peculiarity; the European, whose sensibility tours the Orient, is a watcher, never involved, always detached” (Said 104); “indeed, it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely

hand experiences in Kaḷiyāṭṭam and the documentations from 2020 to 2023 help focus on the process of architecture-making as world-building in Kaḷiyāṭṭam— to shift from subject-centric thinking to a process-centric approach in architecture. Furthermore, by making conversations between my experiences and architectural learning, this thesis critiques the eye-centric representational assumptions that deceptively attempt to pre-define subjects and objects or the see-er and the seen. Thus, I do not represent anything or anyone but urge the reader to understand this as an attempt to conceptualize a more inclusive philosophy of architecture-making by using my ‘privilege’ of supporting as well as challenging education and the freedom enabling me to survive and live in multiple worlds projected by diverse naturecultures across the globe.

This thesis is a call to challenge oneself to turn inward to know the openness of the self and shift focus to the relationships and the processes of world-building.

### 1.3 CHAPTER OUTLINES

Chapter Two explains Kaḷiyāṭṭam as an accelerated architecture-making process— a moving temple. It begins by problematizing and questioning the assumption of the existence of defined subjects and objects. The first section examines the formation of the ‘I’ in Lacan’s mirror

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what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness, usually overriding the possibility that a more independent, or more skeptical, thinker might have had different views on the matter. In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand” (Said 71). Post-colonial discussion on the East West divide and how that reflects in the work is out of scope for this thesis.

stage using Teyyaṃ. The ‘I’ in the mirror stage projects a static self and an ideal self that functions in daily life. Such a concept reduces the self to a static image, a ‘representation.’ Establishing the overflowing open self helps to illustrate how incessant interactions in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ create space; by that, the chapter conceptualizes the nature of the overflowing self in space and sketches what it means to inhabit a space, feel architecture, create architecture, listen and live responsibly. With the concept of inhabitation and architect-ing, the chapter argues that Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ is an example of an accelerated architect-ing process and, by implication, a moving temple.

The third chapter deals with architecture making as a part of world-building in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ. Accounting for the capacious virtual and the obvious actuals in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ, the chapter explains the habitual emergent nature of architecture-making and world-building of Teyyaṃ and his devotees in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ— in the case of both Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan and Poṭṭan Teyyaṃs— something that is formed through everyone and no one at the same time. Further, to make a clear distinction between this philosophy of architect-ing and the situationist approach, I use the idea of Dhāranā from the article “Dhāranā: The Agency of Architecture in Decolonization” to contrast and profess the need to account for the virtual in architecture thinking. Chapter Three thereby reinforces the idea that one must start feeling and listening to architecture by illustrating complex nature architect-ing in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ. This moves away from self- and eye-centric knowledge production and world-building.

In light of the inferences gathered from the previous chapters, Chapter Four avers that architecture is integrally kinetic, i.e., the Śvabhāv or behavior of architecture is kinetic. Tying the idea of inhabitation that draws from the understanding of overflowing open self and its interactions in a

space with the realization of architect-ing as an emergent process that requires one to open up their mega-receptor—the body—to begin feeling and listening to the architecture process again, this chapter attempts to discover and propose a new, more inclusive, non-self-centric and non-eye-centric philosophy of architecture.

This thesis concludes with the inferences and open questions gathered through the praxis of thesis writing for further studies on this subject. In sum, through this effort, I intend to highlight the need for a paradigm shift in the way we think of architecture, to conceptualize beyond dualities of temporary-permanent and subject-object to surpass individual boundaries to engage with life in a collective and holistic manner— an effort to see everything that unites rather than separates every-‘thing’ in the world.

## CHAPTER 2. KALİYĀṬṬAM: ACCELERATED ARCHITECT- ING

Around 4 a.m. was the time of 'Uṛayal.' The people and the Teyyaṃ were together in motion conversing something in between the movements. Teyyaṃ looked out for the betrayers and attacked them (see Figure 3). Who is being watched, and who is watching? How is space created, and what does it have to say about the production of architecture in Kaḷiyāṭṭam?



Figure 3. Uṛayal of Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ, February 2023

This chapter critiques the formation of the 'I' and the limiting static imagerial representation through Lacan's mirror stage. The naturecultural expression, Kaḷiyāṭṭam, shows the overflowing

nature of subjects and fades the apparent division between subjects and objects. This view questions the ‘othering’ of what is not the ‘I’ and subject-centric understanding of architecture. Using the concept of open and overflowing self, this chapter conceptualizes a philosophy of space formations and inhabitation. Inhabiting a space means knowing the expanse, limits, and interaction of the ‘I’; the act of mapping various modes of existence while inhabiting a space is the process of architect-ing. Finally, the chapter concludes by arguing that Kaḷiyāṭṭam is an accelerated architect-ing process, by implication, a moving temple.

The chapter contains five sections. The first talks about the individual identity formation in Lacan’s mirror stage in the context of Teyyaṃ in Kaḷiyāṭṭam to critique the static imagerial identification of the self that reflects in the thinking of the subject-object divide and the idea representation born from it.

The second illustrates the overflowing nature and interactions of the ‘I’ to traverse beyond the subject-object conundrum of ‘I’-centric and eye-centric understanding of the world. The third explains the occurrence of relation-making and the birth of various modes of existence due to interactions between the ‘I’ and the rest to explain the perpetual formation of space in Kaḷiyāṭṭam. Space is a result of the co-existence and the ‘we’ effect of coming together for Teyyaṃ and all other elements in the Kaḷiyāṭṭam.

The fourth section talks about the concept of inhabitation and the mapping of modes of existence as the process of architect-ing. Discovering existing modes of existence and relations by knowing the interactions between ‘I’ and the rest is an act of returning to the body, feeling,

responsibly listening, and acting in a shared weaving of space. By tying the concepts in the previous sections, the last part finds that there exists a congruence between the fashion of Teyyam and built structures to argue that Kalīyāṭṭam is an accelerated architect-ing process that is similar to a fast-forwarded experience of any built structure’s life.

## 2.1 LACAN’S ‘I’ AND ARCHITECTURE OF TEYYAṂ IN KALĪYĀṬṬAṂ THROUGH LACANIAN LENSES

*Quote 1: “I am led, therefore, to regard the function of the mirror-stage as a particular case of the function of the imago, which is to establish a relationship between the organism and its reality— or, as they say, between the Innenwelt and the Umwelt.” (Lacan 505)*

*Quote 2: “It is worth noting, incidentally that this is a fact recognized as such by embryologists, by the term foetalization, which determines the prevalence of the so called superior apparatus of the neurax, and especially of the cortex, which psycho-surgical operations lead us to regard as the intra-organic mirror.” (Lacan 505)*

One of the very influential concepts on the formation of the subject or the ‘I’ is by Jacques Lacan. Through a paper on “mirror stage,” Lacan introduces the idea of the establishment of ego, the feeling of ‘I’ or the individual.

In Quote 1, Lacan claims that the function of the mirror stage is a function of the ‘*imago*,’ the false imagery of the ‘I’ that establishes the relationship between the ‘I’ and the world<sup>21</sup>. This argument clearly draws a distinction between what is inside and what is outside or, in other words, a definition of the ‘I’ or a subject by othering everything else in the world. In quote two, by drawing from biology, Lacan professes that the human brain seems to register the image of the self, like a mirror inside. A limiting image-based argument establishing a ‘mirror’ to define self supports the assumption that everything can be represented. Such an obsessive subject-centered self-identification by detaching itself from the world gives birth to a world of subjects and objects. Binary creation in this world creates one major assumption: the existence of a defined subject, an object, or a ‘thing’ that can be represented.

In the mirror stage, Lacan talks about the creation of human identities, the ego—the ‘I’ or the subject by finding that human infants pass through a stage where the external image of the body, by othering everything else, produces a mental representation of the ‘I,’ selfhood (Lacan). The self is fundamentally formed in relation to the other, establishing depending on the other or external always. This exemplifies that the attempts to identify others begin before the identification of the self, and that becomes the basis or reference for the formation of the ‘I.’ With this false identification of self, or ‘fictional’ one as Lacan refers to it, one does not match up with the image created (the *imago*) nor attain the image that one is always striving for in life (the Ideal I) with the experience of existence but gets transformed with the image which is a ‘representation’ of self. The ‘I’ never becomes complete, meaning the self is always open, yet the individual (or the I) continues to attempt to become one throughout.

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<sup>21</sup> The ‘I’ and the world corresponds to *Innenwelt* and *Umwelt*. *Umwelt* in German means surroundings or environment and Lacan uses *Innenwelt* to describe an inner world as opposed to the outer.

The presence of false identification cannot be ignored because of its colossal influence in life, but all identification of the 'I' in the mirror stage (including the *imago* and Ideal I) are static representations that do not capture the temporally dynamic nature of the self or the 'I.' A way of knowing that finds the self as a static representation, like in the mirror stage, ignores the ephemeral nature of the self, and there begin the attempts to define subjects and objects, creating worlds of 'things' or the subjects and objects. Because of the fundamental 'othering' from the birth of the 'I' in the mirror stage, a top-down perspective (like a bird's eye view) of the world comes into action. Fixing gaze on subjects or objects from above lets one ask: who or what represents whom, and who has the right to do it? Isolation of the 'I' from everything other than the false self-image limits the 'I' in the physical body. Such a limited identification of the 'I' results in the belief that: everything 'represents' something. The narcissistic, self-obsessive false identification of the self or subject from a distanced position unavoidably adds to both self-centric and eye-centric perceptions of the world.

Understanding the raiment of Teyyam as a representation of the identity of the Teyyam is a subject-centric and eye-centric approach to Teyyam. Discussions on fashion and architecture are largely limited within the lenses of representation, even in the novel drift relating to architecture and fashion in the late-twentieth century and early-twenty-first century. Brooke Hodge<sup>22</sup> found both architecture and fashion with their point of origin as the human body, functioning as shelter or a wrap for the body— potentially mediating between the body and the environment—that can express personal, social, [political, religious] and cultural identity regardless of the scale (Brooke

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<sup>22</sup> Curator of Architecture & Design at the MOCA in Los Angeles, Brooke Hodge, talked about the intersections between these two creative disciplines from the 1980s to the present were based on MOCA's 2006 exhibition of the title "Skin + Bones: Practices in Fashion and Architecture" at Architecture Fall 2008 Lecture Series - November 25, 2008, at Slocum Hall. (*School of Architecture - All Scholarship*).

*et al.*). Such an approach to fashion and architecture on the raiment of Teyyam returns to the idea of static false identification. The static and defined imagery of the ‘I’ satiates one with a representation projecting an identity that helps people to brace themselves in blatant complacency in an eye-centric world.

The way of making sense of the world from a top-down perspective supports this complacency with self-serving subject-object arguments, but they fail to address the fact that the argument does not give voice to anyone, rather takes away the ability to speak as no one can speak for a group given that architect-ing and world building by its nature is essentially a collective formation.

## 2.2 THE OVERFLOWING SELF IN KALİYĀṬṬAM

Kalīyāṭṭam shows the openness and overflowing nature of the self or subjects. It critiques the excessive identification of an individual and questions the static representation and false identification of the self. The open ‘I’—the incomplete self in Lacanian view— is not only related to everything other than itself but is always interacting, forming relations, and overflowing through all such channels. Kalīyāṭṭam travels beyond the limitations of knowing from the top-down perspective of the world that creates the world of subjects and objects. By exposing the overflowing nature of self, formed by virtue of the act of overflowing into everything other than the self or the ‘I,’ Teyyam in Kalīyāṭṭam shows the open-ness of the subject in the process of world-building.

Two of the ubiquitous yet subtle channels of overflow are the act of perception and breathing, where both are physical at varying capacities. “According to Merleau-Ponty, perceptual openness is always the lived body’s, that is, the body subject’s perceptual openness, as we ourselves always already are bodily openness to the world” (Berndtson 260)—breathing. Through breathing and perceiving the world, one can engage with something in a different physical setting with being actively present in another without physical presence—which means that the act of perception is not completely physical or visible, but it exists and influences the continuous act of world-building. For instance, conversations between the explorer Marco Polo and the emperor Kublai Khan in the book *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino show how Polo’s description of many ‘fictitious’ cities he traveled to create invisible cities for Khan through imagination (Calvino). Those cities are neither seeable nor palpable in any sense, but they are real for them. They overflow through these perceptions and remain open and participate in the continuing process of architecture-making as world-building.



Figure 4. People carrying Puli marañña thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ after he fell unconscious



Figure 5. Interaction: Pottan Teyyam talking to children



Figure 6. Interaction between Pottan Teyyam and his devotees



Figure 7. Potṭan Teyyaṃ in conversation and funny wordplay with people.

In *Kaliyāṭṭam*, the open and overflowing subject is evident in the climax stage when Teyyaṃ falls unconscious —*Uṛayal* (see Figure 4). The Teyyaṃ overflows both as the mythical deity and a human at once in the *Uṛayal* stage because of their interactions with the world. Teyyaṃ biting off living fowl's throat, spewing blood and flesh around the place during *Uṛayal* was an act of re-living the life of *Kāri*, a channel of overflow into the world of *Puli maranña thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ* to reinitiate it in the present. The human-turned deity, the Teyyaṃ, touches, feels, and converses with his devotees (see Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7). Through this, both Teyyaṃ and devotees overflow into the life and world of Teyyaṃ.



Figure 8. Puli marañña thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ racing into the crowd



Figure 9. Four men leading the recitals (Tōttam) of Puli marañña thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ

In the instances where Teyyaṃ recognizes people as the enemies and the fowl as his betrayer, they become a part of Kāri's life, and Teyyaṃ overflows into the mythical story to exist within the world of Teyyaṃ (see Figure 8). The flow, transformation, and weaving of people and

Teyyaṃ into the world of Kāri is aided by recitals where group recitals accompanied by percussion instruments create space to think, breathe and perceive the reality of Puli Marañña Thoṅaccan Teyyaṃ (see Figure 9). At the Paḷlipraṃ śrī Putiya Bhagavati temple premises and their process of overflowing into the reality of Teyyaṃ by breathing, thinking, and perceiving everything other than their selves allowed devotees to share a space and build into the world of Teyyaṃ. The act of continuously repeated recitals of the story initiates and engraves the world of Teyyaṃ; in fact, the basic act of repeating syllables evokes the mythical story together, breathing and thinking re-initiates the world of Teyyaṃ where all of them collectively individuate into Teyyaṃ's realm of reality.

The overflow lets one sustain in a state of abundance as opposed to a state of scarcity. Georges Bataille proposed an idea of a general economy that radically opposed the economy of scarcity and utility. The concept of general economy in energy terms explains that all living systems have an 'accused share' of energy wealth in an abundant state, letting one spend energy in different ways (Bataille). In Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ, the act of tearing apart the living fowl in the Uṛayal stage is one such catastrophic energy expenditure. Unlike sacrifice, breathing is a continuous existential interaction, a subtle yet unavoidable body movement. Congruently, like breathing, thinking is a voluntary as well as involuntary interaction and is the experiential body's relationship with the world. "Thoughts simply arise," and ideas "pop into our heads" (Berndtson 11). The sheer amount of overflowing energy maintains the self always in excess and overflowing. Sacrifice, breathing, and thinking in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ spend energy to re-evoked the life of Kāri and build the world of Teyyaṃ together; the energy is always overflowing in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ. The self always remains in excess energy, a perpetual abundant state, and hence the subject always overflows

into everything else through its interactions, starting from the simple yet complicated act of breathing (see Figure 10).



Figure 10. Interactions in Uṛayal, Puli marañña thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ. This series of frames (1-11) shows sacrifice and the physical movements of people and Teyyaṃ in relation to each other during Uṛayal. People and Teyyaṃ interact with each other as they move, creating ephemeral physical spaces.

The Lacanian definition of selfhood in the mirror stage distances the world from the self and ignores the ephemeral nature and open-ness of being. Understanding the self as an overflowing entity allows us to start thinking about the dynamic relationships in *Kaḷiyāṭṭam* devoid of the assumption that the forms and movements of *Teyyaṃ* are representations and convey meanings.

By understanding the subject or the 'I' (or self) as a constantly overflowing open entity, we attempt to drift away from the 'subjective' analysis from a top-down perspective. *Teyyaṃ*, with its overflowing nature cuts through the duality: the subject vs. the object, urging one to see the contradiction or the irony within the subject-object conundrum born from fervent attempts to blind oneself from the temporal nature of existence.

The 'I' is always overflowing and always engaging with what is not the 'I' through constant interactions that cause relations and re-initiating or re-inventing the existing relationships. The open 'I' spent energy in these interactions overflows and expands into everything other than the self, always.

### 2.3 EXPANSION OF THE 'I' AND SPACE-CREATION IN *KALİYĀṬṬAM*

An overflowing subject shifts focus from subjects to the relationships between the subject and the rest. To know space creation in *Kaḷiyāṭṭam*, one must start accepting the temporal nature and openness of the subject by actively deviating from a subject-centric philosophy of space creation.

Expansion of the overflowing ‘I’ by creating combinations of relations through interactions, the ‘I’ always attempts to be more than what it is. While Lacan finds that the ‘I’ is continuously engaged in the process of completing its incomplete self, Kalīyāṭṭam exposes the self as an open and overflowing assemblage that attempts to know and feel more of the rest, which causes its expansion through interactions and the relations making (see figure 11). Perpetual interactions between the ‘I’ and the rest channel the overflow of the ‘I’ or the subject and create relations between the ‘I’ and everything that is not the ‘I.’ Interactions between the self and the rest span from breathing to actions like sacrifice— they build relationships. Perpetual formations of such relationships and their formation into a shared mesh of relations of different intensities create a shared space. The overflowing ‘I’ or the subject operate and inhabit such a co-weaved space that is always in formation.



Figure 11. Interactions between Puli marañña thonṭaccan Teyyaṃ and people

Interactions happen concurrently in multiple ways and intensities. For example, perpetual experience acquires memory; what we perceive is determined by what we know and what we are ready to do, meaning we enact our perceptual experience, and we act it out (Noe). The relations we make out of perception reflect on our perceptual experience, i.e., our experience is being acted out based on what we do and what we know. Relation-making is a complexly intertwined act with memories created from relations of multiple levels of depths and the perpetual feeling of existence or sensations that the 'I' or the subject recognize from the world.



Figure 12. Multi-layered interactions between Teyyams and people

Kaliyāṭṭam illustrates that these relations emerging from the interactions of varying intensities, like many others, remain meshed within multiple levels of depths, potentially influencing the

emerging relations and actions happening between the subject and the rest. At the time of Urayal, when Thoṅaccan Teyyaṃ was at the peak of his anger wading aggressively through the crowd, Kuṛatti, Guḷikan, and Poṭṭan Teyyaṃs moved and interacted like any other commoner but with a heavy and eye-catching red attire of Teyyaṃs. The behavior and intensity of interactions vary in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ, and they not only depend on the Teyyaṃ and people but the shared space they create in order to function together. All the relations in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ are mutually dependent and interweaving (see Figure 12). On the one hand, they expand the boundaries of the subjects by stitching shared spaces and, on the other hand, simultaneously form the subjects that operate in the space. The interweaving of the relationships made through the interaction between the ‘I’ and the rest form varying depths of relation networks; subjects and shared spaces are formed by navigating through such layers of multiple depths of relation networks. The shared weaving of space happens as response to the varying situational imperatives and potentially influences the action of formation of both subjects and the shared spaces simultaneously.

Fulfillment of needs that arise at every pregnant stage of relation networks of varying depth creates multiple generations of relations in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ, triggering different modes of existence in the shared space. Erin Manning’s *Minor Gesture* notes that *Étienne Souriau* defines modes of existence not as states but as passages. They do not belong to any subject or object, do not define existence but propose it, “they are the transitory and fragile interstices of experience in the making,” they are ecologies that activate a field of the world in its unfolding (Manning 90). They are emergent fields of relations, pushing the self or the subject to its limits. Fulfillment of needs in the ecologies activates differential tendencies that re-orient and re-constitute spaces.

Modes of existence are crafted out of ecologies of practices that are active at the interstices of what life is becoming, where life as life-living is a force form in the cut that cleaves experience, opening it to new modes of experience (Manning 104). Each generation of relation networks invents ecologies of practices that cause the emergence of the next generation by cutting through experiences that are influenced and acted upon by the multiple modes of existence born from ecologies of practices from previous generations of relationships. In this nexus, similar to the subjects, the shared space is created by virtue of multiple modes of existence that accumulate and expand continuously in Kaḷiyāṭṭam. The perpetual noise of interaction in Kaḷiyāṭṭam, due to multiple generations of relations, keeps the subjects and the space overflowing in excess and stays in an abundant state, always.

The shared space in Kaḷiyāṭṭam includes the overflowing Teyyaṃs and the devotees sharing the same space. Interweaving with the mythical story, Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ, like all other subjects within Kaḷiyāṭṭam, participates in the continuing cycle of the shared space formations navigating through varying accumulated depths of relations, their modes of existence, and memories of previous interactions (see Figure 10).

Teyyaṃ operates in a transcendental field of singularities that conjoins and sinks into the shared space by allowing the metamorphization of mortal human identity into Teyyaṃ, a divine identity built by everyone who reveres the ancestor Kāri and his life. According to Deleuze, a transcendent field would be defined as a pure plane of immanence that eludes all transcendence of the subject and the object (Deleuze 26). In absolute immanence, at the peak of the transformation from a mortal human identity, Teyyaṃ operates in such a field. It is a shared singularity that helps the

subjects in Kaḷiyāṭṭam to individuate into the continuously forming shared space between Teyyam and his devotees. The space creation within Kaḷiyāṭṭam is the reversal of what Deleuze noted: “We are and remain “anybodies” before we become “somebodies” (Deleuze 14). I.e., in Kaḷiyāṭṭam, with the help of Teyyam, all the subjects attempt to become any bodies— a singular that is always impersonal and indefinite— dissolving from ‘somebodies.’ The space creation that happens by virtue of the act of existing and coming together is a reminder of the ‘we effect’ or the singularity everyone shares while in the process of weaving and simultaneously existing in the shared space.

The space of Kaḷiyāṭṭam is abundant and is continuously woven by virtue of the relationship networks, the effect of coming together, and their multiple modes of existence of varying depths formed because of constant interactions of varying intensities between the subject and the rest.

## 2.4 ARCHITECT-ING: A WAY OF INHABITING SPACE AND MAPPING MODES OF EXISTENCE

What does it mean to inhabit a space in Kaḷiyāṭṭam? Inhabiting a space means knowing the expanse and interactions of the overflowing open subject with the rest in the shared space of Kaḷiyāṭṭam. The act of architect-ing requires this knowledge to the maximum level possible to be able to map the modes of existence born from ecologies of practices from generations of relation networks between the ‘I’ and the rest. Mapping these modes of existence by knowing the expanse and interactions of the overflowing ‘I’ in the abundant space of Kaḷiyāṭṭam is an act of architect-ing.

Existence and the act of inhabiting a space need to be approached from a relation-centric perspective because the subject is formed by virtue of the interactions and relations made in the shared space of Kaḷiyāṭṭam. The overflowing ‘I’ is always expanding, and any attempt to know the expanse and interaction of the ‘I’ in space, i.e., to inhabit a space, one will require to shift to a relation-centric approach, knowing subjects through their relations. A subject in Kaḷiyāṭṭam is the unity or coherence of relations and their effects. Subjects exist in relation to everything, where both the space and subjects are formed simultaneously, with neither of them having closed boundaries (see Figure 13).

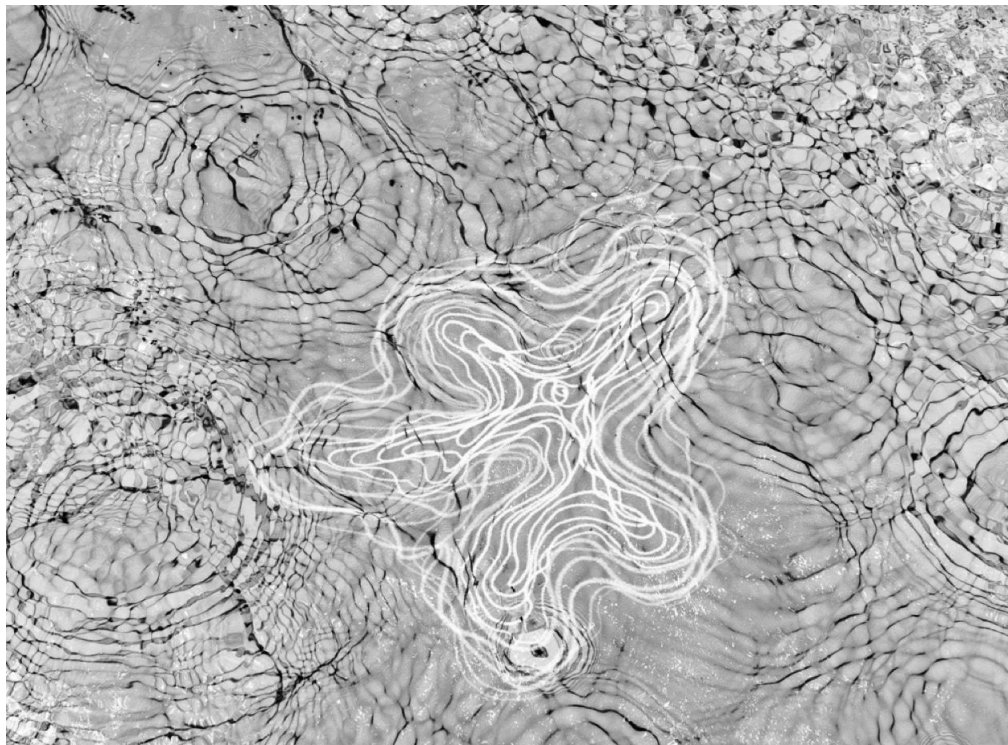


Figure 13. Illustration showing simultaneous formation of the space and subjects— original artwork by the author.

While Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ fell unconscious as the furious Kāri, other Teyyaṃs such as Kuṟatti, Guḷikan, and Poṭṭan Teyyaṃs along with most of the people except some, who carried the unconscious Teyyaṃ, dispersed and spread in multiple directions (see Figure 14). There exists no stage, no audience but only a collective becoming of all overflowing open subjects who are in Kaḷiyāṭṭam. The boundaries of these subjects remain in flux, or in other words, the boundaries of the subject fluctuate, and hence they are never static. This fluctuating nature makes knowing the expanse of the subject and mapping the modes of their existence caused by their relations in space—the act of architect-ing—a challenge.



Figure 14. Dispersal after Uṟayal, Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ

Ceaseless efforts to identify and locate oneself in space lead to mapping of the modes of existence born from ecologies of practices from all generations of relationships combined. To know the limits of the subjects, to map the modes of existence, to feel and listen responsibly while participating and existing in a shared weaving of spaces, one should challenge the limitations of

selected perception and activate the mega-receptor— the human body. Merleau-Ponty notes: “Paul Valéry said that the painter takes his body with him,” “He lends his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings” (Merleau-Ponty 123). The painter opens up the body— the mega-receptor— to feel the expanse of the I and to map the relations made between the I and the rest. Opening up means being cognizant of the interactions and their effects on the I. Merleau-Ponty further wrote, “the quality of color and depth exist only because they generate an echo in our bodies and because the body embraces them” (Merleau-Ponty 125). Opening up bodily receptors means knowing these echoes created by the color that potentially create relations and affect the modes of existence. To be a perceiver is to implicitly understand the effects of movement on sensory stimulation (Noe). To be an open perceiver who can inhabit a space, one must know the embodiment of echoes that are accepted, assimilated, consumed, or blended into the subject— an act of returning to the body to inhabit space.



Figure 15. Interaction in the world of Kāri, Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ

“Perception is not a process in the brain, but a kind of skillful activity of the body as a whole. We enact our perceptual experience” (Noe 1). Teyyaṃ in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ opens his body or lends the body to the world of Kāri to act out his perceptual experience and embodied echoes to become a Teyyaṃ (see Figure 15 and Figure 16). The human embodying Teyyaṃ returns to his body to feel, listen, and see responsibly, opening him up, letting him inhabit the space and become the other here, the deity. Inhabiting a space in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ means returning to the body to live in it, spend time and energy to start feeling, and know ‘how to responsibly listen.’ It is an acquired skill of being that demands to stop distancing and othering worlds through the top-down perspective to start feeling again. Teyyaṃ inhabits the space by expanding the self and allowing one to feel the interactions and expanse of the subjects in the Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ. Hence, knowing the way of being, allowing the body to feel, reciprocating any degree of responsible and respectful knowing, and living by interacting, assimilating, and attaching are essential to inhabit a space.



Figure 16. Teyyaṃ in the world of Kāri, Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ



Figure 17. Adorning a wearable form, Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ

Architect-ing, the act of knowing the interactions and expanse of the subject and mapping the modes of existence triggered by the relation networks produced due to interactions in a space, does not create anything; rather, everything is discovered or revealed. In Kaḷiyāṭṭam, the forms of the attire and aesthetics of the paintings are products of discovery and not creation (see Figure 17 and Figure 7). Paintings and wearable forms are consequences of mapping different relations and modes of existence from a point in space. The paintings are discovered in the act of mapping existing components of reality. Mapping taps memories and reinvents the modes of existence and leaves memories of the act of mapping. i.e., the wearable form and paintings of Teyyaṃ are the ‘actual’ memories of discovering and mapping modes of existence that help in holding the space together in Kaḷiyāṭṭam (see Figure 18).



Figure 18. Face and body painting of Teyyaṃ, Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ



Figure 19. A wearable form, Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ



Figure 20. The human-turned deity, Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyam

According to Manning, art as practice “begins not with the object but with what else art can do” (Manning 46). Manning proposes that we engage first and foremost with the manner of practice and not the end result (Manning). Architect-ing is such a process that operates and passes through the organic and the inorganic. It does not intend to build an object; rather, it is an effect of coming together of all that expands, learns, and leaves memories in emerging spaces. In Kaḷiyāṭṭam, by

inhabiting the space and mapping the modes of existence, Teyyaṃ participates in architecture making or architect-ing. The wearable forms and paintings remain as visual memories of interactions by Teyyaṃ. Rituals, recitals, and donning attire of Teyyaṃ urge subjects in Kaḷiyāṭṭam to return to their bodies to exist in a shared transcendental field of singularities. The wearable forms on Teyyaṃ, such as tiger-like body paint on his chest, detailed curvy geometry in red on his face, massive headgear, and skirt-like draping below the waist with metal anklets, mark the presence of Teyyaṃ. They help in the metamorphization of the mortal human into Teyyaṃ and, by implication, transform the space and the subjects collectively (see Figure 19 and Figure 20).

In addition to the adornments, the human requires following strict rules of abstinence, fasting, and other ritualistic activities in the transformation stages; these processes, along with the collective becoming of all subjects in Kaḷiyāṭṭam continue the process of architect-ing.



Figure 21. Architect-ing: Adorning wearable forms, Poṭṭan Teyyaṃ



Figure 22. Architect-ing: Mapping modes of existence, Potṭan Teyyam



Figure 23. Architect-ing: Adorning wearable forms, Potṭan Teyyam



Figure 24. Architect-ing: Mapping modes of existence, Pottan Teyyam



Figure 25. Architect-ing: Human-turned deity, Pottan Teyyam

Kaḷiyāṭṭam exposes openness and overflowing nature of the subjects, unlike static representations of the subjects in the Lacanian way of knowing the ‘I’ or the subject. Interactions of the subjects creating relation networks and ecologies of different modes of existence in Kaḷiyāṭṭam shows how they co-weave spaces, exist and operate in them, and how the discovery of wearable forms and paintings contribute to the process of architect-ing (see Figure 21, Figure 22, Figure 23, Figure 24, Figure 25).

## 2.5 KAḶIYĀṬṬAM: AN ACCELERATED ARCHITECTURE PROCESS

Teyyaṃ in Kaḷiyāṭṭam illustrates subjects as an overflowing, coherent, collective unity not limited by the physical body, expanding by virtue of the constant interactions between the ‘I’ and the rest. Operating beyond the static representations of the subjects, objects, and their divides, the expanding and overflowing subject in Kaḷiyāṭṭam helps to better explain how subjects co-weave and inhabit spaces and how they project different modes of existence. While architect-ing, one attempts to know the expanse and limits of the ‘I’ to map them with the modes of existence in the space to produce wearable forms and paintings in Kaḷiyāṭṭam.

The heavily detailed bright red attire of Teyyaṃ is congruent with built structures. They are memories of mapping various modes of existence of perpetual collective formation of space. The wearable forms and paintings are active componential participants of the space formations. Teyyaṃ moving and adorning the forms and paintings works similarly to a temple that helps to hold and shape the space together. Kaḷiyāṭṭam is an accelerated architectural process that is akin

to a fast-forwarded experience of a building's life. The wearable forms along with the human body in Kaḷiyāṭṭam are a moving temple or an accelerated architecture process or architect-ing.

### CHAPTER 3. WORLD BUILDING IN KAḶIYĀṬṬAM

The identity conflict in me demanded to re-assure myself ‘my identity’ when Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ saw his wife who betrayed him among the people in front of him. I was asked to stay at a ‘safe’ distance when Teyyaṃ raced into the crowd (see Figure 26), but I was determined to see him closer, and I always managed to find a place in the first row in the moving crowd. As he pranced and shifted closer in his furious tiger gait and roar, I stepped back as many steps as I could. I saw the urge to destroy all the betrayers in front of him, and his eyes were moving across the crowd picking his next victim. I was living in a world of Teyyaṃ, and that urged me to ask: If the fear I felt and my actions showed me the reality of the world, is Teyyaṃ virtual? What is true for one who is a part of KaḶiyāṭṭam?



Figure 26. Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ racing into the crowd.

The perpetual formation of spaces in KaḶiyāṭṭam constitutes virtual relations. The deity is a virtual relation between people; in KaḶiyāṭṭam, this virtual take on a human form, i.e., Teyyaṃ. Expansion

of the overflowing subject due to continuous interactions of the subject with others implies the formation of relations through the act of perception and breathing, which are partially conscious and subconscious at the same time. In fact, the subject is the coming together of the mega-receptor, the body, and the expanding relation networks of the subject to function together or exist in space.

Interactions, co-weaving of spaces, projection of different modes of existence, and mapping them by knowing the expanse and interaction of the subject is an architect-ing process. It involves virtual components, and this chapter shows how Teyyaṃ reveals the role of virtual components of realities in architecture-making and, by implication, world-building.

This chapter has three sections. Un-seeing of virtual elements in architecture production is discussed in the first section. The second discusses the nature of space creation in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ, where the virtual weaves into the habitual and emergent relation-making. They influence the multiple modes of existence reverberating due to the habitual formation of relation networks. Blending into the existing modes of existence, the habitual emergent process creates varying depths of relations of different intensities. This section deals with the concepts of emergence to argue that architectural production in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ is procedural, with both actual and virtual components in play. The third section discusses the question of agency in the emergent system of Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ, where the architecture is produced by everyone and no one at the same time. Interrogating this by initiating conversation with the concept of dhāranā, the section urges to move away from an eye and 'I'-centric approach in architecture. In summary, the chapter questions the subject-oriented and image or representation-oriented narrative of architecture and world-building using Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ.

### 3.1 THE ACTUAL AND THE VIRTUAL IN KALİYĀṬṬAM

Teyyam, before it acted through a human, was something that can be perceived but not ‘seen’ but, through the metamorphization of a mortal human, the deity talks to devotees by weaving spaces together in Kalīyāṭṭam (see Figure 27). Is a virtual entity something that is not visible yet remains perceivable?



Figure 27. The human-turned-deity and devotees in the world of Pottan Teyyam

For Maussumi, “...the base definition of the virtual in philosophy is potentiality. What is in potentiality may come to be, and what has been already was in the potential. The virtual must thus be understood as a dimension of reality, not its illusionary opponent or artificial overcoming” (Massumi 55). The virtual is not the antonym of reality. It is a part of reality projecting potentials

at any given point, given that potentials may happen or may remain as potentials or transform throughout the becoming of life. The reality constitutes what we palpably perceive or see, i.e., the actual, and others — the virtual—at that point in the becoming. The former has concrete materialistic or visible ‘evidence,’ but the latter struggles to prove that it’s as real because of the absence of the same. The conflict in me asking what is real and what is virtual reinforces this binary instilled in my learning and its reflection in my perception. According to Deleuze, the reality is a dynamic relationship between the virtual and the actual (Williams 8). Deleuze finds that the virtual is opposed not to the real but to the actual, and the virtual is fully real— real without being actual (Deleuze and Parnet). Deleuze says that both the actual and the virtual are fully real, and for *Kaḷiyāṭṭam*, it definitely is—actual and virtual are real, and they can only happen together.

Difficulty in acknowledging the virtual components of reality roots back to the static false identification of the ‘I’ as an image or visual representation by Lacan. Implicitly conveying that the ‘real’ is all that is visible, Lacan’s argument supports an idea of actual but not real representation. Establishing the inaccessibility of reality, it subscribes to the subjectivity of multiple points of view at any point in the becoming of life. *Teyyaṃ* in *Kaḷiyāṭṭam* makes reality accessible by re-initiating a shared virtual—the life of *Kāri*— to involve in architecture-making and world-building blending both actual and virtual in *Kaḷiyāṭṭam*, i.e., the reality in the world of *Teyyaṃ*.

In *Kaḷiyāṭṭam*, the shared virtual is the life of *Kāri*, who turned into *Teyyaṃ* after his wife and people betrayed him. It was in play, and it blended with the actual, and the reality was an amalgam

of both. Inextricably intertwined relationships between actual and virtual in the reality of Kaḷiyāṭṭam makes it difficult to gauge or differentiate what is actual and what is not.



Figure 28. The person relentlessly trying to hold the furious Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyam

Deleuze talked about ‘reciprocal determination’ between virtual and actual, showing how actual things alter due to their relation to differences in virtual and vice versa (Williams 11). The reality in the world of Teyyam consists of both actual and virtual. Therefore, understanding architecture production in Kaḷiyāṭṭam requires a Deleuzian approach which accounts for the virtual that is often considered fake or spurious. Perception is a key factor in this apparent distinction. In attempts to

surpass this dichotomy—Maussumi notes that “the question of perception is no longer one of truth or illusion, but of different modes of reality, in the movement of emergence through which the forms of experience come to pass” (Massumi 55). Reading through Deleuze’s concept of real, Maussumi identified different modes of reality that form into moods or experiences in the becoming of life. The reality in Teyyaṃ’s world, like the life of Kāri—the fear, anger, and the actions of people and the Teyyaṃ—is a layered presence of multiple modes of reality. One of the best illustrations of it is where a person is relentlessly trying to hold the furious Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ (see Figure 28). In this circumstance, the person lives in Teyyaṃ’s world but is also cognizant of the re-living of the Teyyaṃ, a participant in Kaḷiyāṭṭam that embodies the layered modes of realities. While the person attempts to keep Kāri’s anger in control by holding him from behind, to deter Kāri from seeing him and act as an internal pull, limiting damage, destruction, and injuries, he is also a part of the re-initiation of Kāri’s life—a betrayer like everyone in Kaḷiyāṭṭam, for the Teyyaṃ. He lives in multiple layers of the realities of Kaḷiyāṭṭam, like others at varying levels, with no apparent distinction between truth and illusion.

Unlike Kaḷiyāṭṭam, space-making in Lacanian lenses ignores virtual relations. Static representations of the self-using mirror stage only attempt to picture actual and the representation of the identity projected from it. Such identification and existence in space do not allow one to cooperate and co-weave a space together. The openness of overflowing subjects in a perpetual formation of spaces accommodates the virtual and interactions beyond actual. Understanding and knowing both the actual and virtual realm of reality is essential for inhabiting a space; without inhabiting both, the process of architect-ing will not happen completely.

Modes of existence in the spaces reflect the interweaving of relation fields between the subject and the rest. As explained in the previous chapter, the emergent formation of such webs of relations fields that are neither completely actual nor completely virtual but an amalgam of both. Different intensities of relations affect the modes of existence, and that creates different potentials in the field of action or space. Intensities form relations where they envelop or cover one another (Williams 13), and they differ by their irrevocably changing events/ realities. The act of creating relations deepens the intensities created through those repetitions, erroring, and differences.



Figure 29. Inhabitation: Mapping of different modes of existence and adorning wearable forms.

By inhabiting space— by attempting to know the expanse and limits of the self—one lays the precondition for mapping the modes of existence and their interactions to create art and architecture in Kalīyāṭṭam (see Figure 29). For instance, face paintings are mapped from these different real modes of existence, and they work in an inextricably inter-connected to actual and

virtual realm—face painting details are lines that struggle to ‘contain’ meaning when they are constricted into the eye-centric world. The attire or fashion of Teyyaṃ is an ‘actual’ form of memory of such interactions due to mapping between relations, multiple modes of existence born out of the metamorphosis of humans into Teyyaṃ to touch the singularity and individuate in and from the transcendental field— a pure plane of immanence— offered by the shared reality of Kaliyāṭṭam.



Figure 30. Inhabitation: Face painting process

The act of face painting in Kaliyāṭṭam is effectively mapping relations between the subject and the rest that is prominently virtual, the deity (see Figure 30). The memory of mapping, the face, and body painting hold the human-turned-deity in spaces formed in the world of Teyyaṃ and lets him weave space as one among the others. Memories aren't inactive; they influence space-making, letting people weave together into the singular transcendental field of Teyyaṃ.



Figure 31. Preparation of Mēlēri for Poṭṭan Teyyaṃ



Figure 32. Preparation of Mēlēri for Poṭṭan Teyyaṃ

The preparation of Mēlēri (heap of glowing charcoal and fire) for Poṭṭan Teyyaṃ<sup>23</sup> is one example in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ where architecture production is a way of world-building (see Figure 31 and Figure

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<sup>23</sup> The Poṭṭan Teyyaṃ is the Pulaya community's ancestor and clan deity who questioned caste hierarchies and customs like untouchability, prevailed in Kerala. The story goes like this: A lower-caste Pulaya was crossing a

32). Commencing with rituals led by the human who turned into Teyyaṃ, the Mēlēri is prepared on a trapezoidal mount step by step by stacking wood in a geometrical fashion. Everyone takes part in the construction and world-building of Teyyaṃ. The community building and the shared virtual successfully produce an emergent order for structure, creating an architecture— an element in world-building (see Figures 19 and 20). This is in tandem with the cāḷa pāṭṭu of the Poṭṭan Teyyaṃ's Tōṭṭam (the recital). According to interpretation in the book, *Ritual and Rhythm of Life – A study of Theyyam in North Malabar*, Cāḷa pāṭṭu explains home building: He made his house with four pillars of equal length measured by the master at all four corners. It has rafts, and the house had nine doors and two additional ones (one for exit and one for entrance) (Markose 64). Logs of wood firmly planted, one stronger than the others, is covered with 90 coconut leaves, grass, and tiles and strengthened with 51 nails to inhabit 21,600 Pulayars (Markose). Pulayar also asks: when will this house collapse? Who knows? The action of preparing mēlēri and the cāḷa pāṭṭu, shows how the community builds together by creating a shared space accepting the temporal nature of life and the world (Markose). The Kaḷiyāṭṭam becomes a field that accepts the coming together of the community creating a real shared space and building the world together.

Building together is nearly impossible without sharing space responsibly and respectfully; Kaḷiyāṭṭam is such a space where Teyyaṃ and his people build their world together. Teyyaṃ urges us to go back to being nobodies and individuate into the world of Teyyaṃ, like one among the

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narrow embankment clasping a baby at his waist and carrying a pot of toddy on his head. Chovar (a higher caste member) on the other end of the embankment, ordered Pulaya to keep the distance he should, according to the prevailing practice of distance pollution. The Pulaya, instead, debated with Chovar, questioning untouchability and inequalities in the caste hierarchies existing in Kerala. Poṭṭan is also seen as the Hindu god Shiva with the moon on his Jaḍa (hair), Pulamārutan is his vehicle, the bull, and Pula Chamunḍi is the goddess Sita, his wife (Markose; Pallath). The word 'Poṭṭan' literally translates to someone who is dumb or an idiot in the Malayalam language. Teyyaṃ, with a fool's identity, creates a mask that lets Teyyaṃ take a stance to protest, resist, attend, and revoke relevant issues related to and within the community.

other, recognizing and realizing the shared ecologies of relation networks— the space or the field of action—between the self and the rest. Responsible listening and respectful actions in the realm of singularities in Kaḷiyāṭṭam provide a vision beyond the eye- and ‘I’-centric world and create a conducive environment to build a common, inclusive world. To be a Teyyaṃ in Kaḷiyāṭṭam is to inhabit and take part in architect-ing— the process of world-building. The world-building in Teyyaṃ is the realization that a common space exists, the act of identifying it, and mapping it to build an inclusive world through responsible and respectful act(s).

### 3.2 EMERGENT HABITUAL ARCHITECTURE MAKING IN KAḶIYĀṬṬAM



Figure 33. Furious swift movements of Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ in relation to people around and the communication among everyone within Uṛayal

There is an order in the ‘chaos.’ My camera capturing the ‘Uṛayal’ of Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan Teyyaṃ and me being a part of the movements in the same Kaḷiyāṭṭam simultaneously

attempted to know what made the actions happen the way it happens in the field of action or space. How is the space formed, and how do the movements reflect or take part in the collective formations of space? Figure 33 shows furious swift movements, formations of clusters of elements, and their dissolution in an instinctual fashion. While the Teyyaṃ flips and turns almost 360 degrees on his feet, people form spaces instinctively as a reflection to present stimulations in the space, creating an order in the Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ that is sometimes ignorantly labeled as chaos. Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ perpetually produces an emergent space, a weaving together of relations that holds itself together even when they are constantly in formation.

John Holland finds emergence as a ubiquitous feature of the world around us (Holland 2). The hallmark of emergence is much coming from little, where the behavior of the system is not easily anticipated from its parts or individual elements (Holland 2). One example Holland references that work congruently with Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ is ant colonies. Like the temperament of elements in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ, the whole is much more complex than the behavior of parts, exhibiting remarkable flexibility, and this emergent behavior occurs without any central executive (Holland 14). For a participant in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ, the information is always in formation, and the movement within the system is always in response to everything in it, corresponding to the conversations within the collective. When the Teyyaṃ fell, the people around him carried him to the back of the shrine; some followed the crowd, some dispersed, and others moved away into loose clusters. If we were to ask if a pre-planned formation exists for the Teyyaṃ and people, the answer would be no. But visually and also experientially through other senses, the movements have an innate harmony that makes it emerge from within to perform in the space. Hence, Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ becomes an emergent system where the nature of building relations—between the self and the rest—is emergent,

producing a collective effect. An element of the emergent system of Kaḷiyāṭṭam in the world-building process is a part of the shared virtual, which accompanies all formations and phases of a process that isn't actively in excess of the form it takes (Manning 59). Thus, the process of world-building of Teyyaṃ, in which the element lives, is collective in nature.

Emergent world-building processes in Teyyaṃ give rise to perpetual novelty in the “temporal flow that is irreversible...replete with an element of uncertainty in what becomes and periodically the source of new events and process.” (Connolly 20). The systems are animated; they are dynamic and perpetually changing over time. An ever-changing flux of patterns leads to perpetual novelty and emergence (Holland 14). The perpetual novelty and same-ness in every generation of behavior is an amalgam of a certain level of innovation and persistent combinations of previous-level constraints. Each trace of novelty is not a surprise nor a complexity; rather, it is our inability to understand the relationships between elements in a system. Innovation is the difference from the previous, and a repeated same-ness is due to habit. This is why the reason behind certain colors and the way Teyyaṃ comes into action is debated on the grounds of cultural meaning and evidence.

There is always a progression within the conditions and potentials of habit. Manning finds habit as a choreographic tool from a performance theory perspective as it enables and directs movement, making them predictable possibilities of experiences (Manning 89). Habit is an unstable mutable memory to a certain extent: habits are procedurally tweaked and pushed to their limits in world-building. They re-live memories of interactions and relations, making them concrete each time it

gets evoked. Conditions, tendencies, and potentials, due to habits, shape the overall becoming of Kaḷiyāṭṭam.

In the shared existence of the world of Teyyam, the way of doing in Kaḷiyāṭṭam is learned by repetition of the process. Like how a walking path (naṭappāta) is created by repeated walking after a lush green cover takes over the monsoon landscapes of Kerala, children over the generation learn how to transform and move as Teyyam from their family elders through observations and by repeatedly ‘doing’ it. This transduction of knowledge through generations without any formal institutions is a process— be it physical, biological, mental, or social— in which an activity gradually sets itself in motion, propagating through different zones over which it operates (Simondon). The element of difference in each such repetition in the process of transduction leads to a ‘creation’ by the person transforming into a Teyyam.

In a relational network, the space, “intensities come into relation with each other through repetition, allows explaining the relations between virtual and actual events” (Williams 12). Construction of models— a uniquely human activity (Holland 4)—and the embodying of them in an amalgam of the actual and the virtual forms a habit. For Deleuze, “the condition for what we commonly understand as repetition in habit and memory is, in fact, the continuity afforded by the variation of an intensity in an idea or sensation” (Williams 13). Such a flow of happenings that conjoin and participate in multiple intensity networks forms the system of Kaḷiyāṭṭam and the creation of accelerated architecture or the moving temple.

*“It builds worlds more than buildings, its mandate to directly cleave the biosphere, or in Arakawa and Gin’s vocabulary, “to bioscleave.” The bioscleave procedural architecture fashions never stop cleaving. It is an active, procedural milieu that remains in-act as a persistent reminder that what sites life also cleaves the environment, opening it to its differential. Cleaving cuts open the field of experience. This cut has the effect of reorienting the field: the cleave, like decision in Whitehead, is the decisional force that activates, that tweaks that the in- act toward the punctual creation of life-living.” (Manning 87)*

Procedural architecture projects architecture as a procedure and a process of world-building that extend architectural thinking beyond built environments. It is an active process that shifts the focus to the site, the space formations that continuously ‘cleave’ the environment, cutting them open to its differential, weaving to the field of experience. In the world of Teyyam, the accelerated architecture, the Kaḷiyāṭṭam, the space is continuously co-woven with the relations born out of interactions. Architect-ing as a process of world-building cleaves the space or the site— in Manning’s words, the environment. Procedural architect-ing is a relation-centric reminder of what constitutes, holds, and sustains the co-woven space together.

Manning quotes Madeline Gins and Shūsaku Arakawa’s definition of procedural as “overlapping tissues of density” (Manning 87). Procedural architecture exceeds representation and goes beyond built structures, and they are productive, i.e., they are procedural and move away from focused reductive approach. The procedural architecture builds worlds (Manning 87). Building worlds through procedural architecture weaves spaces and projects various modes of existence.

Procedural architect-ing as world building maps these varying modes of existence and, in effect, accumulates memories and participates in creating deferential in the act of habitual architect-ing in Kaḷiyāṭṭam.

Figure 10 shows interactions in Kaḷiyāṭṭam: it shows the physical body movements of participants creating ephemeral physical spaces. In procedural architect-ing, movement is not limited to physical spatial movements; rather, the movement includes all the actual-virtual interactions, relation-making between the subject and the rest—and co-weaving of their spaces. Procedural architect-ing builds worlds and situates one in space— by inhabiting different modes of existence emerging out from the relations networks interacting in the co-woven spaces. Procedural architect-ing even happens as one breathes, perceives the world, and perpetually co-operates and co-weaves spaces together.

The creation of modes of existence by the networks formed by relations between the ‘I’ and the rest enables architecture as a procedure. As different modes of existence do not define but propose existence, a passage that are ecologies that activate a field of concern. Those modes of existence are active in the happening of Kaḷiyāṭṭam and provoke new forms of process and new modes of existence that form space (Manning). The process of mapping such relations and interactions in space is procedural and does not follow a set of instructions. Instead, it follows zones of intensity in space, directs the motion into a path, and re-initiates them to re-intensify (Manning). Procedural architecture stimulates the field of relations in space such that life continues to be the play of self-invention (Manning 88).

“Most architectures, Arakawa and Gins argue, do anything but de-intensifying life rather than opening it to its potential difference. We follow their routes, we embrace their limits, and in so doing, our lives become predictably oriented by them.” (Manning 88). The process of becoming habitual procedural architect-ing follows differences and repetitions that are born out of and into the varying intensities of relation networks. Procedural architecture does not necessarily de-intensify but accumulates and suggests potential differences in each consequence cycle within the predictable orientation formed due to previous interactions.

“A procedural architecting... always involves an encounter with a work that persists even as it stands, that engages with the openings of potential even as it takes its place, here and now.” (Manning 103). Built structures and wearable forms of Teyyaṃ have significant engagements with openings of potential while in the habitual process of procedural architect-ing. Memories of mapping modes of existence like these forms are reminders and accumulations of interactions between the subject and the rest. They actively participate in the perpetual co-weaving of spaces and subjects in the procedural architect-ing in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ.

Architecture as a procedure understands buildings or structures as a memory that is an active part of the becoming. Memory is inseparable from the relational movement in the process, and—  
“duration does not attach itself to being—or to beings, it coincides with pure becoming” (Lapoujade) (Manning 50). The fashion and the space re-organization remain as memories of movements and interactions in the preceded duration of becoming, which are active participants in the successive process of becoming, resulting in the accelerated architect-ing, a moving temple.

In procedural architecture in Teyyaṃ, the act of mapping modes of existence in space is not representational or a ‘thing.’ It is a world-building process that maps the formations of relations and attempts to know their expanse and interactions— the act of inhabitation. Procedural architecture is about inhabiting and building the world simultaneously, showing that we cannot build an inclusive space unless we open ourselves enough to inhabit space woven in actual-virtual relationships. Kaḷiyāṭṭam is accelerated architect-ing, where movement is not only physical displacement but the constant movement of space when virtual elements are considered.

### 3.1 THE QUESTION OF AGENCY IN THE ARCHITECTURE PRODUCTION IN KAḶIYĀṬṬAM



Figure 34. Ephemeral spatial formations in Kaḷiyāṭṭam; frames 1-6 in the figure are in an order showing the physical movements of people and Teyyaṃ in Kaḷiyāṭṭam.



Figure 35. Ephemeral spatial formations in Kaḷiyāṭṭam; the frames 7-13 in the figure are in an order showing the physical movements of people and Teyyaṃ in Kaḷiyāṭṭam.

Architectural production in the emergent system of Kaḷiyāṭṭam is not in the eye of the beholder nor driven by an agent or do-er. Holland urges us to think of the generations of emergent

behavior as agents (Holland 5), which will divert from subject-object-oriented attempts to know the agency of Teyyam and people in the architecture production within Kalīyāṭṭam. The ‘Uṛayal’ stage of Puli Marañña Thoṇṭaccan (see Figure 34 and Figure 35) shows the production of ephemeral spatial formations, and it is held together collectively, where they are created by everybody and nobody at the same time. Understanding the nature of architectural production in Kalīyāṭṭam urges one to move away from subject-centered views, which assume interactions and spaces emerge from actors or doers in the system, predominantly humans.

“New imagination of architectural agency has to find its moorings in an understanding of the social that is neither abstract nor individualist but intersubjective. This is dhāranā” (Prakash 107). An inter-subjective concept, dhāranā, as an agency of architecture in decolonization, echoes an attempt to move away from subject-centric perspectives on the agency. According to this concept, the act of architecture making is “enablement that comes from recognizing the imperatives of the situation, in the middle voice sense of the terms, which implies neither a self-authored nor a deterministic notion of agency” (Prakash 110). An action, the Karma, is a result of the situational imperatives that come to life in a pregnant stage in the field of action as subtended by the force that holds the system together. Karma is informed by the imperatives of the situation that somehow come clear in the specific theater of immediate life, the ‘field of action’ or the Kshetra—as subtended by Dhāranā (Prakash 109). An action born out of situational imperatives will maintain the togetherness and the weaving of the larger shared space that, in effect, maintains the ‘we’ effect, dhāranā. To hold the system together, “to act to uphold.. requires recognition that my actions as an architect are woven into a larger textile that is larger

than, exceeds behind and in front, and is larger than the experience of ourselves” is Dharma (Prakash 107).

So, in the concept of dhāranā, as the agency of architecture, dharma—the act of holding together— weaves everything together, producing a “we” effect, the dhāranā (that which holds together), and karma is the action in the field of action, i.e., Kshetra, according to the situational imperatives in such a held-together system.

Dharma, the act of holding together is impossible without the inhabitation of space; in other words, one must first inhabit a space— the field of action (or field of relations)— to know situational imperatives and to do an act (Karma) that will hold the system together. Inhabitation of space demands acknowledgment of the openness and overflowing nature of subjects to challenge one to know the expanse and interactions of the subject in the world. Inhabitation also requires one to acknowledge virtual relations that amalgamate with actual into reality. Knowing the situational imperatives to do Karma in space (or field of action) is never possible without accounting for the virtual in the perpetual formations of relations and interactions between the overflowing subject and the rest. Any degree of agency can exist only by knowing the potential triggered by situational imperatives. The eye-centered view that misses out on the virtual that happens together with the actual leaves no chance of knowing the potentials of a situation, hence inevitably failing to respond to the situational imperatives that can weave and hold up the system together. To act responsibly— to do Karma in terms of Dharma in tune with dhāranā—one has to be open enough to feel and know a situation in a reality consisting of both virtual and actual.

Architecture making of Kaḷiyāṭṭam moves away from the subject-centered question of agency to focus on relation-based, responsible knowing. There exists no question of a subject-centric agency in Kaḷiyāṭṭam because an enabler of any act is a collective effect or togetherness at varying capacities, degrees, and qualities— dhāranā. But the concept of dhāranā as the agency in Kaḷiyāṭṭam has one precondition: the subject must inhabit the space and, by effect, know the virtual- actual relations between the subject and rest to know the expanse and interactions of those relations created by the overflowing subject.

The procedural architect-ing of Teyyam is a process, a way of inhabiting and locating in a space. By knowing the expanse and limitations of the overflowing open self, Teyyam inhabits a space by orienting himself constantly, mapping the relations, and building the world together with the emergent system of Kaḷiyāṭṭam. It questions exclusive human agency and self-centered narratives of architecture-making and world-building.

## CHAPTER 4. INTEGRALLY KINETIC ARCHITECTURE

About twelve years back, while strolling through Sarojini Nagar in New Delhi to buy some vegetables from street vendors, I saw sudden movements on both sides of the street. Within a matter of seconds, they pulled the whole space that could be considered as the shop into the voids of the buildings on either side of the streets. A group of policemen waded through the crowd, and soon as they moved past, the shops were back in the same rigor at the same place; nothing changed except the few seconds for doing and un-doing their shops on both sides of the streets. Are these shops any different from the ones in concrete boxes right behind them?

The concept of kinetic cities by Rahul Mehrotra attempts to include such temporary structures that co-exist with other ‘static’ city buildings in the history and theory discussions in architecture. This chapter facilitates a conversation between the concept of kinetic cities and the nature of procedural architect-ing in *Kaḷiyāṭṭam*. This chapter is divided into three main sub-headings: Rahul Mehrotra’s kinetic city, the *Śvabhāv* of architecture, and integrally kinetic procedural architect-ing as inclusive world-building. Starting by examining and critiquing the idea of a kinetic city, the chapter explains the nature of architectural production or the *Śvabhāv* of architecture as kinetic. Through this argument, the concluding section claims that identifying the integrally kinetic procedural architect-ing in the world-building process is a step towards an inclusive way of world-building.

#### 4.1 RAHUL MEHROTRA'S KINETIC CITY

Spaces created by the street vendors in Sarojini Nagar come into being by virtue of their actions to sustain and fulfill survival needs. These spaces have been actively excluded and othered from the architectural discourses as it is not 'permanent' or even might look 'out of place' or 'undesirable' because of the pre-notions about architecture on how it should be, based on 'permanence' in a material sense ignored such functional physical spaces. Processions, weddings, festivals, street vendors, and many others, the majority of India's population, by virtue of their everyday dominating presence, constantly modify and re-invent spaces. They create an ever-transforming streetscape—a city in constant motion where the physical fabric is characterized by continuous change (Mehrotra 214).

Mehrotra conceptualized the idea of kinetic cities to include and create dialogues on this bazaar-like urbanism like the Sarojini Nagar as a critique of the attempts to un-see the temporality of space creation. According to Mehrotra, Indian cities have two components: static and kinetic. The former is the components built with materials like concrete, steel, and brick, more permanent materials, while the latter is with materials like plastic sheets, canvas, waste wood, scrap materials, etc. (Mehrotra 206). While a static city depends on architecture for its representation, the kinetic is incomprehensible as a three-dimensional entity because of its temporal nature (Mehrotra 206). A kinetic city comprises spaces that hold associative values and support lives and livelihoods to include formally un-imagined uses (Mehrotra 216). This concept attempts to move away from the canonical understanding of architecture as only static built structures but maintains a clear division between what is permanent and what is not. The division

of kinetic and static is rooted in this basic understanding of the binary: permanency vs. ephemerality.

“The Kinetic City forces the Static City to re-engage itself in present conditions by dissolving its utopian project to fabricate multiple dialogues with its context.” (Mehrotra 216). Mehrotra addresses some of the temporal aspects of architecture-making, categorizing them into ‘kinetic cities’ as something that opposes the other counterpart, ‘static’ components of cities. “The kinetic city, like a twitching organism, locates and re-locates itself through perpetual motion. Flow, instability, and indeterminacy are basic to the kinetic city.” Forms and perceptions of spaces that constitute kinetic cities are determined by patterns of occupation (Mehrotra 214). Vendors, their space, and interactions in Sarojini Nagar Bazar change every time. On a busy day in Sarojini Nagar Bazar, the memory of the city is an enacted temporal process where the spaces aren’t stable, and hence, they cannot ‘contain’ meaning. The fear of uncertainty, temporality, and the unknown adds to the continuous failures in ‘freezing’ the temporal happening and the temporal aspects of architecture that were unexplainable with the philosophy of architecture as buildings or built structures get categorized and labeled.

Procedural architect-ing in Kaḷiyāṭṭam does not fall into the category of the kinetic city as the temporal space creation proposed in the concept is essentially eye-centric and does not account for the virtual-actual relations of overflowing open subjects. The binary, kinetic vs. static, does not completely address the process of architecture-making or struggle to include the temporal aspects of habitual procedural architect-ing in Kaḷiyāṭṭam.

## 4.2 THE ŚVABHĀV OF ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of Teyyaṃ in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ transcends this limiting binary of static vs. kinetic city and understands architecture as integrally kinetic. First, by illustrating the open and overflowing ‘I’ or the self, Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ questions the subject-object conundrum and shows the constant relation-making process by virtue of the interactions between the self and the rest. The weaving of relations (concurrently both virtual and actual) creates a field of action or space that is in constant change according to the constant interactions in the relation fabrics— i.e., a perpetual formation of space. In Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ, architecture is a process that requires one to inhabit a space and map the interactions in the field of action or space. Here, inhabiting a space means knowing the expanse of the self and the interactions between the self and the rest. The mapping of those interactions in space is the art of architecture-making that leaves memories which again, in turn, affect the inhabitation and mapping of interaction in space. The architecture of Teyyaṃ is hence integrally kinetic and is always in formation as all components in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ always drive to know and map their interactions with the world better each time to help inhabit the ‘I’ or the subject better.

Through the lenses of Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ, the problem of a Kinetic city is not only the binary: permanency vs. temporality and the assumption defining subjects or agents but also its failure to notice the virtual components contributing to architecture-making and world-building. Failure to know the dynamic flow of constant interactions and relation-making constricts the understanding of architecture by focusing not on the process but on its visual or ‘actual’ consequences. Kinetic city addresses the emergent nature of the spaces in Indian cities but is forced to create an

opposite counterpart—the static city— as a result of the blindness towards the virtual, the constant interactions and relation making of the open overflowing subjects in a world.

An eye and 'I'-centric approach toward architecture is evident in Mehrotra's concept of Kinetic cities. As they are set on futile attempts to maintain the permanent vs. temporary divide, kinetic cities fail to recognize virtual components in space formations and the nature of architecture-making. According to Mehrotra, the building blocks of a kinetic city are not pieces of architecture but spaces that hold value and support lives in an unplanned manner. Here the term "architecture" follows the canonical way of understanding, and it means built structures opposed to the fluidity of spaces. The idea of kinetic cities ignores the degree of permanence in its emergent nature, and the static city ignores the degree of temporality that it holds. What is to be understood as permanent and what is not depends on the context in architecture making because the nature of inhabitation is dynamic in nature. The permanency posed by the static city is untenable because of the nature of the built structures— made of concrete, brick, or stone— as they have never been static in the world of becoming. They are involved in world-building and take part in the act of inhabitation as a part of the becoming of every component and their relations in the world.

In an integrally kinetic architecture process, built structures are not part of a static city, and they are also not representations of a city. Rather, they are a heap of 'actual,' visible memories of the act of mapping interactions involving both actual and virtual in the space created between the elements in any given system or conglomeration. One who inhabits spaces, influenced by the memories of previous interactions, will open up all senses to start feeling the architectural

process breaking the limitations that one creates for one's own body—the mega-receptor. To inhabit a space means to know the expanse of the 'I' and be cognizant of interactions between the 'I' and what is not the 'I.' The way of inhabitation influences the accumulation of memories of interaction and their mapping, the process of architect-ing. The built structures are not static entities that represent something in this happening, but they are as kinetic as everything that is partaking in the process of becoming.

The notion of agency, *dhāranā* from the last chapter, and the concept of kinetic cities do not account for virtual components of becoming, and by implication, they are largely eye-centric. Integrally kinetic 'architecture' of *Kaḷiyāṭṭam* from the procedural architect-ing in *Kaḷiyāṭṭam* acknowledges the actual and virtual relations between the overflowing open subject and the rest—that are inextricably intertwined with the actual-virtual amalgam.

#### 4.3 INTEGRALLY KINETIC PROCEDURAL ARCHITECT-ING AS INCLUSIVE WORLD-BUILDING

The *Teyyaṃ* is a moving temple in *Kaḷiyāṭṭam*— an accelerated architect-ing process or a fast-forwarded array of happenings in participation of built structures in the architect-ing and world-building process. Conjoining relations of multiple intensity networks forming in the system of *Kaḷiyāṭṭam* and the attempts to map them cause the production of the accelerated architecture of the moving temple. The creation of modes of existence or the networks formed by relations between the self and the rest enables architecture in *Kaḷiyāṭṭam* as a procedure rather than a product. *Teyyaṃ* attempts to de-center relation-making and architecture-producing from

the ‘I’ to focus on the relations and show how they, in turn, create the self or the ‘I.’

Identification of the open and overflowing ‘I’ with constant interactions and relation-making in this way requires a knowing and responsibility-based listening to inhabit a space. Like Teyyam, one should start feeling in a world of becoming, erasing hard binaries that struggle to maintain their existence by fighting against the integrally temporal nature of being and the inherent kinetic nature of architect-ing as a continued act of recreation.

World-building and the nature of architect-ing in Kaḷiyāṭṭam illustrates a way of inhabiting space through which a different philosophy of architecture can reveal itself to think beyond limiting binaries like permanence vs. temporary and kinetic vs. static, arguing for an inclusive way of understanding architecture across the globe. Self-centric perspectives solidify foundations for subject-centric operations and narratives fueling the current anthropocentric, euro-centric world. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through many channels like colonization, such self-centric narratives formed subject-centric and eye-centric worlds. Subjects distance themselves from ‘feelings’ and emphasize eye-centric knowledge production, which ‘others’ everything else, every other way of knowing the world. This thesis attempts to break out from the self-centric philosophies of architecture through Kaḷiyāṭṭam, enabling readers to revisit what it means to inhabit.

Architecture (in its noun form) is a product of mapping the modes of existence in space formed due to the interactions and relations between the ‘I’ and what is not the ‘I’ in Kaḷiyāṭṭam; Teyyam urges us to begin to feel, listen, and open up the body to be responsive to the world not as an agent but as a participant of a collective emergent happening. This thesis is an endeavor to work on Haraway’s urgent call for transformative learning on how to become more response-

able, more imaginative, and more capable of practicing the arts of living and dying well in a multi-species symbiosis on a damaged planet. (Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* 98). Perception of architecture should shift from an object and subject-oriented world-building to a process-oriented and experience-based one by practicing what Merleau-Ponty urged one to do— to return back to the receptive body (Merleau-Ponty 131).

Designing or producing architecture with an idea of ‘I’ supremacy in an anthropocentric world is violence. Teyyaṃ in Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ challenges ideas a subject-centered idea of agency and helps execute and move further from a right-based function<sup>24</sup> to a sensitive knowing by listening and feeling architecture responsibly. It envisions architecture production in a plural world beyond subject-centrism, anthropology, or any other ‘I’-centric perspective of architecture production and world-building. Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ reminds us that existence is not individual-centric, and neither is architecture because it is simply a way of inhabiting and world-building.

According to the concept, Kinetic city, ephemerality emerges as an important condition in the life cycle of every built environment. But Teyyaṃ in a Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ shows that ephemerality or temporality is not a condition but an integral part of all architecture-making processes or architect-ing. In Kaḷiyāṭṭaṃ, this ephemeral nature of architecture is more ‘actual’ than other forms, such as buildings; hence, this thesis on the architecture of Teyyaṃ opens up chances to rethink architecture philosophy in a more inclusive manner by moving away from subject-centric and eye-centric philosophies of architecture.

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<sup>24</sup> Spivak discusses the concept of right-based agency in the article *City, Country, Agency Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Winter 2019), pp. 59-85 (27 pages) (Spivak)

The feeling of permanence is a fallacy to fight the temporality and incompleteness that is felt and experienced by humans. Fear from uncertainty manifests in many ways, including where the mind deals with the uncertainty of the future by trying to create a sense of permanence. But Teyyam in Kaḷiyāṭṭam embodies this temporality enabling multiple layered modes of existence and relationships with the world, and architecture in Kaḷiyāṭṭam is a re-imitation through mapping of interactions resulting from such an embodiment expanding the ‘I’ and letting the self-overflow. Architecture is a process of invocation of human-world relations, and hence, at any given point, the architecture production will remain temporal, spatial, and dynamic.

Architecture as a habitual and procedural process is an act of re-evocation of the ‘I’ and the world relationships as a part of world-building. The ‘architecture’ will remain as a product, blinding oneself from process-centered procedural architect-ing until architecture making is felt and understood with a maximum level of openness in a non-subject-centric way of knowing. Knowing the expanse and interactions of the ‘I’ with what is not the ‘I’ is a need for inhabiting a space, locating and mapping such relationships and modes of existence in any co-woven space. Both subjects and the space are always in formation and are created simultaneously to build a world by architect-ing. Architecture as a process creates shared collective spaces, like how Teyyam and his people weaved an emergent space in Kaḷiyāṭṭam. One has to be as sentient and conscious as a Teyyam while in the world-building process to take part in a knowing—based on responsible listening and feeling— an inevitable factor of habitual procedural architect-ing.

This thesis conceptualized a non-subject-centric, non-eye-centric, more inclusive philosophy of architecture through Kaḷiyāṭṭam. Teyyaṃ in Kaḷiyāṭṭam is like a passage, a pathway to an effective conversation between my experiences and architectural theories, opening up a space to talk about ephemeral nature of architecture-making. This is a call for realizing that any knowledge or ‘creation’ by inhabiting a space is a result of responsible listening and architect-  
ing.

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