

An Introduction to Indian Literary Theory
Dr. Sreenath VS
Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Science Education and Research - Bhopal
Lecture- 61
Vivaksitanya-paravacya

Hello everyone,

In the previous lecture, we saw the basic definition of dhvani. We saw that dhvani can be divided into two broad categories namely, avivaksita-vatya-dhvani and vivaksitanya-paravacya-dhvani. We saw that avivaksita-vatyadhvani is that kind of dhvani where a word abandons its primary meaning and goes on to suggest a new meaning that is not conventionally associated with it. Avivaksita-vacya-dhvani was divided into two broad categories, namely, atyanta-tiraskrit-vacya-dhvani and arthantra-samkramita-vacya-dhvani. Atyanta-tiraskrit-vacya-dhvani is that kind of dhvani where a signifier completely abandons its primary meaning and suggests a new meaning. But in arthantra-samkramita-vacya-dhvani, the signifier retains its primary meaning to some degree, but still suggests a new meaning that is not conventionally associated with it. In this lecture, we are going to discuss the second larger variety of dhvani which is vivaksitanya paravacya dhvani. What is vivaksitanya paravacya dhvani?

The expression *vivakṣitānya-paravācyā* literally means ‘the literal meaning understood in a different way (*anyaparavācyā*).’ In *vivakṣitānya-paravācyā-dhvani*, the literal meaning, although intended, moves onto suggest something which is not explicitly presented such as a *rasa* (aesthetic emotion), an *alaṅkāra* (a figure of speech), or a *vastu* (a fact). *Vivakṣitānya-paravācyā* is broadly divided into two—*saṃlakṣya-krama-vyaṅgya* and *asaṃlakṣya-krama-vyaṅgya*—on the basis of whether we are conscious of the succession from the literal meaning to the suggested element. In *asaṃlakṣya-krama-vyaṅgya*, we are not conscious of the movement from the literal to the suggested. Only *rasa-dhvani* falls within the ambit of *asaṃlakṣya-krama-vyaṅgya*.

First, let us take a look at *saṃlakṣya-krama-vyaṅgya*. *Samlakṣya-krama-vyaṅgya* means, suggested sense appearing like a reverberation. It is also called അനുരണന രൂപ വ്യാഖ്യാ ധ്വനി (anuraṇana rūpa vyaṅgya dhvani). In *saṃlakṣya-krama-vyaṅgya*, we are conscious of the movement that takes place from the literal meaning to the suggested meaning. In other words, first we perceive the literal sense; then after a momentary interval, the suggested sense dawns on us. *Samlakṣya-krama-vyaṅgya* is divided into two varieties, which are, *śabda-śakti-mūla* and *artha-śakti-mūla*.

Śabda-śakti-mūla is that variety of *dhvani* where a figure of speech is implied, without being directly expressed, by a word or a set of words. In other words, in *artha-śakti-mūla-dhvani*, words, in addition to their literal sense, suggest a new meaning by the power of primary meaning. The following is an example of an *alankāra* (figure of speech) being suggested from the power of words (*śabdaśakti*). Ānandavardhana takes this example from Mayūra's *Sūryaśataka*,

In the actual context of the text, this verse is about the rays of the sun. Therefore, it means as follows:

"Giving joy to all creatures,
by their absorption and release of water [payōbhi],
scattering to all directions in the morning
and disappearing [samhāra] at the close of day;
they are a ship for crossing
the sea of transmigration, the source of our long pain.
May these rays of the sun [gāvo] engender
in your purified selves unmeasured bliss."

The same verse can denote another meaning through pun, although the new meaning does not fit in the context of poem. The following is the second meaning which deals with a herd of cows:

"Giving joy to their progeny
By their absorption and release of milk [payōbhi],
scattering to all directions in the morning
And gathering [samhāra] at the close of day:

May these cows [*gāvo*] engender
In your purified selves unmeasured bliss."

In the example given above, the contextual meaning and the non-contextual meanings are literal. However, there is an implicit connection between the contextual meaning and the non-contextual meaning. This connection is that of a subject and tenor or *upamāna* and *upameya*. Therefore, what is suggested is the figure of speech called *rūpaka* where a connection is drawn between two apparently dissimilar objects in such a way that this connection between the superimposed object and its real base has to be understood from the context.

The second variety under *samlakṣya-krama-vyaṅgya* is *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani*. In this variety of *dhvani*, a fact—other than the literal meaning of the words—is suggested by the power of the primary meaning of words. Unlike *avivakṣita-vācya-dhvani*, where the literal meaning of the word is abandoned to suggest a new meaning by the power of the secondary usage of words, *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani* does not make use of the possibilities of the secondary usage to generate the suggested meaning. On the other hand, in *artha-śakti-mūla*, the suggested meaning is created solely by the power of primary meaning and context.

In this variety, the literal meaning is retained and then a new meaning is suggested. Ānandavardhana says that this variety is totally different from the literal sense. An example of this variety quoted by Ānandavardhana is taken from *Sattaśai*. The speaker of this verse is a certain woman who tries to prevent a mendicant from venturing into her trysting place on the bank of Gōda River. A religious mendicant was always frightened away from a house by the family dog, and he used to wander around freely along the banks of Gōda River to gather flowers for his *pūja*. Now the young wife of the house was in the habit of secretly meeting her lover in a thicket on the riverbank. Now she fears that the mendicant who comes along the riverbank has become a hindrance to her tryst with her lover. To prevent the mendicant from coming to the thicket, thereby interrupting her love-making, the clever woman says these words to the mendicant:

"Go your rounds freely, gently monk;
the little dog is gone.
Just today from the thickets by the Gōda,
came a fearsome lion and killed him. "

The literal signification of the verse is obviously an injunction that the mendicant can roam around the banks of Gōda River. But in this context, the literal meaning, i.e. the ascetic can freely roam around in the bank, gets cancelled because an ascetic, who was afraid of an attack from a dog, will not dare walk along a riverbank where a lion freely roams around. So what the verse suggests is not an injunction, but a prohibition that he should not walk along the banks of Gōda River. In short, the verse blocks its primary signification conveyed by the conventional meanings of words, and suggests a new meaning. Ānandavardhana shows different kinds of *vastudhvanis* such as, “when the literal meaning is an injunction, the suggested meaning takes the form of a prohibition”; “when the literal meaning is a prohibition, the suggested meaning is an injunction;” when the literal meaning is in the form of an injunction, the suggested meaning is neither injunction nor prohibition and so on. Although he demonstrates only a few instances of *vastudhvani*, he says that, “Other differences of the suggested meaning from the literal are possible along these lines. We have merely indicated the general direction” (105).

Having seen both the varieties of *samlakṣya-kramavyangya*, let us take a look at *asamlakṣya-krama-vyangya*. In *asamlakṣya-krama-vyangya*, we are not conscious of the movement from the literal to the suggested. Only *rasa-dhvani* falls within the ambit of *asamlakṣya-krama-vyangya*. According to Ānandavardhana, *rasadhvani* can be suggested through a whole lot of *vyañjakas* or suggestors such as such a *pada* or word, a *vākya* or sentence, a *varṇa* (phoneme), a *padāmśam* (a part of a word), a *saṅghaṭana* (texture), an *alaṅkāra* (figure of speech), an *āṅgya* (gesture), a *sup* (case endings), a *tiri* (personal endings of a verb), *vacana* (grammatical number), *sambandha* (relationship indicated through the genitive), *kāraṅkas* (complements of the verbal action such as agent, object, locus etc), a *kṛt* (primary suffixes attached to the verb root), *sandhi* (compounds), etc. According to Abhinavagupta, the commentator of Ānanda’s *Dhvanyāloka*, the very first benedictory verse in *Dhvānyaloka* is an example of *rasadhvani*:

"Of Madhu's foe
 Incarnate as a lion by his will,
 May the claws, which put the moon to shame
 In purity and shape,
 By cutting off his devotees' distress
 grant you protection."

This benedictory verse has as its subject Narasiṃha, the man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu. The legend has it that Viṣṇu incarnated as Narasiṃha in order to destroy the demon king Hiranyakaṣipu to remove the distress of the Vaiṣṇava devotee, Prahlāda. According to Abhinavagupta, “The heroic flavour (*vīrarasa*) is suggested by our apprehension of energy (*utsāha*), an apprehension furnished by the association of God, who is constantly exerting himself [on behalf of humankind], with the characteristic of clarity of purpose and diligent resolve” (44).

The following is another example of rasadhvani that Ananda cites:

"Her face was bowed in shyness,
 In the presence of our elders,
 and she forced back the grief,
 that gave motion to her breast.
 But did not the mere corner of her eye,
 lovelier than a startled deer's,
 somehow, as it dropped a tear,
 tell me not to go?"

In this verse, the speaker describes how his beloved looked at him, despite the presence of her elders, with a sweet glance that revealed her yearning, despair, and grief. This recollection of the speaker serves as a stimulant for love-in-separation, caused by the journey, one of the couple, who cannot live without each other. The act of forcing back the grief, startled eyes, shedding of tears etc. function as vibhava for love-in-separation.

The last variety of *dhvani* that Anandavardhana refers to is *guṇibhūta-vyaṅgya-kāvya*. In *guṇibhūta-vyaṅgya-kāvya*, the suggested elements always remain subordinate to what is explicitly stated. According to Anandavardhana, sometimes the poets will suggest a meaning and then will later explicitly mention what is suggested. If the suggested element is explicitly stated later in the poem, then also it will be relegated to the position of *guṇibhūta-vyaṅgya-kāvya*. According to Ananda, the subordination of the suggested element “to the principal sense of the sentence is like a king’s following after his servant in the

servant's wedding procession" (594). The following is an example of *guṇibhūta-vyaṅgya-kāvya*:

"Knowing that her gallant had set his heart
on a rendezvous, the subtle lass
smiled and to show her meaning folded
the petals of the lotus in her hand."

According to Anandavardhana, in the poem, the readers are expressly told that there is a suggestiveness in the girl's folding up of the lotus blossom with which she is playing. Therefore, Ananda opines that suggestiveness in the poem is subordinated to the explicit meaning. As lotuses close their petals at sundown, she means that he is to meet her at that time. The suggestion is the fact that her lover should come at night. We arrive at the suggested meaning immediately. This remark indicating that there is a suggestion in the act actually ruins the concealed nature of poetic suggestion. Abhinava's commentary on this passage is noteworthy. According to Abhinava, "by the first three lines. It is true that no one word in these three lines, even in connection with its neighbors, has the power of denoting the sense of "evening," and to that extent the suggestiveness of the stanza is not undone. However, we are expressly told that the sense is suggestive of some other sense and thereby the very life of suggestion, which consists of the charm of something's being said in a hidden manner, is destroyed" (316).

According to Anandavardhana, seen from the point of view of *rasa*, a *guṇibhūta-vyaṅgya-kāvya* can also eventually turn out to be *dhvani* *kavya*. Ananda says, "This type of poetry also, where the suggestion is subordinated, may take on the nature of *dhvani* when regarded from the viewpoint of its final meaning, if that meaning is a *rasa*, etc." (624). Anandavardhana also points out that words instancing *guṇibhūta-vyaṅgya-kāvya* will continue to remain *guṇibhūta-vyaṅgya-kāvya*, if their final purport is not *rasa*.

Standing in contrast to *dhvani-kavya* is what Ananda calls *citra-kavya*. According to Anandavardhana, a type of poetry which looks beautiful because of its novelties of literal sense and expression, but fails to suggest a *rasa* or a fact or a thing as its final meaning is called *citra-kavya*. For Ananda, it is not real poetry, but just an imitation of poetry like a *citra* or painting. *Citra-kavya* is of two types namely, *śabda citra* (verbal poetry of display) and

artha citra (semantic poetry of display). Semantic citra extensively uses figures of speech like poetic fancy that carry no suggested sense and fails to suggest anything because of the predominance of the literal meaning. Similarly, in verbal citra kavya, the emphasis is on signification without suggestion.

Anticipating a criticism from his detractors, Ananda says that people who deny the existence of dhvani may now point out that poetry cannot be about nothing; and anything that a poet mentions in the poem can turn out to be a *vibhava* or stimulant for some rasa or bhava. Ananda observes that this criticism does not hold. He opines that although it is true that anything that a poetic composition deals with ultimately results in rasa, the purport of the poet is particularly important. If the poet is not properly charged with emotion and does not have the intention of producing rasa, a poetic composition will turn out to be an imitation of rasa bereft of aesthetic emotion. Ananda states,

“It is true that there is no species of poetry where there is no apprehension of the rasas, etc. When, however, a poet, having no intention of revealing by his words rasa, or bhava, etc., composes mere figures of sound and sense, we may regard his composition from the viewpoint of his intention as being without rasa, etc. For the meaning of the words in a poem is greatly strengthened by the author’s intention. By force of the inherent capability of the literal sense there may be an apprehension of rasa, even though the author had no intention of revealing it; but that apprehension will be very weak. In this way too we may regard such a composition as without rasa and so assign it to the area of citra. The matter is stated as follows: That is the area of citra where the author’s intent is not to write on the subject of rasas or bhavas, etc., but to compose figures of speech. But when the intention of the author, as the final sense of his composition, is the rasas, etc., one may say that there is no poetry that is not in the sphere of dhvani” (625).