



Varieties Of Dialogue In Dance Performance

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Abstract:

Communication is a process by which a message progresses into a conversation through various means like symbols, signs, body language, facial expression and many more.

A Dialogue does not signify conversation with one individual or more. It can also be an interaction within self. Dialogue can be categorised into two types.

Aim:

The main aim of this paper is to establish some of the prominent methods of communication and dialogue delivery in dance performances. The characters involved in a song.

Keywords – outer dialogue, inner dialogue, nayika, nayaka, sakhi, facial expression, hastas.

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Dialogue is an exchange of ideas with some mid-point. It is a place where, the conversation of differences are put together to create a common ground.

The word Dialogue has got its roots from the Greek language -dia and logos. Dia meaning 'through'; logos interprets to 'word' or 'meaning'. In a nutshell, it is possible to understand that dialogue is a sequence that flow in, to get a meaning.

Dialogue can be divided into a) Outer Dialogue and b) Inner Dialogue. A straightforward explanation for the two types is as follows.

- Outer Dialogue – A conversation happening between two characters.
- Inner Dialogue - Character conversing with himself/herself. Conversation between the character and the mind.

Comprehending from the dance perspective, the dialogue in dance performance pursues two types of dialogues. In Bharathanatyam dance performances, the songs have the content and give the centre to two or three characters. The characters being hero(nayaka), heroine(nayika) and the friend(sakhi). The songs and the characters are generally having the base of Gods and their stories, or kings or sociable aspects.

In the Sanskrit text Natyashastra, there is a mention of eight types of heroines called the Ashtanayikas. And they forever have a sakhi who assists the nayika in getting dressed, running errands, planning for the nayaka's arrival, supports her by delivering messages, comforts her when in distress. Like the Ashtanayika, Natyashastra has classified the sakhi also into 8 kinds.

A Sakhi the nayika's friend, is considered more of a shadow to the Nayika than a different person. She is a trusted and empathetic friend and helps the nayika in her romantic life and looks out for her. There are situations where, the Sakhi becomes the mediator between nayaka and nayika. The relation of the sakhi and nayika is portrayed via dance dialogue. They share their emotions and feelings to each other through body movements, facial expressions, hand gestures, etc. There are some parts of the song where the sakhi dances to establish and convey the story line. Some popular songs that illustrate the dialogue between nayika and sakhi are – Sumasayaka varnam, Velanai Varasolludi, Idene sakhi, Aduvum solluval and many more. These kinds of songs come under the category of Outer dialogue having conversation between two characters.

To state a few examples of the dialogue occurrence non – verbally between the sakhi and nayika, the song “smara sundara” is illustrated as follows.

This song is a telugu javali composed by Dharmapuri Subbarayyar Iyer, where the nayika brags about her beloved to her sakhi and others. The nayika in this song is a swathinapathika. In this song the nayika begins her interaction with the sakhi by saying,

Hey, have you seen my beloved ? Do you think anyone is worth a chance to even stand close to him ?

Have you seen his eyebrows ? They are perfectly shaped like a bow.

Have you seen his walk ? So majestic.

Do you know, when we are together and there is another woman at the doorstep, he does not even bother to look at her.

He buys jewellery, sarees and not only that he also braids my hair for me and holds my feet to place the anklet on my ankle.

Therefore, in this manner the nayika continues to praise and talk about her beloved to her sakhi, by using various hand gestures to match the lyrics of the song. There is also a constant smile and proud expression on her face to show her admiration to her beloved. This is one of the means of communicating non-verbally to her sakhi.

Similarly, there are songs where the nayika has a conversation with her sakhi yearning for her beloved's presence. In these kinds of songs either the nayaka would have gone out of town for some business or the God(nayaka) is whom the nayika is longing for. A well-suited song for this type of scenarios – Ariya Paruvam. This is a song composed by Periyasaami Thooran in Tamil language. It is a song about Lord Muruga.

The nayika has thoughts about Lord Muruga, when they were children as how they played together, and that one embrace given by Muruga has still not left her mind even after so many years.

She feels very gloomy that she has not been able to come out of that embrace and her beloved has not visited her after that.

The thought of my beloved is not fading in time but is only growing inside me.

The nayika continues to share her feelings to her sakhi by showing the katakamukha hasta and trilinga hasta and questions the sakhi, do you think he will remember me at least a little ?

Then she has her frown in her facial expression by bringing the eyebrows together, having a wrinkle in her forehead and in deep thought.

She questions with that expression, do you think he is lost himself in the companionship of Deivanai and Valli, that my thought has never crossed his mind.

Oh, my dear Sakhi ! my heart is trembling here, with the thought of not being able to meet my beloved.

Another example where the Sakhi is been sent by the nayika to go check on her beloved. A tamil padam “Nee poi azhaithuvaadi” composed by Ambujam Krishna. This is a song where the nayika is deeply distressed by not meeting her nayaka. Therefore, she tells her friend what she is going through and to somehow bring her beloved to her.

As the nayika sits down in agony, she calls her sakhi and tells, Oh friend please go bring him.....The God with the colour of blue cloud.... the suffering of not meeting her beloved his shown on her face and she uses relevant hastas’ to communicate it to her friend.

She continues by saying how her heart is wounded by thinking and thinking of him and it is unfair for him to leave her in such a state. At this point she conveys this using hastas like pathakam(show herself), katakamukam(show the soul), hamsasyam(to show how it is been wounded like a needle piercing) and relevant facial expression.

She concludes by saying, how her beloved had promised her that they would not part, and now he has forgotten to come and see me, my dear sakhi please go bring that Krishna here, I want to meet him. This is the place where, the nayaka is revealed to the sakhi, that the God with the colour of blue cloud is none other than Lord Krishna.

In the above-mentioned song, it is evidently shown on how there is communication through dance via nonverbal dialogues. This is one method of dance dialogue which is used widely.

Conclusion:

From the above-mentioned subject matter and examples, it is possible to understand how the first variety of outer dialogue is efficiently used in non-verbal communication(dance). Apart from this there are many other songs that establish the second category of dialogue – inner dialogue. And there are songs that are sung from the nayaka(hero) point of view as well to his beloved – nayika(heroine), where the sakhi gets in contact with the nayaka and delivers it to the nayika.

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