



Conceits As A Poetic Device In Sanskrit Literature; In The Light Of Vakroktijīva.

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ABSTRACT

In Sanskrit Literature, the poetics use various literary devices to enhance the beauty of kāvya. Alamkāras bear a significant role in enhancing the beauty of poetry. The Upama and the Rūpaka are the most common devices in poetry of any language with subtle implications into varieties. Conceits are one among them. In English literature conceits form a very special kind of metaphor. As in English literature conceits are the metaphorical expression itself but it has some specific changes as referring to Sanskrit literature. It is the Vakrokti theory of Kuntaka that attracts our attention to the context of conceits. Kuntaka maintains that the Vakrokti constitutes the only possible embellishment or Alamkāra of poetry. Vakrokti, as Kuntaka holds, the only possible to śabda and artha and also so called poetic figures are but different aspects of vakrokti. It acts as a mode of expression being essential in poetry, it underlies and forms the substance of all poetic figures. In Vakrokti, vakrata includes everything from alliteration to diction. It is Upacāra vakrata, like the conceit of English Poetry, frees itself from all restraints. So many examples can be drawn from the works of Sanskrit poets. Here in this paper shows how U.V or conceits reflected as used by poets of that time as a literary device, especially in Kalidasa's poetry.

INTRODUCTION

As ornaments embellish the body, so do figures of speech adorn language. Traditionally and most commonly defined as ornamentation, alamkāra transcends mere decoration, serving as a vital mechanism for evoking rasa, aesthetic experience and enhancing the emotional resonance of poetic works. Alamkāra plays an integral role in the poetic process as it bridges the gap between the literal and the figurative. Alamkāra is not just a decorative element but a fundamental aspect of Sanskrit poetics, central to the creation and appreciation of poetic art. Vāmana in his Kāvyaalamkārasūtra said that “*saundaryam alamkaraḥ*”. The first systematisation of alamkāra is to be found in the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata. The treatment of alamkāra in the Nāṭyaśāstra is more incidental, as Bharata's main objective is to discuss the principles of drama. However, his work laid the groundwork for the later more systematic explorations of alamkāra by subsequent theorists and poets. The narrow or specialised meaning of alamkāra is more explicitly developed by early Sanskrit poetics and theorists Bhāmaha and Udbhaṭa. According to Bhāmaha, the beauty of poetry lies in the use of various figures of speech that enhance the expression and aesthetic appeal. His focus was primarily on stylistic aspects, and he classified and detailed many of these figures. Udbhaṭa, further developed the

alamkāra theory and introduced new concepts and classification of figures of speech. Both Bhāmaha and Udbhaṭa view alamkāra as central to the aesthetic value of poetry, focusing on the embellishment of language and the enhancement of poetic expression. In a broader sense alamkāra can be classified into two types:

Śabda-alamkāra:- Figures of speech that focus on the phonetic qualities of language such as alliteration and rhyme. They enhance the auditory experience of the poetry.

Artha-alamkāra :- Figures of speech that emphasise on meaning or the sense conveyed such as metaphors and similes. They deepen the emotional and intellectual impact of the poetry.

CONCEITS

The upama and the rūpaka are the most common devices in poetry of any language with subtle sub-division into varieties. There comes conceit which holds a special place in the list of alamkāras. A conceit in literature is a type of figurative language in which the writer establishes a comparison between two very different concepts or objects. Conceits are a specific use of extended metaphors. The metaphor as a poetic device personifies the object and therefore goes beyond the simile. Conceit's function in literature is to let the writers to show the depth of their feelings about their subject.

Of all these it is the vakrokti theory of Kuntaka that attracts our attention in the context of conceit. Kuntaka begins his treatise stating that his purpose is to establish the idea of vicitrya which causes extraordinary charm in poetry. Kuntaka's doctrine of Vakrokti is a vast and all embracing concept and such comprehends the idea of Dhvani and Rasa under its wide and elastic scope. The origin of the concept of Vakrokti can be traced back to the early speculations of Bhāmaha. He makes mention of vakrokti in various connections. It is vakrokti which raises a linguistic composition to the status of kāvya; it is vakrokti which adorns the poetic figures and what is a poetic figure without vakrokti? That is why poetic figures like swabhāvokti, hetu, sūkṣma, leśa etc. have been rejected outright by Bhāmaha since these are not endowed with vakrokti. So, to Bhāmaha vakrokti is not a particular figure ; it is a peculiar mode of expression giving rise to various figures and thus being an essential element in poetry, flashes forth meaning. Then appears Kuntaka in whom the concept of Bhāmaha finds an ardent exponent. He elaborates the concept and carries it to such an extreme as to formulate a unique theory of literary criticism out of it. He has got at its centre that vakrokti constitutes the essence of poetry. In reply to what is meant by vakrokti he contends that it is nothing but a striking mode of expression- "*vakrokti vaidagdhyā baṅgībhaṇitirucyate*". According to him what makes poetry is the presence of strikingness due to vakrokti in the alliance existing between sound and sense used in particular composition; thus vakrokti becomes, in fact, the essence of poetic art. It is, as Kuntaka holds, the only alamkāra possible to śabda and artha and also so-called poetic figures are but different aspect of vakrokti.

ANALYSING WITH VAKROKTIJĪVITA

The vakrata created by kavivyāpāra communicates itself to those whose sensibilities are capable of identification with the described object and such persons are called sahrdayas. In kavivyāpāra the poet uses paryaya (synonyms), rudhi (conventional words), upacara (fancied identification), viśeṣaṇa (attributes), samvṛti (hidden expression). All the devices led to different kind of vakrata. The vakrokti being the only alamkāra admissible all other alamkāras or poetic figures so analysed by other writers can be properly included in its comprehensive scope.

When come to the point of conceits, as in English poetry where metaphysical conceits form a very special kind of metaphor, in Sanskrit upacāra vakrata occupies a very restricted position. It is only when the metaphor is torn away from such roots, that it becomes conceit of English poetry, frees itself from all such restraints. It is only when the metaphor is torn away from such roots, that it becomes conceit. In vakrokti, vakrata include everything from alliteration to diction.

Upacāra vakrata is defined by Kuntaka as follows:

*“yatra dūrāntarenyasmāt sāmānyamupacaryate/
leśenāpi bhavatkāñcitvaktumudriktavṛttitām//
“yanmūlā sarasollekhā rūpakādiralamkṛti/
upacārapradhānasau vakratā kācitucyate//”*

As K Krishnamurthy's translation:

“wherein even the two are far apart from each other, a common attribute, however slight is metaphorically superimposed in order to indicate that the resemblance is really close....”

“....and which forms the basis for various pleasing and inventive figures of speech headed by metaphor. Such a type of poetic beauty is designated by the name beauty of metaphorical expression.”

In an instance the subject described and the standard of comparison are actually far apart, the poet may attribute a kind of identity between them to serve some special purpose. Upacāra vakrata comes into various forms. An example cited from Vakroktijīvita is as below:

*“gaganam ca mattamegham dhārālulitārjunāni vanāni/
nirahaṅkāra mṛgāṅkā haranti nīlā api niśāh//”*

Both Kuntaka and Ānandavardhana cites this verse. Ānandavardhana cites as an example of arthātara saṅkramita vācya dhvani. He argues that the attributes of the living are given to the inanimate and as such have abandoned the primary meaning and communicate by suggestion. But Kuntaka argues that there is superimposition of the qualities of the animate upon the inanimate produced the strikingness. So the upacāra aspect is underlined by Kuntaka.

In Kāvyaśāstrakārasūtra:

*“iha ca nirantaranavamukulapulakitā harati mādhavī hṛdayam/
madayati ca kesarāṇām parimalamadhugandhi niśvasitam//”*

The beloved, experiences goosebumps and the term ‘pulaka’ more appropriated to a lady is superimposed upon a plant. The upacāra aspect of this vakrata come closer to the idea of conceit in a metaphysical sense – remoteness, strangeness, similarity and novelty. This metaphorisation does not have a tradition and can most fittingly called conceits. Taking some examples from Kālidāsa's work.

Meghasandēśa:

Example from the Pūrvamegha verse 25

*“nīcairākhyam girimadhivasestatra viśrāmaheto
stvatsamparkātpulakitamiva prauḍhapuṣpaih kadambai/
yah paṇyāstrīratiparimalodgāribhirnāgarāṇā-
muddāmāni prathayati śilāveśmabhīryauvanāni//” (śloka:25)*

In the second half of the stanza, Kālidāsa describes escasy of the courtesan through a description of kadamba blooms on the mountain. He uses his upama with such strangeness and originality that they border upon the conceit. Again in pūrvamegha, Kālidāsa uses the waves of a river to communicate the expression of knitting eyebrows:

“teṣāṃ dikṣu prārthanavidīśālakṣaṇam rājadhānīm

gatvā sadyah phalamavikalaṃ kāmukatvasya labdhā/

tīropāntastanitasubhagaṃ pāsyasi svādu yasmā-

tsabhrūbhaṅgaṃ mukhamiva payo vetravatyaścalormi//”

In this verse the cloud messenger is assured of the glances of Vetravati, whose waves are called the ‘shrinking eyebrows’ by the poet. The knitting of eyebrows corresponds to the waves of river. The drinking of water suggest the kissing of lips and roar of the thunder, shrieks of love in union.

Taking examples from Raghuvamśa:

“śreṇībandhādvitanvadbhistambhām toraṇasrajam/

sārasaiḥ kalanihlādaiḥ kvacitunnāmitānanau//”

‘toraṇa’ usually means the outergate of a palace. It also means a temporary ornamental arch. When kings go out on a tour it is customary for people to raise ornamental arches with garlands suspended from them. Kālidāsa sees the flight of the cranes as the ornamental arch suspended in the sky unsupported by posts.

In the Dhvanyāloka, Ānandavardhana cites an example:

“upoḍharāgeṇa vilolatāarakam tathā grhītam śaśinā niśāmukham//”

The artistic skill of the poet has transformed the context of darkness disappearing in the presence of moon to the slipping off of the black garment at the appearance of a lover.

These are some examples quoted to show how conceits are described by poetics.

CONCLUSION

From the detailed evaluation it is seen that Kālidāsa and his works have an immense collection of the creative usage of conceits as a literary device. Especially the Pūrvamegha of Meghasandēśa contains the beautiful usage of conceits. This conceit is really the embellishment and cannot be explained either by atīśayoti or a metaphor. In Sanskrit the concept of poetry aesthetic level is one of inseparable association between the expression and expressed. Kālidāsa’s work utilised more in the conceits. The use of rhetorical devices or figures of speech is essential in elevating the quality of the poetry. These devices embellish the language and contribute to the overall beauty and expressiveness of the composition.