



Ashtanāyikas in Padams

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Abstract

Nāyika or heroine is classified into different types, and Ashtanayika is a classification based on the situation in which the heroine is placed. Situational changes lead to behavioral shifts in nāyika as the same heroine can react in different ways in different situations. A padam describes a situation, which also sometimes contain a peek into the past or assumption of future. This will then comprise of three different situations based on progression of time. Thus, the result is three different shades of Ashtanayika in that one padam itself.

Aim – Firstly, this paper aims to analyse how different shades of Ashtanayika, dominant and subservient, manifest in padams. Secondly, to analyse three different nayikas in padam, Theruvil Vārāno

Keywords – padam, nayika, nayaka, sakhi, mugdha, Madhya, pragalbha, Vāsakasajjā, Virahotkhanṭhitā, Svādhīnapatikā, Kalahāntarītā, Khandītā, Vipralabdhā and Abhisārikā

Introduction

Padam is a song of devotion and set in slow tempo. The words set to melody are soaked in bhava, offering maximum scope for abhinaya. The three important characters in padam are Nayika (heroine), Nayaka (hero) and Sakhi (friend). According to NatyaSastra, a treatise on Dramaturgy, the Nāyika character is analysed deeply, through various categories:

1. Based on birth – Kulajā (of high birth), Vesya (courtesan) and Kanyakā (maiden)
2. Based on nature – Utthama (Higher), Madhyama (middling) and Adhama (Lower)
3. Based on age and experience in love – Prathama – yauvanā, Dvītiya Yauvanā, Tritīya Yauvanā and Caturthayauvanā, i.e, first, second, third and fourth stages of love.
4. Nayika in Love, categorized based on Situation or Avasthā – Vāsakasajjā (dressed up to receive her lover), Virahotkhanṭhitā (distressed at his absence), Svādhīnapatikā (her lover always sits by her side with pleasure and is always under her subjection), Kalahāntarītā



(having repulsed her lover out of indignation, suffers remorse), Khanditā (afflicted with agony on account of the absence of her lover), Vipralabdhā (when she does not find him at the appointed place), Proṣitabhatrkā (when her lover is away in a distant land on business) and Abhisārikā (she is love sick and having renounced all modesty and bashfulness, goes to meet her lover)

The format in which Ashtanayikas are represented in poetry is aptly stated by K.S.Srinivasan in his article, “The Nayikas of Indian Classics – Their Genesis and Rise to Glory” : “The format is that of dramatic narrative, common to oraltraditions wherein the context and the participants are usually wellknown and assumed as such; 'he', 'she' and sakhi are the recurringcharactersimpersonal, and therefore universal. No names, ever” (9).

Analysis of Ashtanāyikas in Select Padams

***Theruvil vārāno*, a padam in Ragam Khamas and Rūpaka talam, composed by Muthu Thandavar.**

This song describes a lovelorn maiden who anxiously looks for the passing palanquin procession carrying the God of Chidambaram, Lord Nataraja. This nāyika is a Kanyakā, a young maiden. She longs for his darshan and waits at her door front, wondering if the street where she lives is the procession route. She wishes that Lord will halt in front of her door and whisper sweet nothings to her. “The lovely lady, who has adorned herself with the sixteen types of makeup and embellishments, who is in an expectant mood is lost in many a pleasant dream...is sitting in her solitary abode” is the state of a Vāsakasajjika Nāyika as expounded by Amṛta Upādhyāya in his book, *The Eight Darlings of Indian Aesthetics* (5). Adbhuta and Vīra are the predominant rasas in anupallavi. Here, the nāyika describes valorous feats of her Lord namely burning of Tripuram and incinerating of Manmatha, the God of love. The concluding word of anupallavi, i. e Natarajar, followed by Pallavi repetition offers plenty of scope for nāyika to exhibit her love. Adbhuta rasa is a pedestal over which Srngāra rasa is effectively highlighted. Charanam portrays the deep intensity of her one-sided love for him. She wishes that her Lord should come, talk to her, and fondle her. She is in a state of dying a slow death tormented by her love to him not being reciprocated. This is one of the stages of Vipralambha Srngāra. Furthermore, she is **Virahotkhanditā nāyika here**, as she yearns for him. What follows is Virahotkhandita in 2nd charanam too, as she desires to send her love message to her Lord, but there is no messenger. Dejected and desperate, she is still in her own fantasy world, unable to realize that her dream will remain only a dream and cannot



become reality.

Reality hits her in the concluding charanam and she gracefully accepts it. She realizes that her Lord is none other than the God who protects everyone in this world and does not solely belong to her. A symbolic realization dawns upon her after observing the significance of Lord's left index pointed at His Foot. She understands that the Lord symbolically guides all people to seek refuge in Him. Thus, this padam, theruvil vārāno commences with a Vāsakasajja nayika, who switches over to Virahotkhandita and eventually concludes in a Bhakthi mood.

***Smarasundarānguni*, a jāvali in Paras rāgam and Adi talam, composed by Dharmapuri Subbarayar**

Svādhinapattika is explained by eambalam as “nayika always enjoys the association of her beloved who has imprinted his trust in her heart. He shows his love to her and remains subject to her will” (eambalam 4). Svādhīnapattika is explored in this song in all length and breadth. The nāyika confidently declares that her Lord is the best in the whole world, there is no one to surpass him. She establishes the good conduct of hero in 1st Charanam, elaborating that he patiently listens to her and doesn't even wish to glance upon any other woman. 2nd charanam reveals his ardent interest in her artistic skills. He pours heaps of praises for her talents in singing and vina playing. His name, fame and generosity as the king of Dharmapuri is explained in the concluding charanam. Thus, the nāyika of this song is a Svādhinapattika throughout, not touching upon any other nayika.

Kalahantarita Nayika is explained by Kadambi as nayika who “feels remorseful due to separation from her beloved through quarrel. She is full of guilt and is deeply sorrowful as she laments her deeds and separation” (5). **This nāyika is the emotional edifice for the song *Māname Bhūshanamu*, in Rāgam Shankarābharanam and Misra Chapu talam.** At the outset, regret filled status of nayika is narrated by herself. The reason for such her turning to Kalahāntarita is explained by her in the forthcoming charanams. In the 1st charanam she expresses her guilt and remorse for having rebuked the hero. She insists that pride and prestige is a jewel for every woman and admits that she has lost it due to her own foolishness. The reason for her anger towards hero forms the crux of the next charanam – she regrets for having listened to her neighbors and sent him away. Her dalliance with hero and her fond memories with him are described in the concluding two charanams. Her narration portrays hero in good light. She confesses that she got swayed by ill talks of other woman about her hero, not analyzing his conduct on her own, though she is pretty sure that



hero possesses good nature and character. Thus, it is Kalahantarita nāyika throughout, with a shade of svadhīnapattika when she recollects her fond memories with him.

Khandita nāyika confronts Nayaka boldly for his unfaithful act as she is the “One whose beloved has not come to her and enjoys with another woman...She is distressful and angry. This heroine feels offended as her beloved enjoys the company of another girl. She is angry at his faithlessness and is full of fear and distress” (5). Khandita is showcased from start to end in the 17th **Ashtapadi, Rajani janita guru jāgara in rāgam Bhairavi Adi talam. Here, the important phrase of Khandita is “yāhi mādhava yāhi Keshava mā vada kaitava vādam”**. The first 6 stanzas contain all observations of Radha over Krishna as proof for his secret dalliances with young maidens. She rebukes him and pleads him to go away. She is hurt, cheated and heartbroken but can never show anger and hatred towards her Lord because he is her dear Krishna. The music intonation itself sounds like pleading and begging and hence, very different from sarcastic and rude Khandita nayika songs such as Idaivida veru venumo sākshi or nee mātale māyanurā. Thus, this is a khandita nāyika where remorse and dejection surpass anger and hatred.

Vipralabdha nāyika is the heart and soul of the padam, Netrandi nerathile neerāḍum karai thanile, in rāgam Husseinī, Rūpaka talam, a composition of Vaideshwarakoil Subbaramaier.

The heroine has spotted her hero, God Muruga, with another woman in the banks of Yamuna - She just signaled to him and he went towards her, infatuated by her. This is the content of Pallavi, where heroine feels cheated and confronts him rightfully. In anupallavi, she reveals that she stood there, as a witness to his dalliance with that other woman. She is heartbroken as she says this because like the previous song, this nayika too cannot completely rebuke her Lord because he is her dear Muruga. The phrase “*pakkathil irunden swami*” clearly reveals that the nayika is dejected but not angry or hateful. Moreover, she addresses nayaka as ‘swami’ which itself exhibits her love and respect for him. She is ready to forgive and lead a happy life with him. She floats back to memorable incidents with him in Charanam 1, thereby displaying characteristics of Svadhīnapathika. This is followed by a shade of Virahotkhandita as she is disinterested in food for almost a month, and innocently pleads that she cannot tolerate his indifference anymore. She is sure that his presence and care will cure her of all sickness and requests him to come to her. It is also to be noted here here that like other padams, the anupallavi or charanam will not end with a Pallavi refrain. This is because nayika has confronted him in the beginning itself and then she wipes it off with pleasing memories of him. She will not want to torment him time and again with



the previous night's unpleasant episode. Hence, nayika here is only partly a Vipraladbha because though she feels cheated, she is confident about convincing her hero, hence displaying characteristics of Svadheenapathika dominantly.

Proṣitabhatrkā nāyika characterizes the Kshetrayya padam, *Ninnu Jūḍa*, in rāgam Punnagavarāli and Triputa talam. The opening phrase, *ninnu juda galige* captures the reaction of nayika on seeing her hero at her doorstep after many months. Though she suffered his absence alone all these months, she only expresses her surprise and happiness on seeing him. She welcomes him fondly and frankly declares how happy she is on meeting him. The following phrase of Pallavi, “*innālaku*” speaks a thousand words about how much she missed him all these days. This phrase offers lot of scope for interpretation and can be performed in following ways:

“why didn't you come all these days?”

“what pleasure did you get by making me wait and yearn for you all the while?”

“did you even think of my pathetic state or were you so busy that you never had time to even think of me?”

“I suffered pangs of separation all these months, did you also feel the same, or??”

Anupallavi offers more details of the duration of his absence from home – 4 -5 months. Here, there is again plenty of scope for different interpretations to portray the duration of his absence:

“having seen you, 4 or 5 months may have passed, O Muvvagopala!”

“see our child, when you left he was a new born child, and now he can crawl. Do you realise how long you have been away from me?”

“do you see our cow there? Now she has a calf – which indicates how long you were on your official tour”

“all the saplings that you fondly planted assuring that you will care for them every single day, have grown into young trees”

It is also important to note here that Proshitabhatrka nayika misses the hero all the while but is not angry or doubtful about his conduct. She keeps on saying what took him so long to return only to show how much she missed him and not to make him feel guilty. She is aware of his professional commitments and sent him off happily. However, she found very difficult to pass each day without him.

Charanam 1 has lot of information to offer as the nayika initially narrates her previous night's vivid dream of his arrival, her waking up and realizing sadly that it was all a dream, and her wondering if



he remembers her or not and then finally delighted at his real return confirming that it is the result of her prayers to God. However, these phrases are complete and do not offer much scope for different interpretations like Pallavi or anupallavi. When phrases are incomplete, the choreographer can complete in many ways, thus sharing authorship with the poet. But when phrases are complete, the choreographer only enacts the meaning of the phrases exactly.

In this song, Pallavi reveals that she is a proshitabhattrka nayika, and anupallavi establishes the same. When she narrates her dream, she is a svadhinapattika. Her realization that it was a dream, makes her into a Proshitabhattrka again. The ending phrase that God answered her prayers, shows that she is Svadhinapattika at present, with her hero by her side all the time hereafter.

Abhisārikā

Different Approaches to a Select Padam – Theruvil Vārano

Vāsakasajja as portrayed in Theruvil Vārāno can be rendered in three different ways based on the age and maturity of nāyika, i.e, as **Mugdha, Madhya and Pragalbha**. Each of them exhibits unique expression, reaction and behavior:

Song Phrase	Mugdha	Madhya	Pragalbha
Pallavi – Will my Lord not come through my street and cast a glance upon me?	Oh! I am so eager to see my Lord, I really want him to pass through this street, so that I can become happy... Though I wish he comes, I will better maintain a distance, as I fear the snakes ornamenting Him... I am definitely going to say this, hope he understands...	Oh! I wish my Lord passes through my street, I really want to see Him, and make love with Him, but really hesitant as people will notice me. Oh! How I wish he removes all snakes wrapped around him, they are a hindrance to my closeness with Him.	Oh! I am anxious and eager to see my Lord approaching me... I am sure he passes through my street, I promise you, I will welcome him and love him so much, noty caring about anyone around me. Nothing can stop us from uniting, even the deadly snakes around his neck do



			not scare me.
<p>Anupallavi – Just with one piercing glance, he burnt the three cities, my Lord Nataraja</p>	<p>Mugdha expresses this wondrous feat of Shiva with awe and wonder, as a young girl...</p>	<p>Madhya expresses with wonder as well as love, as she is in a transcendental stage to a mature woman</p>	<p>Pragalbha is expressing wonder too, but her love and passion for her Lord dominates the wonder feeling</p>
<p>Charanam 1 – Will he not halt at my house, and utter some secret message for me?</p> <p>I am experiencing pangs of separation.... will I not win over him?</p>	<p>Oh Lord! I have drawn this kolam, just to receive you.. “Oh so beautiful!”, will you not say so? Will you not appreciate me?</p> <p>I miss you, because you are my friend, my companion to play with....</p> <p>Oh, His trishula is</p>	<p>I have drawn such a complicated kolam, with utmost sincerity so that you will appreciate my talent....</p> <p>It is so intricate as I have done my best...so I am expecting to see you and gain your honest appreciation...</p> <p>I have so much liking for you...no, is it liking or love? I do not know... I think it is infatuation. But our bonding has grown stronger...I want to spend time with you...come soon.</p> <p>You look majestic when you hold</p>	<p>I invite you with a kolam.... I will look at you continuously, until you look back at me...</p> <p>I am very sure and confident that I am in love with you. I would like to take our relationship to a higher level... somehow, I want to win over you!</p> <p>The bold and</p>



<p>He holds the trident in his hand and dances forever in the golden hall of Cidambaram</p>	<p>wonderful! Will he not offer me his trishula so that I too can play with it?</p>	<p>Trishula...you are special to me. Please come!</p>	<p>handsome Lord of Chidambaram, my love!</p>
<p>Charanam 2 It is so difficult to pass time because of my constant thoughts about You... There is nobody (not even a parrot or a deer)</p>	<p>Oh Lord! Can't you see that I have no companion to play, like you have. If you play damaru, I dance; if you release your deer, I can chase it; if you give me the fire, I can play; if you offer Ganga to me, I can play Holi; Oh so many things you hold! Even if you refuse to give these attributes of yours, let me snatch those snakes, and play. Oh God! Please understand that I feel lonely without you and cannot spend time. You have Nandi at your beck and call...whom do I have to send you a message?</p>	<p>When I see my neighbors, they have either pet or sibling for companion, but I have none...Yes, yes, so many friends around me (in sarcastic tone) ...no, that's not true. You are my only companion... I didn't maintain many friends as my complete focus was on you... you have so many friends to entertain you but I have none. Not that I am not capable, but I completely looked forward for your companionship! Other than you, I do not have any companion who will help me unite with</p>	<p>When you are with me time flies; but in your absence, every minute ticks slowly...I really want to receive you, pamper you, make a beautiful garland for you, cook delicious food for you. But I don't know if you will really come... I cannot bear disappointment or rejection... I am thinking... I have no one to send across my message to you... a parrot? No. a</p>



<p>to carry my love message to you!</p> <p>What mistake did I commit? I cannot be blamed for this situation. I hope I can unite with you, my Lord who dances in the golden hall of Chidambaram, witnessed by Brahma, and Vishnu.</p>	<p>A parrot, a pigeon? A deer? None!</p> <p>Oh my Lord! What mistake did I commit? I am confronting with you directly and expressing my feelings to you... there is nothing that you cannot do... so please come to me and make me happy.</p>	<p>you... why don't you yourself come as thoodu for me just like you went for Sundarar? Is my devotion towards you not worthy enough?</p> <p>Mistake? Me? All I did was fall in love with you and yearn for you all the time... is that a mistake? You very well know that my love for you is genuine... if you feel so, come fast, and let us celebrate our union and love... please come soon my Lord!</p>	<p>dog? No, a cow? No, a pigeon? No, or at least a street dog?? No, not even that!</p> <p>You know very well that I didn't commit any mistake.... So please do not test me anymore. I am so exhausted, and you are my only hope, as each minute ticks, my heartbeat ticks too.... But it is deteriorating... If I do not unite with you, I will end my life for sure...</p>
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Conclusion

Every padam is a work of intense network of emotions. There is always plenty of scope to explore new dimensions... One such instance is attempted in this research paper, analyzing how differently Mugdha, Madhya and Pragabha react and behave for similar situations. Certain compositions like Daari Joochu naturally depict a mugdha nayika while compositions like Indendu Vachitivira portray a pragalbha. However, compositions like Ninnu joochi, Chudare or Payyada can be interpreted with these three different nayikas. Thus, Padam is a composition where the poet has



PRANAV JOURNAL OF FINE ARTS

ISSN: 2582-9513

made a beautiful landscape on a canvas, with gaps, to be filled by the composer, thus bringing out a unique interpretation every time.

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