

The Representation of Women's Beauty and Sexuality as a Financial object in Sinhala Conventional Theatre

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Abstract: Woman has been a subject of discussion, viewed from a number of perspectives as beauty, love, sexuality and a financial object from ancient times to the present as can be traced in a vast volume of literature in the world. According to the theories of Sanskrit literature as reflected in the works of poets and dramatists like Kalidasa, Sri Harshadeva, Bhasa 'Woman' is something very compulsory for them as a subject for oration. Such oration should focus on the woman from hair to feet with an ornated language'.

According to the cross-cultural communication between India and Sri Lanka, many Sinhalese theatre directors have taken 'woman and the sexuality' as a tool for the performances from the beginning to the present time. This fact naturally leads through the achievements of financial situation of the performances. Therefore theatre directors have focused on how the woman's beauty and gracefulness are important for a play. These attributes of women are integral to the development of the performance text on the stage. Sometimes they constitute the most important icon for the production. Many of the theatre productions have such a view in their representation of women's body. For example, in Ediriweera Sarachchandra's play 'Maname', the whole plot centers round the desire of the young princess Maname to be in the comfort of security and the personality of a man. The Director has chosen a girl for princess Maname who is very young and beautiful, with a typical woman's body as described by many poets in literature. She was an incarnation of beauty and sexuality as in the descriptions of many dramatists and poets. According to my view this is a tool which connects women's beauty and the sexuality with society. A similar representation of the woman's beauty and sexuality can be found in the plays such as Sinhalese theatre directors as, Dharmasiri Bandaranayaka (*Makarakhshyana / The Dragon*, 2011), Jayalath Manoratna (*Horu Samaga Heluwen (Nude with thieves)* 2008 and Dayananda Gunawardane (*Gajaman Puwatha / The Lady*, Gajaman).

The source for primary data was the actual performances of particular plays. The secondary sources included the literature relevant to these areas.

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Women's participation in theatre has not been attested in the history of theatre in Ceylon, before *Pārsi* theatre came to Colombo. With the arrival of *Pārsi* theatre, Sri Lankan people realized that a woman's character could be meaningfully represented by women actresses themselves on stage.

'In August 1884 a woman named Mary Matilda wrote in *Sarasavi Sandarasa*, a Sinhala journal, that she watched *Nurthi* twice together with her husband, and was pleased that the plays were fit fare for respectable men and women. There is also reference to working class women forming part of *Nurthi* audiences. Although they were lampooned in the Sinhala press as *Thuppahi* (hybrid) and disrespectable because of their attendance nevertheless shows that the plays had popular appeal and attracted people of all classes. They were therefore, powerful vehicles of popular culture in the service of the nationalist cause.' (Neloufer De Mel, *Women & the Nation's Narrative: Gender and Nationalism in Twentieth Century*, pp.73-74)

This is the starting point of women's participation in theatre, as people considered such participation as inauspicious in a Sinhala Buddhist society, and as most of the Sinhala theatre genres aimed at fulfilling ritualistic purposes rather than developing a theatre genre. (Ediriweera Sarachchanda, *Sinhala Gemi Nātakaya*, p.54)

There were cultural and religious barriers restricting women's participation in theatre in Ceylon for women's presence in the theatre was not welcome. In Sri Lankan theatre, women's entry in to the world of theatre either as an actor, manager and playwright, was resisted in the past and this seems to continue in the present too. (Tissa Kariyawasam, *Sinhala Nātyaye Vikāsanaya*, p. 48)

Sinhalese literature provides evidence for the presence of women in dance and singing as courtesans and dancers in Hindu and Buddhist temples. They danced for Gods. Many poets have written about ornate

women's beauty and performances in their work. The following example is from *Nalangana Venuma* or description of dancing women in Rev. Wetteve Himi's *Guttala Kāvya* (15th Century A.D.)

<i>Rurāse andinā lese ath lela didī viduliya</i>	<i>pabā</i>
<i>Ran rase ek vana lese vena nāda nūpā thaba</i>	<i>thabā</i>
<i>Kam pase dena sara lese desa bala balā nethagin</i>	<i>sabā</i>
<i>Mam kese pavasam ese vara sura landun dun ranga</i>	<i>sabā</i>

(Sarala, Peramunugama (ed.), *Vettave Himi's Guttala Kāvya*, p.115)

‘Like drawing thousands of figures, moving their hands with the grace and lightness of lightning flashes, like gold mixing with mercury, they are keeping rhythm or *Thāla* with their feet to the music with the beauty and soft harmony, Like the arrows dispatched by Cupid's or *Anangayā*'s bow, they are sending sharp piercing flashes from their eyes, looking at the audience, that being these heavenly dancing *Apsarās*, how can I possibly describe from my scene?’

Courtesans and the other women had been performing at the royal court and on the open street. However, women's performances in theatre were despised by the society. This negative treatment is unwanted, because women have taken part in number of performances as ornate according to literary critics. Thus, such performances have been well performed by women and their beauty and figure were immensely praised.

However, from Polonnaruwa period to Kandy period, (13 - 18 century B.C.) woman was absent in all the rituals and the other performances due to religious and social influences. (E. Sarachchandra., *Sinhala Gemi Nātakaya*, p.62) If theatre has taken women continuously for the performances instead of man acting female characters, theatre in Sri Lanka might have been further developed.

At the beginning of 19th Century, women have been permitted to act or sometimes even to sit in the audiences at the theatre. (D. V. Hapuarachchi, *Sinhala Nātya Ithihāsaya* p. 25). These women were mostly, English educated middle class women who lived in Colombo. Public visibility of a woman in the other areas of the island is different from Colombo. It's not because of caste, but class issues. In rural areas there is a certain custom related to women. Where a woman steps in to her adolescence as her first journey into becoming a youthful woman, she is required to be confined into her house. Her lonely confinement continues till her parents find a good partner for her life. Education is not compulsory according to folk ways of life. (Pathegama Gnanissara Himi, *Sinhala Geethaya saha Ape Sanskrutiya*, p. 49). In the light of these circumstances, there is no space for her to visit theatre at all, since it doesn't go with the codes of a standardized lifestyle. A woman has no space for any performances. (E. Sarachchandra, *Sinhala Gemi Nātakaya*, p. 54)

But in Colombo, the situation is different. They are rich and well English educated people. Their life styles are similar to westerners' society where, there are no customs similar to those of the rural peasantry. Therefore, participating in theatre had not been a big problem for women from Colombo in the 19th Century. This is the starting point of women in Sinhala theatre.

However, people who lived in the other parts of Sri Lanka, have opposed women's involvements in theatre. Actresses had been abused by peasants as they considered such acting is a disgrace to women. (Sunil Ariyaratna, *Kerol, Pasan, Kantaru*, p.112) Further, no one liked to marry such a woman in the society then. However when compared to such a hostile background, the present situation has marginally improved. For example, Lalita Sarachchandra, Sunethra Sarachchandra, Menike attanayaka, Trilishia Abykoon have acted as Princess Maname. But they earned reputation in the society from the successful acting in Sarachchandra's lyrical play *Maname*.

“Trilicia's performance contributed much towards the success of ‘*Maname*’ which gave a totally new dimension to Sinhala theatre.” (‘Farewell sweet princess’, *Sunday Times*, May 2nd 1999)

According to the above discussion, such negative treatment for women has undermined Sinhala theatre very much because the directors and producers have not succeeded financial situation without the representation of women in theatre.

Therefore, it is important to discuss the representation in women in Sinhala theatre to make performances on the contemporary stage. Therefore, this research deals with the beauty of woman and sexuality as a financial object in Sinhalese theatre. Also, the research will examine how the director has used a woman's figure and beauty for the appeal of sexual desire.

The dramaturgy about the concept of heroines is famous in Sanskrit literature and theatre. The treatises, such as Bharatamuni's *Nātyaśāstra*, Dhanamjaya's *Dasarupaka* and the other Indian literature influenced very much on these.

They were interested in explaining heroes and heroines as main characters of their work. Since the theme of the Sanskrit theatre and the other work mostly focused on love and passion, beautiful women are

important to create the circumstances for love or *rathi*, and finally the playwright is supposed to have evoked *śṅgāra rasa*.

The heroines occupy more space in literature and in theatre than heroes. This is quite natural as a heroine provides the situations and much impression for all the events of the play through her beauty and the skill of making love. In Sanskrit theatre, those heroines are described with graceful movements. When they represent the main role of the play, they have to use the graceful movements through the gestures in order to intoxicate the beloved. Because of this point income of the play is increased as spectators love to see the heroin's beauty and the sexual desires in a graceful manner.

Indian playwrights, poets, painters who are interested in erotica or erotic literature on *śṅgāra*, have long researched and studied woman's nature and her beauty and how she can make love to her beloved. This was an interesting topic for many Indian writers such as Mahā Kavi, Kālidāsa, Harshadeva. Those who have studied Indian woman have classified her into many categories, according to her behavior with her lover. Those heroines are well defined.

Anyhow, the classifications of heroines can be seen in Sanskrit treatises such as Bharatamuni's *Nātyaśāstra* (2nd century A.D.), Dhanamjaya's *Dasarupa* (975 -999 AD), Vishvanatha Kaviraja's *Sāhityadarpana* (1384 A.D.?), Vatsyayana's *Kāmasutra* (400 BCE - 200 CE), Kalyana Mallawa's *Ananga Ranga* (16th Century) and in the later vernacular literature.

They have classified the hero as well, but this research focuses on the representation of women in Sinhala theatre in terms of the heroine concept in the contemporary Sri Lanka. In the performance, a woman's beauty conveys diverse meanings to diverse spectators and to the text if the director uses the woman's body and the beauty for his play very well. The heroine occupies considerably more space than the hero in the literature and dramaturgy of theatre, which is quite natural. However, according to researcher's point of view, woman is much more interesting in many aspects as an object of study than man.

After studying Sanskrit literature, it is evident that *Nāikā* symbolizes nature in many respects. The names given by the author to the heroine in a piece of art reflect nature. Ancient Indian literature provides many examples for this. Śakuntalā connects with *Śakunta pakshi*, the peacock; Urvashi in *Vicramorvashīya* of Kālidasa with a plant; Sitha in Bhavabhuti's *Uttara Rāma Charita*, with the earth. The name Vasanthasenā is made of two words, *Vasantha* (Spring) and *Sena* (army). It means "essence of spring". She is presented as a beauty of love and the light of Charudatta's spring.

The focus of this research is the representation of heroine in Sanskrit theatre and also in Sinhala theatre. Heroine has been very successfully portrayed in Sanskrit theatre. Even in the present time, in "live tradition of Sanskrit theatre" and in the other conventional theatre, dramatists use the heroine in performances very well. However, when the heroine concept is used in Sinhala theatre, it is necessary to see whether the heroines are properly represented.

Nāikās has been classified in Indian literature, according to their relationship with hero. There are eight *nāikās* such as; *Abhisārikā*, *virahotkaṇṭhā*, *Svādhinapatikādikā*, *Vāsakasajjā*, *Proshitapatikā*, *Vipralabdhā*, *Kalahantarikā*, *Khanditā*.

Those eight *nāikās* have been represented in Sanskrit theatre very well. Mahā Kavi, Kālidasa, Harshadeva and Shudraka were well talented to create the heroine according to the definitions of dramatists such as Bharatamuni and Dhanamjaya. Also, they have defined graceful movements for them in their work.

A heroine, who is due to love or passion is attracted by her lover and gives up modesty for going out to meet him, secretly moving to her lover is called *Abhisārikā*. (Manmohan Ghosh, *Nātyaśāstra of Bharatamuni: Text, Commentary of Abhinava Bhārati by Abhinavaguptāchārya and English Translation*, Vol. II, 24. 219, p.852)

One that goes after her lover *Abhisārikā* is the one who is lovesick, goes to her lover or makes him come to her. The rain, darkness, serpents, scattered jewels, and lightning are always depicted when she acts a scene in a play. These four conditions connect in the mind of heroine according to the circumstances and the event or moment of her lover. Also those can be changed from moment to moment according to the situation which is created by the text and the hero. Therefore, one heroine sometimes represents each *nāikā*.

Vasantasenā in Śudraka's *Mṛichchhakaṭikā* belongs to the *Nishābhisārikā*. She is going to meet her lover in the night and in heavy rain in the fifth act of *Mṛichchhakaṭikā*. When the character of Vasantasenā performs for the Sinhalese theatre, director can create *Nishābhisārikā* who is going in the night and on a rainy day with dim blue light.

Vasantasenā has come through rain and danger. Chārudatta lifts his hands to express surprise. Vasantasenā is happy to visit her lover, after getting troubles from huge thunderstorm while walking on the streets in the night. This moment gives the opportunity to the playwright to create beautiful songs to describe

rain, thunder, and lightning with her shaken mind. Here the researcher likes to refer to Gireesh Khanna's movie, titled 'Utsav' where this moment has been created very successfully.

Vasantasena (Rekha) goes to Charudatta's house in the rainy night. She has adorned herself in white muslin-clothes and gold ornaments. She walks alone through a forest, shivering in fear of thunder and lightning. Her muslin-clothes wet with rain. Therefore, her clothes are transparent. When she enters Charudatta's house, she bids him to disentangle her hair and her golden corset in a graceful manner. This event represents the *Nishābhisāraikā*.

Also, to create an *Abhisārikā nāikā* out of a beautiful heroine, the playwright should be an excellent poet and the director should look at her in a graceful manner. He/She has to have the knowledge of Sanskrit literature and dramaturgy for directing the particular theatre. Creating the aesthetically pleasing of a play is more important than the other works of the director in a play. It helps represent the heroine very well. Therefore, when the beauty is created for a *Nishābhisāraikā* as an example, the director should create rain and lightning on the stage through so many effects from the lights. Also, stage background should be in a very particular manner like pine covered mountains with deer, peacocks.

Vasantasena is proceeding to her lover, through forest, in rain and lightning. In the background of pine covered mountains, and amongst the pines is a single palm; this combination of palm and pine may be seen by the traveler on his way. Imagination of the playwright is crucial to the direction of a play. The problems of writing a drama, keeping heroine's qualities in a particular manner are quite difficult without knowing Sanskrit literature like Śudraka's *Mṛchchhakatikā*, Kalikdasa's *Mālavikāgnimitra*, Dandin's *Kāvyaadarsha*.

Creating this kind of situation on the Sinhalese proscenium arch theatre will incur much money and needs a thorough knowledge. The director has to have creativity rather than expressing situations in a dialogue. Rain and the thunderstorm can be created by using lights. The problem the researcher sees here is the removal from the script the representation of these kinds of *nāikās* on the Sinhalese theatre on stage and also the playwright's lack of knowledge about creating such event on the stage.

When the director creates rainy nights with an *Abhisārikā nāikā*, it is important to create joyful dance of peacocks, and their sounds, uplifted tails disliked by the distressed swans who are about to depart from the lake. Moreover, the clouds, looking dark and *nāikā* is wearing wet yellow colour veil, gold jewelries, flashing by the flash light on the stage.

Graceful movements are important when the *Abhisārika nāikā* enters the stage. In Sinhalese lyrical theatre, those *nāikās* are beautiful like divines as shown in Princess Maname in Srarachandra's play *Maname*, Suppadevi in *Sinhabahu*, lady Gajaman in *Gajaman Puwatha*, Kuveni in Henri heroines Jayasena's play, *Kuveni*. In Sanskrit theatre, heroines have different kinds of dance steps to move on the stage. However, in the above Sinhalese lyrical theatre, such variation in steps is absent, and further they follow only one step to move. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UX2tFGWvPU)

Those are mostly related to theatre as well as to Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dance. For example, in the play Śudraka's *Mṛchchhakatikā*, Vasantasena has to mount the cart to meet Charudatta in Pushpakarandaka garden. Vasantasena would get into the framework of the cart in *Atikrānta chāri*, with her body held up high. She would do that after first assuming *Samapāda Stāna*. Once inside the framework, she would imitate the movement of the cart with short swift *Sampāda* steps then the cart starts moving. While the cart is moving, Vasantasena would assume the role of a passionate woman in love.

A woman whose beloved does not turn up because of his preoccupation with many other engagements and makes her sad, is a heroine distressed by separation *Virahotkaṇṭhithā*. (Manmohan. Ghosh., *Nātyaśāstra of Bharatamuni: Text, Commentary of Abhinava Bhārati by Abhinavaguptāchārya and English Translation*, Vol. II., 24.213, p. 851)

Sometimes when her lover, having promised to come at night and never comes but, he comes in the morning and abuses her by using bad terms. *Virahotkaṇṭhithā nāikā* is also called *Utkā* and *Utknithā*. She is the one who awaits her beloved impatiently in a secret place. She is lying on a bed of leaves of passion and sadness. Her eyes are filled with tears and her face shows signs of passion. Sometimes she is under a tree or at the edge of some grove or beside a stream. At night the quietness of the Gardner and the loneliness of a group of timid deer, grazing or snuffing the wind, and ready to dash away at the least sound creates circumstances for *Vipralambha śṅgāra*. These representations, and those of the *Abhisārikā*, are generally the best and most poetical of the series in *nāikā* concept in Indian theatre.

Creating this *Virahokantitha Nāikā* as similar to *Abhisārika nāikā* on Sinhala theatre is more problematic than *Abhisārika nāikā* as creating bead leaves on the stage, and hiding from a stream, lonely deer, their snuffing are quite suited for a film. But, theatre director can create those for conventional theatre in a context where the spectator knows that the theatre is an illusion. Therefore, we can create all those events with

graceful *abhinaya* through Bharatanatyam dancers, using their *mudrās* to represent all the bead leaves and deer with dance and music.

The problem is that the directors and the producers of lyrical theatre do not create above on stage and the reason could be their lack of awareness or financial constraints. The producer has to spend much money if he uses techniques to represent all the circumstances with *Virahothkantitha nāikā*. Stage setting, sounds and light effects are very expensive. It computes into almost Sri Lankan Rs. 300,000/- .

There is room to change the theory in theatre according to the directors' needs. Therefore, performances will differ from theory sometimes. When the director represents *Virahothkhanthithā nāikā* on Sinhalese theatre, she can perform a night scene with lightning, the awaited hero standing under a mango tree, two cuckoos are making love . Sometimes her left arm is round the trunk of the tree under which she stands. Her eyes should be to the direction of right hand and it symbolizes the hand of her beloved.

Svādhinapatikā by whose virtues her lord ever remains beside her. She makes the lover happy. A woman, whose husband is captivated by her conduct as well as by love's pleasure (*Surata*) from her, stays by her side, and who has pleasing qualities, is a heroine having the husband in subjection *Svādinapatikā* or *Svādhinabhṛtykā*. (*Opcit.*, 24.214, p.851)

In the play, Harshadeva's *Ratnāvali*, *Vāsavadattā* is the princess of the king Udayana. Even when he is not nearby her, she always thinks that he is her lover; he loves her so much, remembering their love-making at the past time. According to these kinds of thoughts, *Vāsavadattā*'s mind is always enchanted with love and passion as she is thinking that her husband is always near her.

When there is a *Svādhinapatikā nāikā* in a play, according to her character, creating circumstances on the stage is important. Also her gestures should be familiar to the lover; she can be represented as *Svādinapathikā nāikā*. When she waits for her lover, it is in the evening and the moon has risen. It should be created by the playwright, using poetic language to describe circumstances for *Vipralambha śṅgāra*. At this time, she must look like a beautiful goddess. She doesn't move away from the bed of leaves, or Mango trees thinking about her fate in grief. Instead of reading a text on the stage, the actors have many things to imitate and represent according to the characters' mind and thoughts.

A woman who in eager expectation of love's pleasure decorates herself joyfully when the conjugal Union (*vāsaka*) is due, is a heroine dressed up for the union *Vāsakasajjitā*. (*ibid.*, 24. 212, p. 850)

When the director creates *Vāsakasajjā* as a heroine in conventional theatre, she should be waiting for her lover and she should lie down on the bed. Her friend or *sakhi* decorates her ears, neck and arms using beautiful ornaments, pleats her hair with jasmine flowers, teasing her with the name of hero. *Sakhi* gives her the sandal bath and gives beautiful clothes to get ready for her husband or lover.

After getting ready, *Vāsakasajjitā* is looking out from the door of her house, and is happy as she is fully dressed and is lying on the bed of flowers hoping that her lover is coming. This is in the evening time. She is a happy *nāikā* and as she is looking around her bed, she feels that it is the bed for her Lord's reception.

The playwright should describe by poetic language that a boat has been sent to take the hero and now she comes near the window and is looking at the river whether he is reaching. The sun is setting at this time. There are two maids on the yard looking at the same direction, waiting for the hero's lover.

A woman whose beloved is living abroad on account of various duties and who wears her hair hanging loose is called a heroine of a sojourning husband *Proshitabhatrikā* or *Proṣitapriyā*. (*Opcit.*, 24. 218, p.852)

Proshitapreyāsi is the beloved whose husband has gone abroad for some business or some other work. *Proshitabhṛtykā nāika* is waiting for the time of return. She sits with her friend or *sakhi*, who comforts her, for the appointed time of her lord's return. Still he has not reached. The sad *Proshitabhṛtykā nāikā* is wiping her eyes with the end of her veil, and the *sakhi* is consoling her.

A woman whose lover does not come to her for a certain reason even when the female Messenger was sent to him and tryst was made is a deceived heroine, *Vipralabdhā*. (*Ibid.*, 24. 217, p. 852)

One that is deceived (*Vipralabdhā*) is one who is greatly offended that her lover has not come to the assignation agreed.

When we represent *Vipralabdhā nāikā* on the conventional theatre at the present time, she should be in a particular manner. She takes her maid in confidence, reveals her feeling about her lover. And she is sitting on her bed, talking many things about her lover to *sakhi*. *Vipralabdhā* is also calling *Utkā - nāikā*. According to the nature of *Utkā - nāikā*, circumstances should be thus; the night has passed, the Sun is rising, no lover came yet. The *nāikā* is tearing off her jewels, and flinging them down.

Facial expressions of *nāikā*'s are also important to represent each category of the heroine. When the *Vipralabdhā nāikā* is represented in conventional theatre, she should imitate the dryness of the mouth by licking her lips, changing facial colours and creation of tremor would be suitable when the *nāikās* are waiting for her

lover. Facial expression is important to express the inner states of her mind. She would do this by coming near the source of light on the downstage centre of the stage.

If the *nāikā* is in a happy union, everything would be changed according to the circumstances and the mood. For this method it is useful to study *rasa* theory in *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Bharatamuni describes all the moods and *rasa* according to the circumstances in his work *Nāṭyaśāstra* on 06th and the 7th Chapters. Brightness in the face and eyes are important if the heroine is in a happy union.

This refers to the heroine separated by quarrel from her husband or lover. She is impatient for her lover who has gone away due to a quarrel or jealousy, and does not return. (*Opcit.*, 24. 215, p.851)

Dhanamjaya explains *Kalahantarikā* in his *Dasarupaka* as, “*Kalahantaritā marṣad vdhūte nuśayārtiyuk*” (George C. O., Hass & A. M. (eds.) *Dasarupaka.*, 02.41, p. 56). One that is separated from her lover by a quarrel is one who suffers remorse after she has repulsed him in indignation. This type of heroine is called *Kalahantarikā*.

A heroine, whose beloved, because of his attachment for another female does not come for the conjugal union when it is due, is an enraged *Khanditā* heroine. (M. Ghosh, Vol. II, 24. 216, p.851) Dhanamjaya says; “*Jhāte nyāsangavikṛte khanditersyākaṣyākaṣyitā*” (*Ibid.*, 02.40, p.55). One that is enraged (*Khanditā*) is the one who is filled with jealousy on discovering her lover to be disfigured through his relations with another woman. The hero that lets his bodily disfigurements is called “shameless” as these disfigurements include marks made by the nails and teeth;

In the Sinhala theatre, all the categories of *nāikās* are represented according to their circumstances, which the playwright has created. The nature of *nāikā* is changing from time to time according to the event and the moments in a play. Especially, there are many problems in the representation of these eight *nāikās*.

The first is lack of knowledge about the dramaturgy. It seems that dramaturgy has been lost when it is performed and this can be highlighted with respect to text of a play. Playwrights have dedicated much time and space for creating poems without knowing the heroine's behavior according to her lover. The representation of heroine's behavior should be very graceful and should be done after studying *Nāṭyaśāstra* and Dhanamjaya's *Dasarupaka*.

The other problem appears in the representation of *nāikā* concept is that the directors have not paid attention to the creation of graceful *abhinaya*. Bharatamuni, Dhanamjaya, and Nandikeshvara have discussed the graceful *abhinaya* in their works, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, *Dasarupaka* and *Abhinayadarpana* respectively. All are important to create the main role in beautiful and graceful ways on the stage. It links with the choreographer as well as the director, and dancer. Theories of these dramatists are also not well followed up in Sinhala conventional theatre. None of the circumstances have been made by playwrights.

There are interesting *nāikās* among the eight categories of *nāikās*. There are *Abhisārikā*, *Virahoṭkañṭhā*, *Svādhinapatikā*, *Vāsakasajjitā*. In these categories, similarities are prevalent in the performances. If some plays focus on these kinds of *nāikās*, it is very important to think about their costumes and jewelries. The ornaments they should wear to wait for her lover are important to represent *bhāva* and *rasa* on the stage: Also, the directors should know the meaning of the symbols depicted by some flowers like lotus, jasmine, blue lotus and mango. This has been discussed in Dhandeen's *Kāvyaadarsha*, according to poetic writing. Some of this has disappeared from our Sinhala conventional theatre.

When the *nāikā* is waiting for her lover, she would assume the alit of passionate woman in love. If the playwright describes *nāikā*'s ornaments, director should follow up it. Also it should be “an exceedingly gorgeous dress” for any kind of *nāikā*. It makes theatrical beauty. She would better wear colorful garments to represent a heroine. Yellowish, peacock green, red mix pink, light violet, blue colours are better. Most of the time, princess is the heroine in Sinhalese conventional theatre. Therefore, her veil should be loosely held on one shoulder, with the other end covering the face in a style. *Nāikā* would also have elaborate coiffure with flowers. She would also wear garlands of flowers around her neck, arms and wrists.

Adorned with ornaments and costumes and in graceful movements, woman adds beauty to the theatre, and being very close to the dramatic art, she is the life of theatre. According to my observation Bharatamuni, Dhanamjaya, Vishvanata have defined the theories mostly according to woman's behavior and her beauty. It seems that without her representation on theatre, the theatre is no longer live. This is proved from Sinhalese conventional theatre genre of Ceylon.

Woman has been a subject of discussion, viewed from a number of perspectives as an object of beauty, love and sexuality from ancient times to the present. This can be traced in a vast volume of literature in the world. According to the theories of Sanskrit literature as reflected in the works of poets and dramatists like Kalidasa, Sri Harshadeva, Bhasa, and “woman” is very necessary for them as a subject for oration. Such oration should focus on the woman from hair to feet with poetic language. (Siri Thilakasiri (ed.) *Kavyādarśaya*, p. 187)

It seems that without woman and sexuality, there is no beauty in literature and theatre. According to the cross-cultural communication between India and Sri Lanka, many Sinhalese theatre directors have taken “woman and the sexuality” as a tool for the performances from the beginning of the Sinhalese literature.

At the present time too, without a women’s beauty and sexuality, there are no literature or performances. Example; Here is a song written by Sunil Ariyaratna, Singer; Visharada Nanda Malini.

‘Govinduni Me Siri Yahane

Virahi Velahinnaki Mā

Rathi Keli Ramani - Sihi kara Perani

Yamunā Nadiyada Kelambe

Piyayuru Mandale Thavarunu Dethole

Suwadin nehevemi Mihire (Sunil Ariyaratna, *Makaranda*, p.12)

(Govinda, (Krishna), I am lamenting on my bed, remembering you. I’m delighted with the fragrance of your lips which you placed on my breast.)

They have focused on how the woman's beauty and gracefulness are important for the play. These attributes of women are integral to the development of the performance of text on the stage. Sometimes they constitute the most important icon for the production. Many of the theatre productions have such a view in their representation of women's body.

For example, in Ediriweera Sarachchandra's play ‘*Maname*’, the whole plot centers round the desire of the young Princess Maname to be in the comfort of security and the personality of a man. As both Prince Maname and princess Maname are stepping through the forest, the princess is lured to a forest king. For this event, the director has done something very important as he has to attract the audience to judge the situation from the perspective of both Princess Maname and the forest king. Therefore, he has chosen a girl for Princess Maname who is very young and beautiful. She had to have a typical woman's body as described by many poets in literature. She was an incarnation of beauty and sexuality as in the descriptions of many dramatists and poets. According to my view this is a tool which connects women's beauty and the sexuality with society.

Heroine in each conventional theatre, moves her hand, shows her hip and the breast, in the hope of fascinating eyes to get the attraction of the hero's mind. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3os-7QJFfs)¹ The male spectator and the hero look at her body movements somewhere; there is no chance to get away from her desire. He is inevitably trapped. This is the target of conventional theatre director. He tries to represent the heroine as a desired, tempting and attractive object for man. This subject of theatre is in fact increases the profit of the production.

For example, in Henri Jayasena's play *Kuveni*, Kuveni is the heroine who is the female demon. She is very beautiful like a divine. When the king Vijaya comes from India to Thāmrappanni in Sri Lanka, Kuveni sees him. She is attracted by his personality, body and the beauty. Now she wants to take him for the Union of love or become a wife of him. She plays the role on the stage the way which has been mentioned above by displaying her hair, even the desired nails, eyes, body, and hip through graceful movements. She knits cotton by her hand in such a beautiful manner.



(Kuveni knits cotton.)

(www.google.co.in/search?=&=Henrijayasena%27s+play+Kuveni-images&tbm)

Now, the king has no way to deviate from her desired eyes and the movements. King Vijaya unites with her in love. At the end of the play it became a huge tragedy as he became the husband of a female demon which can not happen in the world. Therefore, he left Kuveni in sorrow. She cursed every Sinhalese and human being. Here the most important fact is that the movements of the heroine depict her lustful mind. (Henry Jayasena, *Abhinaya*, Vol. I, p.24)

These performances of gender and desire have been variously performed according to the each play, but there is no nude dance, or half-naked scenes. The interesting aspect about representation of these heroines is that they are fully dressed and covered by beautiful clothes. But, the blouse and the skirt or sari, have been designed to show the shape of her breast and the hip. Even the director is very keen to choose a heroine for his play. He always selects a very beautiful girl, who has long hair, beautiful eyes, especially attractive breasts and a hip.



(Vijaya - Kuveni in the play, *Kuveni* (ibid.)

Kissing, hugging and ogling are prohibited in the conventional theatre. Therefore, everything has to be done in Abhinaya. These generic acts or performances of gender and desire in the concept of heroine have been variously performed in Sinhalese conventional theatre.

Due to lack of contribution of women as heroine in theatre there was a drastic decline in the performance of such genres in field of Sinhalese conventional theatre. The task of portrayal of women characters were done by male personalities. According to my observations women's representation as heroines

in conventional theatre has been certainly problematic and unsuccessful. Therefore, the financial condition of the performances also have been lost.

In conclusion, *Nāikā* is in the ancient Indian literature, she has represented various aspects of one character in a play according to her behavior towards the hero. For example; Sāgarikā, in Harshadeva's play *Ratnavali* represents two *nāikas* in different events. When she goes to meet the king Udayana in the 3rd act of the play, she represents *Vāsakasajjitā nāika*. (C. R. Devadhar & N. G. Suru (eds.), *Ratnavālī of Śrī Harṣa*, p. 25) Vasavadatta the princess of Udayana comes to know of Sāgarikā and Udayana's love affair. She arrests Sāgarikā in the harem. (ibid., p.63). At this time Sāgarikā represents *Virahotkaṇṭhī, nāika*.

However, when considering about concept with respect to Sinhalese conventional theatre, according to the researcher's observations made, there is a problem of drawing from Indian dramaturgy of conventional theatre. Also, there are some cultural and religious constraints. In my opinion, both have affected the theatrical beauty of theatre at the present time. This is directly influence to the income of the play.

This study of heroines in theatre is an important feature. For, she is the main theme of a play. Beautiful successful play reaches the good income after performing on the stage.

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