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THEORETICAL SIMILES
IN ĀNANDAVARDHANA'S *DHVANYĀLOKA*

Much has been said about poetical similes in literature on *alaṃkāra* research. It is perhaps due to this privileged position of *upamā* as a poetical figure of speech that other aspects of usage attracted lesser attention. A few significant efforts in this respect considered similes employed mainly as proofs or examples in argumentative context¹. The subject of this presentation is a rather different mode of using similes as illustrations or analogies in theoretical texts where they have the purpose to elucidate novel terms or concepts. Certainly, there is a mutual influence between these three roughly outlined areas of employment but my task here will be to concentrate on the specific features of the third variety as we find it in the famous treatise of ĀNANDAVARDHANA *Dhvanyāloka*. At the present I will restrict my presentation only to the similes in the first *uddyota* and leave aside the more conventional analogies from other parts of the text like *ghaṭa-pradīpa-nyāya*, etc. Besides, it is the first *uddyota* where the author lays the foundations of the *dhvani* theory, so that the similes used here expand like a network over the main postulates and thus reflect in a more comprehensive manner the theoretical import of ĀNANDA's novel ideas.

1. Cf. M. BIARDEAU, "Le rôle de l'exemple dans l'inférence indienne", in *JA* 245 (1957); H. BRUECKNER, "Zum Beweisverfahren Śaṅkaras", in *Marburger Studien zur Afrika- und Asienkunde*, Ser. B, Bd. 5; M. D. PARADKAR in various articles in periodicals.

The first line of ĀNANDA's theoretical text contains a metaphor²:

[1] The soul of poetry - that is *dhvani*...

Although metaphors incorporate an underlying process of comparison I am not going to investigate ĀNANDA's metaphoric locutions further. We should not, however, pass over this very important instance because it mirrors the core of ĀNANDA's novel theory and sheds light on other real similes in the text. Fortunately, the soul metaphor from the first line appears later in an analysed simile form³. According to the specific attribution we get two renderings of this sentence:

[2] Now, this meaning of poetry - which is constituted through its essentiality like a soul of a charming body, [which is] lovely by a suitable stature - possesses two parts: the explicit [meaning] and the guessed [meaning].

This part of the *vṛtti* along with *kārikā* no. 2 has been an object of many critical discussions, most recently in the Harvard University translation of *Dhvanyāloka cum Locana*⁴. In the first place, ĀNANDA substitutes here for *dhvani* the technical term *artha*, i.e. 'meaning' in a broader sense which is one of the proper renderings of *dhvani* according to ABHINAVAGUPTA. Second, the point of controversy – that by this position the soul of poetry embraces both directly expressed meaning and suggested, respectively guessed, meaning – attains plausibility if we consider the crucial importance of the expressed meaning for the guessed meaning. The mode of dependence is repeatedly stressed and elaborated by the author throughout the whole text as we will see later on. On the other hand, the technique of starting with a broader statement and proceeding by constantly narrowing the scope of his argu-

2. ĀNANDAVARDHANA, *Dhvanyāloka*, critically edited with intr., transl. and notes by K. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Second Edition, Delhi, 1982, p. 2:

kāvyaśyātma dhvanir iti [...] I. 1.

3. ĀNANDAVARDHANA, *op. cit.*, p. 6:

kāvyaśya hi lalitōcīta-sanniveśa-cāruṇaḥ śarīrasyēvātma sārārūpatayā sthitaḥ [...] yo 'rthas tasya vācyah praiyamānaś cēti dvau bhedau // *vṛtti* ad I. 2.

4. ĀNANDAVARDHANA, *Dhvanyāloka*, with the *Locana* of ABHINAVAGUPTA, transl. by D.H.H. INGALLS, J.M. MASSON and M.V. PATWARDHAN, Cambridge, London, 1990, p. 75.

mentation and definition is a peculiar feature of ĀNANDA's style.

We can analyse the somewhat ambiguous syntactical structure of this complex comparison by separating the two interwoven sentences and precisely paralleling its two parts: *kāvya* to *śarīra* and *artha* to *ātman*. The attributes *lalita* etc. would then refer via morphological congruency to both *kāvya* and *śarīra*. On the other hand, *śarīra* in the sense of 'linguistic setting' can be subordinated to *kāvya* where *kāvyaśya śarīram* would be the compositional equivalent to the essential *kāvyaśya ātmā*. The unusual position of *iva* again suggests a possible modal employment of the *upamāvācaka* conveying a sense of 'appear', 'seem', etc. This concession would, however, weaken the theoretical strength of the term *dhvani* which is postulated by the parallel to *ātman* as the essential substance of poetry to which elements of diction are subsidiary. In the purely technical vocabulary of the treatise the relation of *dhvani* to the figures of speech is expressed by the pair *aṅgin-aṅgāni*.

As to the origin of this simile we can trace the idea of a 'body' to its earliest specimens in the dramatic tradition, e.g. *Nāṭyaśāstra*, or in the poetics, e.g. *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra*. BHARATA uses *śarīra* in a strict technical sense of 'plot' or 'dramatic composition' and does not intend any metaphoric implications⁵. BHĀMAHA's usage does not differ significantly from this⁶. In later treatises on poetry the meaning of *śarīra* shifts to that of 'poetic diction' but *śarīra* becomes part of a vivid metaphor or simile respectively only after the soul part has been added by VĀMANA⁷. The concentration on the soul constituent of a real poetry marks thus the transition from definitions based merely on the enumeration of qualities of style, like *guṇa*s, etc. to the *lakṣaṇa* type defining an essential feature which isolates the entity in focus from everything else. This structure of the body-soul metaphor or simile respectively serves the main intention of ĀNANDA to offer a strong definition of *kāvya* for the benefit of discerning critics.

5. BHARATA, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, ed. with an introd. and various readings by M.M. GHOSH, Calcutta, 1967, p. 127:

itivṛttaṃ tu kāvyasya śarīraṃ parikīrtitam // 21.1.

6. Cf. BHĀMAHA, *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra*, ed. by P.V.N. SHASTRI, Tanjore, 1927, I. 23, p. 3.

7. Cf. VĀMANA, *Kāvyaḷaṃkārasūtra*, ed. by M. DURGAPRASAD, K.P. PARAB, Bombay, 1926, p. 3:

rītir ātmā kāvyasya // I.2.6.

Let us now proceed to the second simile we come across in the text and reflect upon its structure and significance. In *kārikā* no. 4 of the first *uddyota* we find the very suggestive *lāvaṇya-dr̥ṣṭānta*⁸:

[3] The guessed meaning again is a different thing indeed.
It is this which shines in the works of great poets as something different from the well known constituents like the beauty in the ladies.

As we see, this simile presents no difficulties with regard to construction or purpose. What makes it remarkable, is its revealing correspondence to the abstract content ĀNANDA had in mind as an *upameya*. The comparison between the sense to be achieved after the comprehension of the expressed meanings and the beauty of women, which is not just the result of their limbs, furnishes two outputs:

1. It illustrates in an intuitively plausible manner a relational entity, which emerges as an epiphenomenon from its constituents, thus surpassing their mere sum total;

and

2. it serves as an image of a purely perceptive Gestalt notion (e.g. Wahrnehmungsbegriff) of a phenomenon which is accessible only to the sensual experience and finally ineffable.

Both characteristics involved in the simile bear a fundamental importance for the *dhvani* doctrine, especially with respect to the link between *pratīyamāna* and *rasa*. *Rasa*, as BHARATA defines the term, is the emergent new quality produced by the combined working of the dramatic constituents⁹. *Rasa*, as ĀNANDA stresses it, cannot be conveyed through designation but is accessible only to direct perception suggested by the description of the appropriate determinants,

8. ĀNANDAVARDHANA, *op. cit.*, p. 6:
pratīyamānaṃ punar anyad eva vastv asti vāṇīṣu mahākavīnām /
yat tat prasiddhāvayavâtiriktaṃ vibhāti lāvaṇyam ivāṅganāsu // I. 4.

9. BHARATA, *op. cit.*, p. 82:
tatra vibhāvānuvāya-vyabhicāri-saṃyogād rasa-niṣpattiḥ // ad VI. 31.

consequences, and complementary psychological states. With the *lāvanya* simile ĀNANDA establishes *pratīyamāna*, and along with it *dhvani*, as proper aesthetic categories if we take “*aesthesis*” in its original etymological meaning of immediate cognition via perception. Surprisingly, ĀNANDA did not make use of the parallel to food taste which is the standard instance for *rasa* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. From a theoretical point of view the comparison to spicy food, which derives its unique taste from the mixture of different ingredients, would have furnished exactly the same purpose¹⁰. Compared to the *dr̥ṣṭānta* of food the notion of beauty is of a more abstract and conventional nature which narrows its universal appeal to a certain degree. It is ABHINAVAGUPTA, who takes up again the comparison to food taste and introduces the famous *pānaka* simile exemplifying thus an emergent synthetic quality¹¹. Finally, the same content has been expressed even directly in a popular maxim, as we can verify in JACOB's *Laukikanyāyāñjali*¹². In conclusion, we may suggest that ĀNANDA himself coined the fresh comparison to ladies' beauty in order to delight the hearts of noble connoisseurs of both poetry and women.

The next two similes we come across in the first *uddyota* of *Dhvanyāloka* point at one and the same element of the *dhvani* theory.

[4]¹³ Just as a man, desirous of seeing (smth.), takes care for the lamp flame - as it is the means (for that) - in the same way the one, who is zealous for [the suggested meaning], takes care for the expressed meaning;

and

10. Cf. BHARATA, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

11. Cf. ABHINAVAGUPTA, *Dhvanyāloka-Locana*, Chapter I, ed. by K. KRISHNAMOORTHY, New Delhi, 1988, p. 10:
pānaka iva guḍa-maricādi-rasānām [...] ad I. 1.

12. Cf. Colonel G.A. JACOB, *Laukikanyāyāñjalih*, *A Handful of Popular Maxims*, vol. III, Bombay, 1900, p. 11:
avayava-prasiddheḥ samudāya-prasiddhir balīyasī //

13. ĀNANDAVARDHANA, *op. cit.*, p. 16:
ālokārthī yathā dīpa-śikhāyām yatnavāñ-janaḥ / tadupāyatayā tadvad arthe vācye tad-ādṛtaḥ //I.9.

[5]¹⁴ In the same way as sentence purport is grasped
through the meaning of the words,
the comprehension of that thing is preceded by the expressed meaning,

Both statements elucidate the dependency of the suggested meaning from the expressed. While the first simile has the nature of a *laukika-nyāya*, the second betrays the influence of some Mīmāṃsā *śabda-bodha* theories on ĀNANDA's semantic convictions and has the nature of a hint. I could not yet trace the *ālokārhtin* simile in other texts but it obviously exposes a commonplace knowledge derived from everyday life. In this sense the *ālokārhtin* simile is a perfectly original *laukika-nyāya* involved in the main stock of the *dhvani* theory¹⁵. The comparison of the emergency of the sentence purport from the meanings of the constituent words elucidates the same content as the *lāvanya* simile but from a different point of view. While the latter exposes the absorption of the constituents in the result, the first stresses their importance as means to the result. Here again the mutual relation between the expressed and the suggested meaning is emphasized while its reference to the evocation of *rasa* is elaborated in a detailed manner in *kārikā* no. 33 of the third *uddyota*. There again ĀNANDA specifies his purpose of using this simile which can be easily confused with the next we come across in the first *uddyota*¹⁶:

[6] *Just as the meaning of a word is not perceived [distinctively] after completing its function although it reveals the sentence purport through its semantic accordance [with other words],
[in the same way] this meaning flashes up - as if indiscretely - in the*

14. ĀNANDAVARDHANA, *op. cit.*, p. 16:
*yathā padārtha-dvāreṇa vākyārthaḥ sampratīyate /
vācyārtha-pūrvikā tadvat pratīpat tasya vastunaḥ //I.10.*

15. In the third *uddyota* ĀNANDA makes use of more trivial *nyāya*s like the e.g. *ghāṭa-pradīpa-nyāya* which, nevertheless, refers very closely to the same point.

16. ĀNANDAVARDHANA, *op. cit.*, p. 18:
*sva-sāmarthya-vaśenaiva vākyārthaṃ prathayann api /
yathā vyāpāra-ṅṣpattau padārtho na vibhāvīyate //I.11;
tadvat [...] so'rtho vācyārtha-vimukhātmanām /
buddhau tattvārtha-darśinyām jhātītyēvāvabhāsate //I.12.*

mind of those who avert themselves from the expressed meaning and contemplate the meaning proper.

The already mentioned content about the mutual relation between word meanings and sentence purport is treated here in a different consideration. It is again the emergent entity which is at stake because it is simultaneously dependent and independent from the expressed elements of speech. The expressed meaning is the necessary condition for the revealing of the real poetic meaning. The connoisseur, however, should emancipate his mind and almost ignore this meaning in order to relish the real poetic beauty. Language is thus the condition of poetry but poetry is more than just a language. Both characteristics of this novel function of language are very important for ĀNANDA's theory because, on the one hand, the expressed meanings are the devices of *rasa*, and *dhvani* respectively, but, on the other hand, there are instances where *dhvani* cannot be identified neither with the primary nor with the secondary designation. This peculiarity of poetic language makes it possible and even necessary to introduce a new linguistic function, *vyañjanā*, beyond *abhidhāvyaṅgā* and *lakṣaṇavyāṅgā*.

For this being the main purpose of ĀNANDA's theoretical project he exploits all epistemological and didactic resources of the contemporary scholar practice in order to found a sound and convincing theory of poetry. It is in fact a rather sophisticated technique of ĀNANDA's using one and the same object of comparison in two almost contradictory theoretical frames. In stressing here on the mode of dependence and there on that of independence he specifies different approaches to one and the same *upameya*, as in the case of *padārtha*. In this way he establishes a kind of *prajñāna* condition similar to the third condition of metaphoric usage that obliges us to find out the concrete intention behind a certain metaphor and precludes any random suggestions.

It has been sometimes stated that the value of a simile 'lies in the new thought which links two things that are in the last analysis very dissimilar'¹⁷. This might be true of poetical similes or metaphors. But observing the way ĀNANDA exploits similes I think that it is not the

17. Cf. K. LEIDECKER, The philosophical significance of similes in ancient Indian thought, in *Aryan Path*, 5 (1954), p. 231-238.

process of comparison that matters and it is not the object of the simile that should absorb our attention. The only purpose of *upamāna* in this mode of employment is to supply a quick, familiar and unquestioned image which flashes upon the *upameya* in a manner of a cognitive shortcut. In this sense we may consider the simile employment in theoretical text from the point of view of the *lāghava* principle of style. We should not view theoretical similes as *exornationes sententiarum*, that is why it is not their extraordinary beauty or striking freshness which makes up their value. As a matter of fact, they are even more useful when conveying a rather trivial insight, because in this case they can best fulfil their pragmatic and didactic tasks. On the other hand, they do not share the stringent status of the logical *dr̥ṣṭānta.s* because they expose a looser technique of usage. As such comparisons in a theoretical discourse appear neither as *alamkāra.s* nor as *pramāṇa.s* but rather as figures of cognition and serve as vehicles of the community knowledge paradigm where new ideas and concepts can be embedded.