

# Vakrokti and Dhvani

## Controversies about Theory of Poetry in Indian Tradition

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*tattovam sālamkārasya kāvyatā* I/6d, Kuntaka

“Poetryhood consists in ornamentation (of speech)”

- this is my interpretative translation. It is one of the main theses of Kuntaka.<sup>1</sup>

From early days, there were two main theories of poetry, that is, Sanskrit Kāvya. One regarded *alamkāra*, i.e., embellishment of speech and its meaning, by which was meant the alliteration, paronomasia, etc. (*śabdālamkāra*), on the one hand, and simile, metaphor, etc. (*arthālamkāra*), on the other, as external means to beautify speech. The idea is to compare a piece of poetry with a body to which *alamkāra* would be added to enhance its beauty. This body-metaphor itself suggests several other things. One is to accept the body as such, i.e., the “body unornamented,” as also beautiful by itself. This has led to the well-known controversy about *svabhāvokti* that even an unadorned speech, a natural description or an unembellished description of nature, would constitute poetry. A later Alamkārika has said, “*analamkṛti punaḥ kvāpi*.”<sup>2</sup>

The other point is that the body needs life or a soul in order to appear beautiful, and the question is: what constitutes that soul, or as they put it, *śarīrin*? The later writers’ answer was that it was *rasa* or aesthetic rapture. But obviously *rasa* here stands for that property of poetic expressions, by virtue of which such aesthetic enjoyment is evoked in

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Leiden meeting of the World Sanskrit Conference in panel on Sanskrit Poetics (organized by the author himself). Another version was presented at a seminar of the Philosophy Department of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, in February 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Mammaṭa: *Kāvya-prakāśa* (ed. V. Jhalkikar), Poona 1965, verse 4, Ch.1.

the readers. All these later views hang together with an earlier view that was fundamental: *alamkāra* are external properties of the *kāvya*. Even Ānandavardhana's superlative genius and insight did not find this position unsatisfactory.<sup>3</sup>

In fact Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta turned our mind further towards a different aspect of poetry, the meaning that is **shown** In poetry, not **expressed** there explicitly. A third (or a fourth) power of the words was appealed to, the power of suggestivity, besides the primary power giving the lexical meanings and their constructs, and the secondary or indicative power giving the metaphorical meanings.

In fact Abhinavagupta talks about three **well-recognized** 'powers' or 'functions' of words, instead of two (*abhidhā* 'denotative' that gives the lexical meanings, and *lakṣaṇā* 'indicative' that gives the metaphorical sense). In this, he seems to follow the Bhāṭṭa view of *abhihitānvaya* '(syntactic) connection after designation'. On this view, besides 'denotative' and 'indicative', there is another power called *tātparya śakti* by virtue of which the isolated word-meanings given by *abhidhā* are connected together to generate a connected whole, the sentence-meaning. Having described these three powers, Abhinava says that suggestivity or *dhvani* is the fourth power or function (cf. *caturthyām tu kakṣāyām dhvanana-vyāpāra*, *Locana*, under I.4). This is summed up as follows:

Therefore this is the fourth function distinct from the three, *abhidhā*, *tātparya* and *lakṣaṇā*. It is understood from the designation of such and other terms: *dhvanana*, *dyotana*, *vyāñjana*, *pratyāyana*, *avagamana* (*Locana*, *Ibid.*)

Poetry, according to Ānanda, must **mean** more than it says. And if what it **shows**, i.e., the suggested sense, exceeds (*atīśaya*) i.e., be more attractive or more beautiful than, the expressed sense, then it constitutes a better variety of poetry. In verse 13 of Uddyota I, Ānanda defines *dhvani* and argues in the *vṛtti* that the **suggested** sense must be dominant over the expressed sense (*vācyārtha*) in order that the piece of

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<sup>3</sup> Ānandavardhana: *Dhvanyāloka* (with Abhinava's *Locana*), ed. P. Sastri, Banaras, C.S.S., 1940. Second Uddyota, verse 17-19. See specially: *Alamkāro hi bāhyalamkārasāmyad aṅginaś cārutoa-hetur ucyate* under verse 17. Also *vivakṣā, tatparatvena nāṅgitvena kadācana* (verse 18 ab).

composition be the proper locus of *dhvani* (ibid., verse 13, and three *saṁgraha śloka* under it).

Abhinava carefully distinguishes the suggested emotive meaning of the poetic composition from the ‘indicative’ metaphorical extension of the word’s meaning. Metaphorical extension of the word-meaning is forced upon us (all hearers or readers) when the lexical meaning of two words forming a sentence do not fit, e.g., “the village is on the river” or ‘Newcastle-upon-Tyne’. The word “river” by metaphorical extension should mean here “the river-bank.” Abhinava says: *mukhyārtha-bādhāyām lakṣaṇāyāḥ prakṛptiḥ* (“Lakṣaṇā arises if the primary meanings are obstructed”), under 1/4 in *Locana*. The suggested emotive meaning or the poetic meaning flashes in the mind of the sensitive reader, only after the literal or ordinary meaning of the sentence has been fully comprehended. Here the condition, i.e., the lack of fitness (‘misfitting’ = *ayogyatā*), for which the service of Lakṣaṇā or metaphorical extension is required, is conspicuous by its absence.

Ānanda was more concerned with the emotive meaning of poetry—poetry being evocative of aesthetic pleasure in the sensitive reader. When emotions are “suggested” (i.e. evoked obliquely) the beauty is all the more enhanced, the aesthetic rapture excels. Alaṅkāras etc., can only be subservient to this evocation of aesthetic enjoyment, called *rasa*.

The second theory, however, regarded *alaṅkāra* as natural or essential properties of poetry. I have deliberately left *alaṅkāra* untranslated here. “*Alaṅkāra*” does not simply mean ‘ornament’. An ornament is what **adds** to the beauty (cf. *alaṅ karoti*). However, it may mean more than that. *Alaṅkāra* may be an **essential part** of the beauty itself. Vāmana inadvertently got it right in the first section of his first chapter. He used the term *alaṅkāra* in two distinguishable senses; in one sense, *alaṅkāra* stands for beauty or beautification in general. He says, “poetry is understood to be attractive to us because of *alaṅkāra*” 1.1.1) and “*alaṅkāra* means beauty”(1.1.2).<sup>4</sup> Etymologically the word may

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<sup>4</sup> Vāmana, *Kāvyaṅkāra-sūtra-vṛtti* (ed. J. Vidyasagar, 3rd ed., Calcutta, 1922); *Kāvyaṅgrāhyam alaṅkārat*, 1-1-1, *saundaryam alaṅkāraḥ*, 1.1.2.

mean making something beautiful or beautification (for *alam* = *bhūṣaṇa*).<sup>5</sup> But there is another sense, when we derive the word in the instrumental case: that which beautifies (cf. *alam kriyate anena*). Then it will refer to the usual item, simile, alliteration, etc. It was Bhāmaha<sup>6</sup> who was also aware of the second view and defended it explicitly. He implicitly accepted that *alamkāra* constitutes the nature of poetry. This consists in the composition of speech and its meaning in an ‘oblique’ (*vakra*) manner. It is not only what you say but also how you say it. He asserts (1.6): The embellishment of speech consists in the oblique composition of words and the oblique presentation of meaning. In Bhāmaha’s slightly loose terminology: *vakrokti* = *atiśayokti* = *alamkāra*. *Vakrokti* means strikingness in word and meaning. *Atiśayokti* means a non-standard way of speech, something that is not ‘the ordinary run of the mill’ but speaks of a meaning that excels (vide II, 81, 84, 85). In 11.85, he says that in all *alamkāra* there is “strikingness in speech” (*vakrokti*). In this vein, he rejected the idea that a *vārtā*, a plain report such as “The sun has set, the moon is up, birds go to their nests” can constitute poetry (11.87). Some scholars (Raghavan, etc.) have said that this is not a rejection of *vārtā*. But I believe he did. Daṇḍin retorted, quoting the same example, that this would be good poetry provided it suggests a special time or state. Daṇḍin’s argument leaves no doubt that some *alamkārikas* did reject *vārtā*. Much later In the history, Mammaṭa (5th Chapter of *Kāvya-prakāśa*) argued that the words constituting the example of *vārtā* may suggest (to different types of persons) at least nine different meanings (see Mammaṭa, ch.5). The idea is that the said expression is highly suggestive and, if suggestivity constitutes good poetry, this would be good poetry. Bhāmaha explicitly rejected *hetu*, *sūkṣma* and *leśa* on the ground that they do not consist in the obliqueness of speech (*vakrokti*). Talking about *svabhāvokti*, Bhāmaha hesitatingly says that some regard it (description of objects or events as they are *tadvasthatvam*) as an *alamkāra*. This (“*Kecit*” in Bhāmaha) might have been a preliminary to the rejection of *svabhāvokti*. Hence Daṇḍin rejoins again. Daṇḍin defines and illustrates three types of *svabhāvokti* and argues that this could be an

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<sup>5</sup> As the lexicographer says: *Alam bhūṣaṇa-paryāpti-śakti-vāraṇa-vācakam*.

<sup>6</sup> See Bhāmaha: *Kāvya-alamkāra* (ed. P.V. Naganath Sastry, Tanjore, 1927) for all the references below.

*alamkāra*. He argues that although “telling as it is” (= *svabhāvokti*) is what dominates the *śāstras*, that is, a philosophical or scientific treatise as opposed to *kāvya*, poetry, it might be desirable (*īpsita*) in a *kāvya* too. In fact, Daṇḍin in verse 11.362 clearly divides ‘poetic speech pattern’ (Kāvya) into two: natural and oblique. Hence ‘telling as it is’ cannot be ignored in a Kāvya, it does constitute an *alamkāra*, says Daṇḍin.<sup>7</sup>

Under verse 1, 1<sup>st</sup> Uddyota, Ānanda quotes a verse composed by (according to Abhinavagupta) Manoratha, a poet contemporary with Ānanda, who argues that the so-called *dhvani* is the figment of imagination belonging to the persons of lesser intelligence. It continues: the stupid people praise a piece of poetry as full of *dhvani* ‘suggestivity’ when it does not contain any meaning that pleases the mind, being devoid of *alamkāra*, it does not consist of skillfully composed words and does not have any *vakrokti*. The mention of the word ‘*vakrokti*’ here is significant. For if *vakrokti* were only a species of *alamkāra*, it did not merit a separate mention. However, Manoratha may be referring to the view that regards *vakrokti* as the basis of all *alamkāra*, as the essence of beautification in poetry. Abhinava’s comment here is important.

Abhinava says that the word *alamkāra* refers to the *arthālamkāras*, simile, etc., “skillfully composed words” refers to the *śabdālamkāras*, alliterations, etc. And ‘*vakrokti*’ refers to the *guṇas* pertaining to the sound and sense. In other words, *vakrokti*—*utkr̥ṣṭa saṅghaṭanā*—excellent arrangements of words, etc. It may refer to style or *rīti*. Abhinava notes further that there is an alternative explanation of *vakrokti* as the common property of all *alamkāra*. However, if we accept this sense, the fault of repetition cannot be avoided.

Now let us consider Kuntaka. What P.V. Kane (*History of Sanskrit Poetics*, Delhi, 1961, p. 372-78) vaguely called the *alamkāra* school, of which, according to him, Bhāmaha was the “oldest extant exponent” (p. 83), may have had its last, and in my view, the most determined, exponent in Kuntaka. Philosophically speaking, Kuntaka was a holist and an essentialist. For him, the *alamkāra*-1 constitutes the very essence of poetry. And this is

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<sup>7</sup> Daṇḍin, *Kāvyaḍarśa* (ed. R. Raddi, Sastri, Poona, 1938). See also V. Raghavan, *Some Concepts of Alamkāra Śāstra*, Madras, 1942.

how he proves it. A *kāvya* ‘poem’ Is something that a poet does or creates. What a poet makes is poetry. A poet makes ‘ornamented speech’. Ornamentation consists in introducing obliqueness or strikingness in speech such that it will rejoice or delight the reader (*tad-vid-āhlāda-kārin*, 1.7). Hence a piece of poetry = a poet’s making = ornamented speech. Thus poetryhood is ornamentation = introduction of obliqueness, uncommonness, non-banality. Bhāmaha’s insight was right. In every *alamkāra* (call it *alamkāra-2*, a term that denotes simile, metaphor, etc.) there is inherent obliqueness. It is what distinguishes poetry from ordinary speech, banal reports, newspaper reports, etc.

Kuntaka can be described as a holist. In this he was explicitly influenced by Bhartṛhari among the grammarians. He believed that the distinction between the *alamkāra* and the *alamkārya*, the ‘ornaments’ and that which is being ornamented (remember our old ‘body-metaphor’: a poem is like a body where ornaments are added for the sake of beauty), is totally artificial. The connection between them is one of inseparability. A poem is a whole, its beauty, or even the means for beautification, cannot be separated from it. To put it in another way, if we can take *alamkāra-1* out i.e., away from the poetic speech, then it loses its poetryhood (*kāvyaṭā*). A body, even a body where there is a soul, can remain as it is, without the beautifying ornaments. But a poem cannot remain a poem without the *alamkāra* (= ornamentation = the poet’s making = *kavikarma*). This follows from the very comprehensive definition of *alamkāra* as *kavikarma*. In fact, it is wrong or misleading to equate *alamkāra-1* with what is known in the West as a figure of speech in a formal scheme. Even Abhinava indirectly endorses Kuntaka’s view of *Alamkāra-1* as the special charm invested in the composition by the imagination by the poet.

Now the question unavoidably arises, the question that is usually raised against any holistic framework: How are we supposed to study and analyze the *alamkāra* in the second sense, i.e., *alamkāra-2*, which activity constitutes the proper subject matter of *alamkāra-śāstra*? We are supposed to discuss and classify similes, metaphors, alliterations, etc. But how? Kuntaka looked towards Bhartṛhari for the answer. Indeed, for Bhartṛhari and the Sanskrit grammarian, a sentence is an unbreakable, impartite whole. But how then are we supposed to study words, their formation out of roots and affixes etc., which constitutes the proper subject matter of grammar? Bhartṛhari

(*Vākyapadīya*, Kaṇḍa 2, verse 10) answers it by referring to what he calls the *apoddhāra* method (VP, II.10). We follow the method of extraction and abstraction. We apply this method and operate it upon the given reality, a whole sentence. We reach individual words, and individual roots or suffixes through abstraction. We **artificially** constitute or create in this way words, roots and suffixes, the subject-matter of our study in grammar. The word “artificially” means that they lack **giveness** or that their existence is a borrowed existence. Thus Bhartṛhari and other holists try to drive the point home by saying that the whole is real while parts are not, for they are constructs or abstracted bits. The natural home of a word is the sentence in which it occurs. Kuntaka refers to this argument of the holist, and on the basis of this analogy, he explains that although the *alaṅkāra* and the *alaṅkārya* are inseparable, and constitute a whole, a distinction is made by the *apoddhāra* method, only because it is instrumental (*upāya*) to our study and understanding of the nature of poetry, which constitutes the proper subject matter of *alaṅkāraśāstra*. The so-called *alaṅkāras*, simile, etc., are therefore **artificially** abstracted from pieces of poetry much as the words are abstracted from the sentence. These *alaṅkāras* have only borrowed existence. They essentially belong to poetry, without poetry they have no *locus standi* outside. The expression “a *gayal* is like a cow” is in this way not a case of *alaṅkāra* (although there is a simile) for it is not a piece of poetry. Similarly, “There is a fire on the hill because there is smoke” would not be a case of Hetu *alaṅkāra*, although a reason is being assigned here, because it is a bland statement without any tinge of obliqueness or beauty. Kuntaka explains *apoddhṛtya* as *nikṛṣya*, i.e., *prthak prthag avasthāpya*, “extracting, putting them separately (in awareness).” He further glosses “*yatra samudāyarūpe tayor antarbhāvas tasmād vibhajya*,” i.e., analyzing or dividing them from the whole in which they inhere. The main point here is to understand the instrumental nature of this division. Every holist has to appeal to a form of instrumentalism as regards the extracted parts. Thus Kuntaka was no exception (cf. *tad-upāyatayā*).

From what has now been said, we may still doubt whether Kuntaka was really a believer in the *Alaṅkāra* theory, or to use Kane’s expression, an exponent of the *Alaṅkāra* School. For on this theory, as I have already noted earlier, the ‘body-metaphor’ along with its various implications should be given up and the metaphor of

the whole and ‘naturalness’ (essentiality or inseparableness) of *alaṅkāra* in poetry should be emphasized. The individual *alaṅkāras* do seem to be separable as a necklace is separable from the neck or the body. Kuntaka dispels this doubt in no uncertain terms:<sup>8</sup>

This is the ultimate meaning (*paramārtha*) here: poetryhood, that is the poet’s making, belongs to something that is existent (*sataḥ*), where all parts have vanished into a whole (i.e. an impartite whole, *nirastā-sakalāvayava*) and which has *alaṅkāra* (as its essential constituent). Thus, the thesis is: poetryhood belongs to what has *alaṅkāra* ‘ornaments’, and it is not the case that *alaṅkāra* are added to or connected (*yoga*) with, the poem.

I have mentioned the Kuntaka thesis, which may be put as follows:

1. Obliqueness (*vakratā*) in speech underlies or pervades all *alaṅkāra*.
2. There cannot be any poem without such an *alaṅkāra*.
3. Therefore obliqueness in speech constitutes poetry.

And his argument is:

4. If poetry is what a poet makes, then we know that the poet makes or creates or introduces the required obliqueness in the middle of plain or banal expressions. Therefore, obliqueness = the property of being made by the poet = poetryhood.

I shall now develop a critique of this thesis, which will include some traditional criticisms and some new ones.

1) Daṇḍin hit the nail right on the head when he argued that even the plain expressions “the sun is set, the moon is up, etc.” can be part of some poetical composition in a suitably chosen context. This was promptly picked up by the later Dhvani theorists (e.g. Mammaṭa), as I have noted earlier. The problem is that banality or plainness in the composition of words and sounds does not imply plainness in meaning.

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<sup>8</sup> Kuntaka, *Vakrokti-jīvitā* (ed. S.K. De, Calcutta, 1928), p. 7, *vr̥tti* under verse 6, Ch. I.

Meaning is given by the context and the poet may of course use plain words in order to generate profoundly charming meaning. Kuntaka might have answered the charge as follows. Obliqueness in **meaning** (*artha*) is also a constituent of poetry. In verses 1.9 and 10, Kuntaka explicitly states that

Although many other words are there (to convey the same meaning), the (poetic) word is what uniquely conveys the sole meaning intended by the poet. The meaning is what beautifully vibrates and charms the hearts of the sensitive reader. Both (word and meaning) are ornamented. This ornamentation of both is said to be the obliqueness in speech, a masterly way of speaking.

In other words, Kuntaka can absorb the criticism of Daṇḍin and turn the counterexample into a proper example covered by his definition of poetry. His intention was to distinguish the ordinary mode of speech, or the cart drivers' language (*śākaṭikā-vākya*), from the poetic language. But the problem is that even the cart drivers' plain or vulgar language can be accorded with beauty or obliqueness by the setting of it in an appropriate context. For example in the Viṣkambhaka in *Abhijñānasakuntala*, the fisherman's as well as the policeman's plain and rough and ready speech became part of an excellent *dṛśyakāvya*. In short, we all know that the plain man's speech must be distinguished from *kāvya* but the element of contextuality makes a wholesale or blanket rejection of the plain man's speech impossible.

2) A Svabhāvokti, as insisted upon by Daṇḍin, may be simply a graphic description and this may indeed be a piece of good poetry. Two well-known examples are often cited: one from *Abhijñānasakuntalā*: *Grīvabhangābhirāmam* etc. The other is *yaḥ kaumāraharah* etc. Kuntaka seems to tackle this objection in verses I.11-15. First, if the term, the word *svabhāvokti* means description of the 'nature' (*svabhāva*) of the object or event, then any description can be such a description for what else can we describe, besides describing some 'nature' of the objects? If such a description is an *alamkāra* 'ornament', what is it that is being ornamented here? Second, an object that lacks a *svabhāva* 'nature', would be a fictitious object, a non-object, and in fact it would be indescribable, ineffable. Objects are denoted by words on the basis of their having some

‘nature’ or other. Hence any possibility of description in language implies description of ‘nature’ (*svabhāvokti*). Third, since one cannot climb up one’s own shoulder, the ‘body’ of a poem, the ‘nature’ (*svabhāva*) to be described, cannot ornament or adorn itself.

Kuntaka’s argument is somewhat *a priori*. It is a dialectic based upon what is meant by *svabhāvokti* and what it is to be an *alamkāra*. But the underlying point is probably that the ‘body’ metaphor, as well as the externalist view of *alamkāra* that goes along with it, is open to serious attack. The opponent in calling Svabhāvokti an *alamkāra* has made his externalist position standing on its head for the duality of *alamkāra* and *alamkārya* collapses.

3) We should note that the well-known verses of Kālidāsa or Śīla-bhaṭṭārikā, that are cited as examples of Svabhāvokti *alamkāra* can be easily regarded as pieces of high class poetry even by a follower of Kuntaka. It is not difficult to discover why such verses are charming to us and wherein lies the mastery of the poetic art (*kaver vyāpārah*) that introduces strikingness in the expression. So the dispute here is not about the *lakṣyas* or *definienda*, but about the defining or distinguishing characteristic itself (*lakṣaṇa*). Is it the obliqueness in speech? or, the profundity in the suggestiveness? or, the aesthetic rapture that it generates in the sensitive reader? Kuntaka opts for the first.

4) Most critics of Kuntaka, traditional as well as modern, accuse him of being much too engrossed in the exterior of poetry. This is to be distinguished from what I have called the externalist view above. The ‘externalist view’, in my opinion, is that which regards *alamkāra* as external and hence in principle separable, properties of Kāvya. Some early Ālamkārikas seem to have upheld such a view. Kuntaka rejected it. But critics charge that Kuntaka was concerned only with the exterior of poetry, with *alamkāra*, *guṇa*, *rīti*, *doṣa*, etc. But this charge is unfounded. Kuntaka did not distinguish between ‘exterior’ and ‘interior’. He was more concerned with the *vyāpāra* ‘function’ of the poet, with what is it that the poet does to the ordinary modes of speech (he also calls it *kavi-kauśala* (11.3, 4). He was seriously concerned with *pratibhā*, the poetic genius or insight, that so-called “philosopher’s stone” which by its mere touch turns iron into gold, ordinary banalities into poetic expressions.

5) We can think of **three** main ways of approaching the study of poetry. One is by concentrating upon the beauty in the external appearance of poetry. The second is by concentrating upon the poet’s power or activity. The third is by concentrating upon the pleasure in the aesthetic judgment, the enjoyment that a sensitive reader derives from poetry. The first route was taken by the old (*cirantana*) Ālaṅkārikas. The second was taken by Kuntaka. The third by Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka. Ānandavardhana no doubt followed the third route but created a new dimension in it. As the readers, especially sensitive readers, are suggestible, it is the power of suggestion of *rasa* or aesthetic pleasure found in poetic expressions, that became the focus of attention of Ānanda. It is, of course, true that both Ānanda and Abhinava were meticulously conscious of the role of the poetic genius or *pratibhā* in the composition of poetry. They made some of the important comments about *kavi-pratibhā*. However, their attention was directed towards the sensitive readers, the *sahṛdayas*, for whom the poetry is composed. Ānanda says under verse 13 of the first Uddyota:

*lakṣye tu parikṣamane sa eva saḥṛdayahṛdayāhladakāri kāvya-tattvam*

“The essence of poetry, is in the delight it imparts to the mind of the *sahṛdaya*.”

Abhinava gives the best description of a *sahṛdaya* ‘a sensitive reader’.

*yeṣāṃ kāvyānuśilanavaśād viśadīkṛte mano-mukure varṇanīya-tanmayībhavana-yogyatā iti*

“The sensitive readers are those whose mirror-like minds are made crystal clear by their constant practice of the reading of poetry in such a way that their minds become Identified with whatever is described in poetry.”

Even Kuntaka was aware of the need for sensitive reader for the proper appreciation of *kāvya*. He said in verse 7 Ch.1, where he apparently defined poetry: *tad-vid-āhlāda-kāriṇi*. Here *tad-vid* = *sahṛdaya*. However, he emphasized the poetic talent—the second route.

Kuntaka, being well aware of the other two routes, was alone in following his own insight; he looked at poetry from the poet's own point of view: The beautiful image is not simply a replica of what naturally exists. It is where **matter** is given **form**. (Compare his comment under verse 7: *tathāpi kavipratibhā-prauḍhir eva prādhānyena'vatiṣṭhate*, p.13.) Thus it seems to be in line with one of the widespread conceptions of art in the West. Art is what gives **form** to **matter**, it **adds** to nature, informs *hyle* with *eidos*.

I shall conclude with an analogy used by Kuntaka himself. He believed that the poet's genius is cannot be categorized. He called it "*kimāpi*" or "*ko'pi*". He compared the poet and his poetry-composition with the painter and his painting a picture. He brings it out nicely, while discussing *vākya-vakratā* in (111.4):

The uncategorizable genius of the poet creates beauty just as a painter paints a picture using a charming canvas, different lines of measured length, colors and tones of different shades.

He explains (I summarize):

The painter uses all those different items, none of which contain beauty, but his genius creates beauty out of the ordinary things. The poet similarly uses different means, rhetoric and other qualities of word and meaning, style (*rīti*), but real beauty does not reside in any one of them singly. It is created by the magic touch of the poet's own genius.

Kuntaka identified the function of writing poetry as introducing "obliqueness" so as to create beauty and please the sensitive readers. In this respect he differed from the old Alāmkāra school. He was aware of the theory about the suggestive power of poetry that was introduced by Ānanda. But a follower of Kuntaka might argue that this takes us away from the poet, i.e., his poetic genius as well as his own function to the side of the readers and why and how they enjoy poetry. It is the reader who is suggestible. But mysterious creation of beauty must be equally important as the experience or enjoyment of beauty. Kuntaka intended to show an alternative way of critically appreciating poetry. Instead of looking for poetic words and expressions that suggest meanings that evoke emotions of love, etc., in the readers, one can concentrate in

wonderful workmanship of the poetic genius which makes poetic expressions and poetic meanings totally inseparable from each other, where beauty consists in their wholeness. It is rather unfortunate that the later Sanskrit tradition ignored it. It was, no doubt, the unavoidable influence of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta that eclipsed the glory and genius of Kuntaka. Perhaps, the philosophical leaning of the *rasa-dhvani* theory won the day. Poetics was taken over by philosophers who dealt with the philosophy of awareness and philosophy of language. In this context Kuntaka's voice was a lone voice. His approach was that of an artist towards the study of poetry, the approach that looks upon art that adds form to matter, invests *hyle* with *eidos*, makes the straightforward natural speech tinged with obliqueness to create beauty: Poetryhood consists in beautification, *tattvam sālankārasya kāvyatā*.