

Chapter IV

Conclusion

The language of literature has been in the focus in many literary theories. Most of the modern literary theories i.e. Formalism, New Criticism, Stylistics, Structuralism, Post Structuralism, Discourse Analysis, Semiotics and Dialogic Criticism in one way or the other emphasize the study of the language in order to understand the meaning of a piece of literary work. Various theorists have reflected on the question of language and they have made several exploratory contributions on many issues having a distinct bearing on poetry and poetic expression. The present study seeks to explore the intersection between the Indian and Russian Formalist thinking about the language of literature and the concept of *vakrokti* therein. *Vakrokti* consists of ‘*vakra*’ and ‘*ukti*’ which literally means a ‘bent’ or ‘marked’ expression in the language of literature. The devices of ‘Foregrounding’ used by Russian Formalists and the concept of ‘*Vakrata*’ originated through Indian poetics can be usefully compared.

The Indian theory of *vakrokti* is a viable theory of the language of poetry. Indian thinking regards poetry primarily as a linguistic organization, and according to it, the language of poetry is based on *vakrokti*. Literally *vakrokti* means a crooked or indirect speech. Raghavan calls it to be a ‘striking, deviating expression’. S.K De refers it to be ‘a kind of heightened expression’. One can find the detailed treatment of this term in Kuntaka’s *Vakroktijivita* besides being introduced in the works of Bhamah, Dandin, and Bhoja. Some scholars are of the view that the earliest traces of theory of *vakrokti* can be found in Bharata’s treatment of *laksanas* in his *Natyasastra*. Bhamaha provides a prominent place to the term and identifies it with *atisayukti* (Hyperbole). Dandin

distinguishes literary compositions in terms of *vakrokti* and *svabhavokti* and says that ‘*slesa*’ (paronomasia) adds charm in *vakrokti*. Vamana conceives *vakrokti* as a peculiar mode of metaphorical expression based on similarity. Anandvardhana calls it an expressed figure and supports Bhamaha, while Rajshekara calls it by the name of *auktika* i.e. pertaining to a saying. Abhinavagupta treats *vakrokti* as ‘a delectable singular meaning’, ‘involving hyperbolic expression by virtue of figures and attributes’ (*gunas*). Bhoja defines poetry in terms of *vakrokti* and designates it as ‘an extraordinary, rounded expression’ (*visista bhaniti*).

Kuntaka however is the one who set this *vakrata* or markedness as everything important and explanatory of literature. Unlike Dandin, to him ‘mere word or mere idea does not constitute poetry (*Na sabdasyaiva ramaniyata – visistasya kevalasya kavyatvam, napi arthasyeti*); what makes them into poetry is the presence of strikingness originating from *vakrokti*. An idea insufficiently expressed is ‘dead’ (*mrtakalpa*) says he, and an expression devoid of idea or expressing something other than the intended idea is ‘diseased’ (*vyadhibhuta*). He also maintains that crucial role in poetics is played by an act of imagination on the part of the poet (*kavi-vyapara*). For Kuntaka creativity of a poet lies in his use of language itself; language that has *vakrata* in it.

According to Kuntaka, *vakrokti* operates at six levels: The first is *varna-vinyasa-vakrata* (phonetic obliquity or obliquity in arrangement of phonemes or consonants or syllables). It works at the level of phoneme when similar or identical phonemes or consonants are repeated at varying intervals, when consonants and phonemes are arranged without any interval, when new consonants or phonemes are employed and when stops are combined with their homorganic nasals. It also includes alliteration and chime. The second type of *vakrata* is *pada-purvarddha-vakrata* (lexical obliquity). It is found in the base forms of substantives, i.e. *rudhi-vaicitraya-vakrata* (obliquity of usage), *paryaya vakrata* (obliquity of synonyms), *upacara-vakrata* (obliquity of transference),

visesana-vakrata (obliquity of adjectives), *samvriti-vakrata* (obliquity of concealment), *vritti-vakrata* (obliquity of indeclinable), and *kriya-vaicitra-vakrata* (obliquity of verb).

The third type of *vakrata* is *pada-pararddha-vakrata* (grammatical obliquity) i.e. tense, case, number, person, voice, affix and particle, termed as *kala-vaictrya-vakrata*, *karaka-vakrata*, *samkhya-vakrata*, *purusa-vakrata*, *upagraha-vakratya*, *upasarga-vakrata* and *nipata-vakrata* respectively. *Vakya-vakrata* (sentential obliquity) is the fourth type of *vakrata* which has two sub-varieties: *sahaja-vakrata* (natural obliquity) and *aharya-vakrata* (imposed obliquity).

The fifth type of *vakrata* is *prakarana-vakrata* (episodic obliquity). It has *bhavapurna-sthiti-vakrata* (obliquity of emotional state), *utapadya-lavanya-vakrata* (obliquity of modified source story), *prakarana upakarya-upkaraka bhava vakrata* (obliquity of episodic relationship), *visitha prakarna vakrata* (obliquity of particular event and episode), *angirasa nisyandanikasa vakrata* (obliquity of dominant rasa), *apradhana prasanga* (obliquity of secondary episode), *prakarantasa vakrata* (device of play within play) and *sandhi vinivesa vakrata* (obliquity of juncture). The last type of *vakrata* is *prabandha vakrata* (compositional obliquity). It is further divided into *rasantara vakrata* (obliquity of changing the rasa), *samapana-vakrata* (obliquity of winding up the story), *katha-viccheda-vakrata* (obliquity of intending end), *anusangika –phal-vakrata* (obliquity of contingent objective), *namakarana vakrata* (obliquity of title) and *tulya-katha-vakrata* (obliquity of identical story).

Russian Formalism, has been expounded by Shklovsky, Mukarovsky, Eichenbaum, Vladimir Prop, Jakobson, Bakhtin etc comes in to play during second and third decade of Twentieth Century. This approach is concerned with specificity and autonomy of poetic language. It provides a framework for a rigorous analysis of literary language. It lays stress on functional roles of literary devices. All the contributors of this group with their individual identity do not

follow any unified doctrine but in one way or the other they base their analysis on two principles:

a) literature itself is, or rather, those of its features that distinguish it from other human activities, must constitute the object of inquiry of literary theory; b) 'literary facts' have to be prioritized over the metaphysical commitments of literary criticism, whether philosophical, aesthetic or psychological. They look upon the artist as a constructor- a proletarian producer of crafted objects. They, therefore, emphatically lay down that the attention should be paid to his technical prowess, to the form he creates. As such they look upon art as a device, a technique. Jakobson focus on the functional speech sounds, or phonemes of language and on the sound relations that characterize phonetic system (correlations and symmetries). In his work on the Russian nouns, he extends the principles of his phonology to the analysis of grammatical categories, developing a sense of oppositions that could classify verbal and nominal categories. He also lays the groundwork for a theory of literary language by proposing that poetic language is a projection of metaphor onto metonymy. Markedness, according to Russian Formalists, refers to the relationship between two poles of an opposition, the term *marked* and *unmarked* refer to the evaluation of the poles; the simpler more general pole is the unmarked term of the opposition while the more complex and focused pole is the marked term. At the semantic level of language, markedness is taken to be a relation between a specific linguistic sign and a sign that is unspecified for the grammatical or conceptual feature in question. It works at various levels including Phonemic: nasal/oral, vocalic/ consonantal; Lexical: beauty/ ugliness, trust/ betrayal, truth/ false; and Grammatical: singular/ plural, positive/ negative, active/ passive, present/ past, masculine/ feminine. Normally black on a white background is marked, if we read Roman, Italics are marked; similarly casuals are unmarked while formals are marked, and one's life is marked if it is motivated.

Foregrounding, construct of Formalists, is the device of language such that the use itself attracts attention. It is perceived as uncommon, as deprived of automatization, as deautomatized such as a live poetic metaphor. Mukarovsky observes that ‘in poetic language foregrounding achieves maximum intensity to the extent of pushing communication into the background as the objective of expression and of being used for its own sake.’ It presupposes some motivation on the part of the writer and some explanation on the part of the reader. According to the Russian Formalists the purpose of art is to make objects unfamiliar, so that a renewed perception of them creates a fresh awareness in the beholder, beyond the stale routines of automatized schemes. Thus for Formalists the devices used by writers are not merely there for ornamental reasons – they serve specific functions. They are of view that literature should be investigated in isolation. They concentrate on the form and refute the idea that literature is meant only for enjoyment. Literature to them is an organized violence committed on ordinary speech. They proclaim that most of our patterns of thinking, feeling and perception are programmed and automatic. Poets deautomatized this new frame where their creativity lies. To change our mode of perception from the automatic and practical to the artistic is the purpose of art according to them. In his essay, “*Art as Technique*” Shklovsky points out that the purpose of art is to impart the sensations of things as they are perceived, and not as they are known.

The present research aims to find the similarities and dissimilarities between *Vakrokti Siddhanta* and Russian Formalism and which one has an edge over the other in their different aspects. It has been interesting to deal with the two theories which belong to the different continents. In Indian Sanskrit poetics, Bharatmuni was the first *acarya* with whom a new era started. He owes his popularity to his opus *Natyashastra*. After Bharatmuni there was a queue of *acaryas* who put their respective views in the context of poetry and Kuntaka was also one of

them. In his opus *Vakroktijivitam*, Kuntaka argues about the essentials of poetic language which has some similarities to the Russian formalism. Both the theories paid attention towards the form and language of the poetry.

Vakroktisiddhanta advocates the unique engagement of words for the soul of poetry while Russian formalism deals with the defamiliarized concept of poetry and literature. *Vakroktisiddhanta* gained fame during the mid of the tenth century when it was put forward by an Indian *acarya* while Russian formalism was a new concept of twentieth century. Both the concepts focus on the earliest genre of literature i.e. poetry. Kuntaka stresses on the unusual or striking use of poetic language, in the same way Russian formalists focused their mind on the language and poetic form. If we try to find the fundamental similarity between the two then we come to the conclusion that it is the unique and extraordinary use of language. Kuntaka called it '*vakrokti*' while Russian formalists named it 'literariness'.

The first and the most important difference between of the two theories is about the role of the poet in the creation of the poetry. Kuntaka strongly advocates the appearance of poet in the creation. He states that it is poet who transforms ordinary language into extraordinary language. It is poet's ability or creativity that presents a common language in extraordinary way. According to Kuntaka, it is the poet's versatility with the help of which he is able to arrange the words in such a way that produce the charming and attractive effect on the heart of the listeners or the reader. In this way according to Kuntaka, the poet is indispensable part of the composition of poetry. Poet's knowledge plays an important role in the creation of better poetry. According to him, a poet should be sagacious. On the other hand, Russian formalists don't put so much emphasis on the role of poet's versatility or his background knowledge. Russian formalists put their stress on the 'form' of the poetry. Russian formalists opine that every word is the result of the preceding word and there

is no extraordinary contribution of poet in it. Kuntaka talks over the knowledge of poet also i.e. the knowledge of the subject or area on which he is working. It is necessary for the poet to be fully aware of his topic or working area but on the other hand Russian formalists strongly oppose of this concept.

Another issue on which the *Vakrokti Siddhanta* and Russian formalism do not agree is the aesthetic pleasure. Kuntaka is of the views that the ultimate aim of the poetry should be the aesthetic pleasure. A true poetry is that poetry which is able to generate aesthetic pleasure and beauty in the heart of the listener or the reader but for Russian formalists believe that the aim of the literature or poetry is not aesthetic pleasure. Its business is not to provide knowledge or pleasure to the receiver but it should defamiliarize the things which have lost their identity because of habituation. Russian formalism functions at the three levels of the language while the *vakrokti siddhanta* works at the six levels.

The only advantage Russian Formalism has over the *Vakrokti Siddhanta* is that it was constructed almost ten centuries later and has all the genres of the literature developed till date for example, romance, novel, short story etc. were available for analysis and application. Russian formalists also included the popular form of novel in ambit of their theory besides the poetry but it does not mean that Russian formalism becomes superior in any sense to the *Vakrokti Siddhanta* because of this advantage coming later and printing and publication technologies. The concept of *vakrokti* can be applied on the modern genres of the literature suitably and effectively. *Vakrokti Siddhanta* has passed the litmus test of the time since last ten centuries without any effective challenge from critics and proving its relevance even today. Hence it has a clear cut edge over Russian formalism which is still a new entrant in the field.