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Integration of Bharata's Nayika Bheda in the Ankiya Geets: The Songs of the Traditional Theatre Form Ankiya Nat-Bhaona of Assam

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Abstract

Bharat Muni, the author of the Natyashastra, is renowned for his work on dance-dramatic literature, particularly the Nayika. The Natyashastra, categorizes and analyzes the emotional states of men and women in love, known as Nayaka and Nayika. The Natyashastra provides an eightfold classification of Nayikas, including Vasakasajja, Virahotkantitha, Swadheena-Bhartrika, Kalahantarita, Khandita, Vipralabdha, Proshitabhartrka, and Abhisarika. To express the Nayika correctly, a dancer must be aware of its nature and creatively convey the feelings that underlie each Nayika. Nayikas are usually classified into three categories: Uttama, Madhyama, and Adhama, with the Udatta temperament being Divya, Nripatni, Kulastri, and Ganika depending on their social standing. Nayika Bheda holds a significant position in Sattriya dance, where it becomes the central position in the narrative. The name Nayika refers to all female characters in the narrative, not just the main heroine. Nayikas are traditionally divided into several categories based on the feelings displayed in front of a prominent masculine figure. The Abhinaya portion of Sattriya Dance uses Ashta Nayikas, based on Borgeets and songs of Ankiya Nats i.e Ankiya Geet. Lord Krishna is at the center of almost every Sattriya Dance Abhinaya, making Bhakti Bhava the primary Bhava of all compositions.

Key Words: Nayika, Natyashastra, Ankiya Bhaona, Sankaradeva, Ankiya Geet

Introduction:

Bharat Muni, the author of the *Natyashastra*, and the renowned exponent who focused mostly on dance-dramatic, or *natya*, literature were the key contributors to the Nayika. "*Natyashastra* is acclaimed as the first authorized treatise for Indian poetics." (Upadhyay 2008, 99). Bharata Muni established the foundation for the literary tradition by precisely and fervently categorising and analysing the emotional states of men and women in love, who are referred as *Nayaka* and *Nayika* which was continued by his successors in a distinct approach. (Rathore 2016, 57).

Natyashastra refers to ten stages of love that a dancer can portray in the treatment of a *Nayika* in love. Bharata gives an eightfold classification of the *Nayika* i.e

- ***Vasakasajja***- A woman who is ready for her beloved one.
- ***Virahotkanthita***- A woman who is distressed by the absence of her beloved one.
- ***Swadheena-Bhartrika***- A woman who is loved by her beloved one and holds her lover in control.
- ***Kalahantarita***- The woman who is separated by quarrel from her loved one,
- ***Khandita***- The woman who is enraged by her lover's action.
- ***Vipralabdha***- The woman who is deceived, waiting for her beloved one but have not turned up.
- ***Proshitabhartrka***-A woman who is mourning the absence of her beloved one who has travelled away.
- ***Abhisarika***- The woman who sets aside her modesty and moves to her beloved one.

He provides an account of *Nayika's* actions in a specific scenario. To express the *Nayika* from the correct angle, a dancer must be aware of its nature. A dancer is able to creatively convey the feelings that underlie each *Nayika*. The various psychological states of the heroines are caused by their imaginations of God as the lover himself. The majority of these states are related to her beloved one and are personified as *Nayikas*. *Nayaka* and *Nayika* are usually classified by Bharata into three categories: *Uttama*, *Madhyama*, and *Adhama*. Bharata states that the *Nayikas* of the *Udatta* temperament are *Divya*, *Nripatni*, *Kulastri*, and *Ganika*, depending on their social standing.

When it comes to the display the expression of *Bhava* through *Abhinaya* in the form of *Sattriya* dance, *Nayika Bheda* holds a significant position. Through *Abhinaya*, *Nayika* becomes the central position in the narrative. The idea of *Nayika* is applied to a number of disciplines, including drama, dance, fine art (including painting and sculpture), and film. In a broad sense, the name *Nayika* refers to all of the female characters in the narrative, not only the main heroine. *Nayikas* are traditionally divided into several categories based on the feelings displayed in front of a prominent masculine figure. The performance of *Ashta Nayikas* is also used in the *Abhinaya* portion of *Sattriya* Dance, based on the scripts of *Borgeets* (devotional *Sattriya* songs based on Ragas), songs derived from *Ankiya Nats*, which is called as *Ankiya Geet* and scenes of *Ankiya Nats* written by Sankaradeva. In this context, a few devotional songs written subsequently by the two *Mahapurushas'* disciples are also utilised. Lord *Krishna* is at the centre of practically every *Sattriya* Dance episode. Thus, *Bhakti* (devotion) *Bhava* or *Rasa* is the primary *Bhava* (inner feeling) of all the compositions. All other *Bhavas* or *Rasas* are subdued by this primary *Bhava*, which leads to the *Dasya Bhakti* between Lord *Krishna* and his devotees. In the *Abhinaya* of *Sattriya* dance, *Nayikas* seldom exhibit the *Sthayi Bhava* (permanent emotional state) of eroticism. When showcasing the *Nayika Bheda* in *Sattriya* dance, the mood consistently reflects *Bhakti Shringar* of a *Nayika*. *Sattriya* dance does not include a role for *Radha*, but it does portray

a variety of detailed emotional expressions of *Sita, Rukmini, Satyabhama*, and other unnamed *Gopis*. (Devi 2016)

About Ankiya Nat-Bhaona:

Ankiya Nat refers to a one-act play. *Brajavali*, an artificial Assamese-Mathili mixed language, was used to write the *Ankiya Nat* plays. Worshipping Lord *Krishna* is the primary focus of *Ankiya Nat*. The productions typically feature dancing, intricate costumes, live instruments, and vocalists. The mediaeval saint and social reformer *Srimanta Sankaradeva* is typically credited with creating the *Ankiya Nat*. In mediaeval Assam, *Ankiya Nat* was meant to be viewed by common people, the bulk of whom were assumed to be illiterate. Therefore, an explanation was given at each subsequent point in the play. (Sharma 2013)

A *Bhaona* is an *Ankiya Nat* presented in a particular manner. *Sankaradeva* began writing plays by organising and staging the *Chihna Yatra*, and he went on to write a few more after that. He wrote six plays: *Patni Prasada, Keli Gopala, Rukmini Harana, Parijata Harana, Kaliya Damana,* and *Rama Bijaya*. The writer's manuscript is commonly referred to as *Ankiya Nat*, whereas the play's performance is called *Bhaona*. Therefore, there is no distinction between these two names. There is no difference between the two terms. In a *Sattra* (Vaishnavite monastery), or the *Namghar* (community Prayer hall) is where the *Bhaona* is frequently performed. Now-a-days it is also performed in proscenium stages. A number of rituals are performed before to the real *Bhaona* performance.

Analysis Of the Reflection Ashtanayika in the Songs of Ankiya Nats:

Prominent academicians and experts assist in the analysis of the *Ashta Nayikas* used in *Ankiya Nats* scenes through the *Nator Geet* (*Ankiya Nat-Bhaona* songs). Several dance experts and academics were interviewed for this research.

Parijata Harana:

This drama is a perfect example to reflect the *Nayikas*. Through *Rukmini* and *Satyabhama*, so many *Nayikas* of *Natyashastra* are focused perfectly in this drama. From the beginning of the drama-

When *Narada* brought the *Parijata* flower down from heaven, he informed *Sri Krishna* that a woman who wore it would be a very beloved wife. *Sri Krishna* placed the *Parijata* flower in *Rukmini*'s hair bun after *Rukmini* requested him to give her the flower as she is his first consort. In her role, *Swadheenabhartrika Nayika* is seen at that moment via a *Geet*-

Geet: *Koutuke Rukamini Namiye Swamika Pawe*
Mage Ajuri Jori Hata |
Ava Prana Natha Mathe Milawa Mohi

Uhi Kusuma Paarijata || (Bora 1989)

When the evil-minded *Narada* went to see *Satyabhama* and told her how *Krishna* had placed a *Parijata* flower in *Rukmini*'s hair, she grew envious, crying in anger and lost her mind. *Virohatkanthita Nayika, Khandita*, and *Kalahantarita* were all visible in her persona at that time. (Goswami 2020)

Geet: *Manini Mai Nayana Pankaja Jure Baari* |
Satinika Udaye Hridaye Dahe Agi
Adhika Milaye Manatapa || (Bora 1989)

The nature of *Khandita* and *Kalahantarita Nayika*'s behaviour towards *Sri Krishna* was discovered when *Krishna* learnt of *Satyabhama's* illness and went to visit her. That time Satyabhama told Krishna in anger that she clearly understand his conduct and warned him leave aside and go back to his loved woman i.e *Rukmini*. (D. Kandali 2020). It was nicely mirrored through the *geet*—

Keshavahe Bujhalahu Tuhu |
Janaloho Tuhu Byabahara ||
Ataye Chaturi Chori Chalahu Bahuri Hari A
Jaha Priya Ramani Tohara || (Bora 1989)

Rukmini Harana:

After a *Bhikshu bhat* (monk) named *Hari Das* travelled from *Dwarka* to *Kundil* and began telling *Rukmini* about *Krishna's* looks, personality, and reputation, *Rukmini* began to spend her days thinking about these things impulsively. *Rukmini* pretended to be ***Virohatkanthita Nayika*** at that period because of the fear of not being able to meet or marry *Krishna* (Goswami 2020). These items may be perceived and experienced with a *geet*-

Koichana Keshava Darashana Hui |
Hari Bine Bifali Janama Ava Moi || (Bora 1989)

When brother *Rukmaveer* boldly said that *Anachari* (wicked) Krishna was not suitable for *Rukmini*, he wished for his devoted sister to get married to King *Sisupala*. The old father decided to give *Rukmini* to *Sisupala* since he was unable to resist his arrogant son. As *Rukmini* heard this, she became devastated and fainted out. It is possible to interpret *Rukmini*'s fear of losing *Krishna* as *Virohatkanthita Nayika*'s portrayal of the character. It can sense *Rukmini*'s grief at their separation through a *geet*.

Hari Bine Ramani Dekhata Andhiwari |
Rahayana Deha Biraha Karu Nari || (Bora 1989)

Like all women who wait for their lover and get dressed gracefully and beautifully, *Chandamukhi- Rukmini* became aware of her beauty as she longed to see *Krishna* on her wedding day. It was at that time that she became ***Vasakasajja Nayika*** (D. Kandali 2020). Through a *geet*, it is brilliantly shown in this drama.

Chandamukhi Pekhite Madhai |
Chalali Leelagati Bhuvana Bhulai | (Bora 1989) |

Rukmini and *Krishna* participated in a happy celebration following their social marriage. *Krishna* the lord of the world is kissing the beloved face. He plays with her and occasionally looks at the lotus like face. He spread his arms and hugs her. She changed into ***Swadheenabhartrika Nayika***, relieved to have her adored one for all time. In the theatre, a *geet* is used to represent it.

Geet: *Karata bihara karata bihara muraru*
Kaminika kamala amala muha lambi
Chumbe jagata adharu || (Bora 1989)

Keli Gopala:

The respondents stated that while the *Keli Gopala* story is a prime illustration of *Sringara Rasa* (erotic sentiment), *Sankaradeva*'s primary goal in writing *Ankiya Nat* was to instill devotion (*Bhakti*) in people's hearts. But between the love of *Krishna* and *Gopi* in this drama, *Bhakti Sringar Rasa* is accessible.

In the middle of the *Yamuna*'s leisurely flow, *Krishna* is entertaining the *Gopis* with a lovely tune on his flute during the full moon night i.e also called *Sharad Purnima*. After hearing the lovely and alluring melody of his flute, the *Gopis* were enchanted and abandoned their homes, husbands, and sons to meet *Krishna*. The persona of *Abhisarika Nayika* is shown here (D. Kandali 2020). It is possible to sense the drama through the *geet*-

Geet: *Akhanda Mandala Shashi Sharata Ratita* |
Sasanke Komala Vrindabana Bikashita || (Bora 1989)

Krishna reminded them of their obligation and urged them to go back home after realising their attraction to him and learning of their intense devotion to him. However, he was prepared to do *Rasa Krida (*divine play or love between Lord *Krishna* and *Gopis* by holding hands in the full moonlight*)* with them after realising how much they loved him. The *Rasa Krida* began with the *Gopis*, who left their homes and families to meet *Krishna* on the night of the full moon and engage in romantic play with him. All of the *Gopis* moved to *Abhisarika Nayika* at that time. (Goswami 2020).

Geet: Keshava karata keli gopini sange range Govinde Karata keli |

Kahaku chumbaya bamanamali lagi mukha |

Alingane gopika milata rati xukha || (Bora 1989)

Krishna vanishes with a *Gopi* in order to crush the *Gopis'* pride. Subsequently, they become aware, weep, and begin looking, lamenting and searching for *Krishna*. After failing to locate *Krishna*, they finally behaved like *Virohatkanthita Nayika*.

Geet: *Kahe geyo kahe geyo hamari bandhu madhai* |
Phokare niswaxa jhuraye neera nayana bayana hata charai || (Bora 1989)

Rama Bijaya:

Sita is the protagonist in the drama *Rama Bijaya*. *Sita*'s actions towards her beloved *Rama* exhibit traits of several of the *Natyashastra's Nayikas*. Right from the start of the play—

Sita, *Janaka*'s daughter, was quite depressed, and her *Sakhis* asked her why. *Sita* informed them that she had fervently begged for God *Narayana* to become her spouse in a former life. She was then informed by an *Akashvaani* (a divine utterance) that she would only be married to *Narayana* as *Rama* in the next incarnation, not in that one. She will marry him as well. However, *Sita* was extremely irritated and began to scream and lamenting since she had not yet had her wishes fulfilled. She feared that she would never marry her beloved. She thus passed out from fading. *Virohatkanthita Nayika* and *Proshitabhartrika Nayika* have arisen or been mirrored in *Sita*'s grief and regrets for the wishes that are not being fulfilled.

Geet: *Bilapati Maitheli Maai Neera Nayana Jhurai* |
Ghana Ghana Swasha Phokarata Tanu Chetanu Nai || (Bora 1989)

On the day of *Swayamvara*, *Sita* wished that *Rama* as her husband and hence being conscious about her beauty, *Sita* wore dresses and ornaments and went to *Swayamvara Sabha* with *Kusuma Mala* (garland of flowers) with her *Sakhis*. During that time *Sita* became *Vasakasajja Nayika* (Goswami 2020). As she is the daughter of kung *Janaka* so she is also known as *Janaki*. Through the *geet*-

Geet: *Janaki Kamini Koutuke Chalali Leelaye*
Sakhi Xaba sange Range Karata Keli
Meli Anchula Dulaie || (Bora 1989)

Being aware of her attractiveness, *Sita* is in very happy mood accompanied with *Kusuma Mala* and her *Sakhis* to the *Swayamvara Sabha* on the day of *Swayamvara*, wishing that *Rama* would be her spouse. After *Rama* breaking down the *Ajagava* bow, Sita goes happily towards

Rama with *Kusuma Mala*. During that time *Sita* portrayed as ***Swadheenabhartrika Nayika***. It can be seen from the *geet*-

Geet: *Anande Rajanandini Hashe |*
Ramaka Pasha Chalali Layalashe || (Bora 1989)

Conclusion:

According to the analysis section, it is important to keep in mind that division in the *Parijata Harana Nat* denotes mental as well as physical distinctions. The heroine could therefore feel cut off from her lover despite the paramour's physical proximity. From such viewpoint point, Krishna feels far from *Satyabhama* despite their close proximity. In order to become a *Kalahantarita Nayika*, after hering from *Narada, Satyabhama* argued with *Krishna* after learning that *Rukmini* had received the *Parijata* flower. She is also portrayed the *Virohatkanthita Nayika* and a *Khandita* at the same time. She adopts a *Khandita Nayika* persona when she believes that *Krishna* loves *Rukmini* more than her.

Rukmini depicts *Virohatkanthita, Vasakasajja,* and *Swadheenabhartrika Nayika* in *Rukmini Harana Nat*. Even though *Krishna* and *Rukmini* are currently deeply in love, the *Vipralambha Sringara* feeling also appears in this *Sankaradeva* verse. Some barriers prevent the union from being achieved. During that period, *Rukmini* changed into *Virohatkanthita Nayika*. After learning about the appearance and attributes of *Krishna, Rukmini* plays a *Vasakasajja Nayika* who is excitedly waiting for his arrival. The *Sambhoga Sringara* is depicted in the play at the same moment of *Krishna* and *Rukmini*'s marriage, which is indicated by their passionate sports as the *Nat* comes to a close. *Rukmini* became *Swadheenabhartrika Nayika* at that moment.

The *Gopis* in *Keli Gopala Nat* may be referred to as *Jyotsna Abhisarika* as they came out to greet *Krishna* on a night with a full moon. However, they might be referred to be *Garba Abhisarika* when they are proud of having won *Krishna's* affection (Kandali 2012) . However, it's also important to note that even while the passionate feelings are being conveyed, *Abhisarika Gopis* is contemplating Lord *Krishna*'s lotus feet. As a result, it is demonstrated that the *Gopis*' passionate love transcends into a supersensory realm where complete surrender occurs without any demands.

Of the eight *Nayikas* in *Rama Bijaya*, *Sita* embodies the traits of *Virahotkantitha, Proshitabhartrika, Vasakasajja, and Swadheeabhartrika Nayika*. *Sita*'s *viraha*, or separation, provides sufficient proof of her identity as a *Virahotkantita Nayika* and *Proshitabhartrika Nayika* since she was terrified that she would never marry her beloved. At the period of *Swayamvara*, *Sita* became aware of her beauty and changed into *Vasakasajja Nayika* when she desired *Rama* as her spouse. Following her marriage to *Rama*, she becomes *Swadheenabhartrika Nayika*.

The *Kaliya Damana* and *Patni Prasada Nat*, these two plays are not influenced by *Sringara Rasa* as both the story is based on childhood of *Krishna*. Since the characteristics of

Nayikas are mainly based on *Sringara Rasa* but these two plays don't focus the qualities of *Nayikas* because of the absence of *Sringara Rasa*.

From the above all analysis it can be clearly seen that out of eight *Ashtanayika* defined by *Bharata* in *Natyashastra*, seven *Nayikas* are reflected in the characters of *Ankiya Nat*. The *Vipralabdha Nayika*, has not reflected in any other character in the songs of *Ankiya Nats* and also there is no such scenes in the entire Ankiya Nats which is reflect the characteristics of *Vipralabdha Nayika*.

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