

An Introduction to Indian Literary Theory

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Lecture- 28

The Theory of Alamkara

Hello everyone! In this lecture, we are going to familiarize ourselves with the theory of Alaṅkāra. The theory of alankara is one of the earliest theories in Sanskrit poetics. We can, in fact, say that Sanskrit literary theory was inaugurated with the theory of *alaṅkāra*. Alaṅkāra being an important constituent of poetry, the word *alaṅkāraśāstra* in course of time came to represent “literary theory” itself.

In this lecture, I would like to give you only a conceptual overview of the idea of *alaṅkāra*. In other words, we will not get into the definitions of individual *alaṅkāras*, rather we will only see how the idea of *alaṅkāra* functioned in general, in Poetics. There are two reasons for this crucial decision. First of all, the definitions of individual *alaṅkāras* never remain static in poetics. It keeps changing with new theoreticians redefining them in their works. Secondly, the time constraints of eight weeks also limits my engagement with the theory of *alaṅkāra* to only a conceptual discussion of this field. Now let us begin our discussion.

What is an *alaṅkāra*? An approximate translation of the word *alaṅkāra* would be “figures of speech” or “rhetoric.” It is interesting to note that the term *alaṅkāra* was used in Sanskrit poetics in two senses—first as a specific term to signify what was conventionally regarded as figures of speech, and secondly, to denote anything that adds beauty to the poem.

The word *alaṅkāra* etymologically means “that which creates beauty.” It is derived from the Sanskrit root *kr̥*, meaning to do, with the prefix *alam*, which means “to decorate,” “to adorn,” etc. The idea of *alaṅkāra* as an ornament implies that there is something to be ornamented. It would be logical to assume then that the thing to be ornamented is the body of the poem. Bimal Krishna Matilal is of the view that we can identify two main theories of *alaṅkāra* in Sanskrit *kāvya*—one, which considers *alaṅkāra* as the special external embellishments (such as *upamā* or *rūpaka*) to the body of poetry, and the other which considers it as everything that adds beauty to a poem. While the idea of ornamentation is relevant to the first theory, the

second theory would consider *alaṅkāra* to be beauty itself. Vāmana has used it in these two senses in his *Kāvyaṅkārasūtravṛtti*.

In *Kāvyaṅkārasūtravṛtti*, Vāmana says “*kāvyaṃ grāhyamaṅkāraṭ* (I.1.1) (poetry appears to be attractive to us because of figure of speech).” Here he uses the word *alaṅkāra* to refer to the idea of figure of speech. Later he says “*saundaryamaṅkāraḥ*. Here he uses the word *alaṅkāra* to mean beauty in general (I.I.2).

Alaṅkāras are usually divided into two—*śabdāṅkāra* and *arthāṅkāras*. *Śabdāṅkāra* includes all those figures of speech that add to the auditory effect like alliteration, assonance, consonance or pun. *Arthāṅkāra* is anything that enhances the meaning of a word, like simile or metaphor. The difference in languages makes it difficult for us to draw exact parallels between figures of speech in Sanskrit and English, but there are similarities like the devices of *upamā* and simile or *anuprāsa* and alliteration.

Although *Bhāmaha* is the name closely associated with the *Alaṅkāra* School, Bharata was the first literary theoretician to define and illustrate *alaṅkāras*. For Bharata, *alaṅkāras* are four in number namely *upamā*, *dīpaka*, *rūpaka*, and *yamaka* (XVII.37). Dramaturgy was the primary concern of Bharata in *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and so he did not analyze the idea of *alaṅkāra* in great detail. Other writers before *Bhāmaha* had often briefly talked about the idea of figures of speech in passing reference. A few examples in this respect include a chapter on *alaṅkāra* in *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* which is of unknown authorship and *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, also known as *Rāvaṇavadha*, by *Bhaṭṭi*. *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* contains some 1,000 verses on the topics of *nāṭyaśāstra* and *alaṅkāra*; chapters 14, 15, and 16 are particularly important as far as *alaṅkāra* is concerned. While chapter 14 lists and defines figures of speech in *kāvya*, chapter 15 distinguishes *kāvya* from *itihāsa*, and chapter 17 speaks of *rūpakas* and their 12 varieties. *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, a poem in 22 cantos, was composed primarily for illustrating the rules of Sanskrit grammar. It is divided into four sections. The fourth chapter named *Prasannakāṇḍa* is very important from the perspective of *alaṅkāra*. It deals with poetics and illustrates thirty-nine *alaṅkāras*. The order in which *alaṅkāras* are arranged is as same as their order in *Bhāmaha*'s *Kāvyaṅkāra*, although *Bhaṭṭi* deviates in a few cases from *Bhāmaha*. Another major work that deals with *alaṅkāra*, in passing, is *Agnipurāṇa*. Chapters 328–347 of *Agnipurāṇa* deal with figures of speech such as *yamaka*, *citra*, *upamā*, *rūpaka*, *sahokti*, *arthāntaranyāsa*, *utprekṣā*, *atiśaya*, *vibhāvanā*, *virodha*, and *hetu*.

In Sanskrit literary theory, Bhāmaha can be considered as the first literary theoretician to systematically deal with the question of alaṅkāra. “He implicitly accepted that alaṅkāra constitutes the very nature of poetry.” We know almost nothing about Bhāmaha other than the fact that he could have been a Buddhist, and a contemporary of Daṇḍin. Bhāmaha’s magnum opus is *Kavyalankara*. In *Kavyalankara*, Bhāmaha primarily focused on the various categories of *alankaras* or figures of speech to understand the nature of poetic language. Other than *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*, he is supposed to have written പ്രകൃത് മനോരമ, a commentary on Vararuci’s Prākṛit work. Bhāmaha is often considered the founding father of Sanskrit poetics, and the fact that later theoreticians like Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta quote him with respect is evidence enough of his stature in the field. The following are the thirty-nine alaṅkāras mentioned by Bhāmaha:

Anuprasa,

Yamaka

Rupaka

Dipaka,

Prativastupama

Aksepa

Arthantaranyasa

Vyatireka

Vibhavana

Samasukti

Atisayukti

Yathasamkhyā

Ulpreksha

Preyas

Rasavat

Urjasvi

Prayokta

Samahita

Udatta

Shlishta

Apahnuti

Visheshokti
Virodha
Thulyayogyata
Aprasthutaprasamsa
Vyajastuti
Nidarsana
Upamarupaka
Upameyopama
Sahokti
Parivrtti
Ananvaya
Sasandeha
Ulprekshavayava
Samsrsti
Bhavika
Ashis
Svabhavokti

Bhāmaha mentions thirty-nine alaṅkāras. But it should be noted that if we include the subdivisions of the alaṅkāras, then it will come to around 49. We will see that the number of *alaṅkāras* increasing in the works of the later writers. For example, Bhoja in his *Saravatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* enumerates 72 *alaṅkāras*. He divides the alankaras into śabdālaṅkāra, arthālaṅkāra and ubhayālaṅkāra. In each category, he mentions some 24 *alaṅkāras*. Mammaṭa in *Kāvya prakāśa* mentions some 67 *alaṅkāras*. In *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, Viśvanātha counts 77 arthālaṅkāra and 7 śabdālaṅkāras. For Ruyyaka, the number of *alaṅkāras* is 80. Jayadeva in *Candrāloka* mentions 100 alaṅkāras. In Appaya Dīkṣita's *Kuvalayānanda*, the number alaṅkāras finally reach 115. This ever increasing number of alaṅkāras shows simultaneously the growth of poetry as well as that of poetics.

One can undoubtedly say that Bhāmaha's observations about the idea of alaṅkāra became the foundation for other literary theoreticians to build their theories further. The most important observation of Bhāmaha vis-à-vis the theory of alaṅkāra was that the soul of all the alaṅkāras is the quality called vakratā or the figurative deviation from the ordinary expression. He says that the alaṅkāra called *atiśayokti* or hyperbole and the quality of *vakratā* or the figurative

deviation from mundane expressions, are the same. According to Bhāmaha, *atiśayokti* is the treatment of an object or idea in such a way that it appears strikingly new to the readers. In other words, in the figure of speech called *atiśayokti*, an object or entity transcends our familiar equations of perceiving it. Many scholars have brought this peculiar nature of *atiśayokti* to our notice. According to Daṇḍin, *atiśayokti* “is that great *alaṅkāra* where signification or *vivakṣa* moves beyond the borders of common perception (210). According to Udbhata, “*Atiśayokti* is a statement which surpasses the common perception of people. Udbhata divided *atiśayokti* into four varieties--‘imposition of sameness where there is difference in reality,’ ‘imagining difference where there is really no difference,’ ‘describing some imaginary thing which is really impossible,’ and ‘the reversion of cause and effect to show quickness of effect.’ In all these varieties of *atiśayokti*, the ultimate aim is to shatter the reader’s common perception about an object or idea.

According to Bhāmaha, *atiśayokti* is identical with *vakrokti* or deviant utterance and all poets should take special care to master this art of deviant utterance. In *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*, Bhāmaha says, “This [*atiśayokti*] is nothing but *vakrokti*. All meanings appear new by this. Poets should be assiduous in cultivating it. Where is an *alaṅkāra* without this?” (49).

Bhāmaha says that ordinary expressions which reproduce the dominant way we perceive entities without any figurative deviation (*vakrata*) should not be considered an *alaṅkāra*, and the matter-of-fact expressions bereft of *vakrata* are mere *vārta* or report, not *kāvya*. Bhāmaha observes that expressions such as “‘The sun has set; the moon shines, the birds are winging back to their nests’ do not turn out to be a poem. He asks What kind of poetry is this? This is called *vārta*.” (50). The following is an example of *atiśayokti* which Bhāmaha cites in *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*:

“If the loose skin of water drops down like the slough of serpents, then it will become the white garments on the limbs of ladies sporting on in the water” (48).

In this example, Bhāmaha gives us a deviant (*vakrata*) and the hitherto unfamiliar equation of perceiving water. The dominant conception about water is that it is a colourless, odourless, liquid which forms water bodies such as river, ocean, pond and so on. By considering water as a white garb on the limbs of ladies playing in the water, Bhāmaha is altering the dominant

conception about water. Matilal observes that “In Bhāmaha’s slightly loose terminology, vakrokti = atīśayokti = alaṅkāra.”

Holding *vakrokti* in high esteem, Bhāmaha is reluctant to consider *svabhāvokti* or the act of presenting something in the way it is commonly perceived as an *alaṅkāra*. While describing five kinds of *kāvya*, Bhāmaha reiterates that *kāvya*, in any form, becomes commendable only if it is characterized by deviant utterance 10. For him, a composition which is clear, smooth, and elegant, but devoid of deviant utterance will be mere music, not *kāvya* (11). Bhāmaha does not give the status of *alaṅkāra* to figures of speech such as *hetu*, *sūkṣma*, and *leśa*, citing the reason that they do not have the quality of *atīśayokti* in them.

This observation of Bhāmaha was later accepted by Ānandavardhana in his *Dhvanyāloka*. Ānanda expresses his agreement with the view of Bhāma by verbatim reproducing the words of Bhāma in *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra* (3.36 A). Abhinavagupta further agrees with the observation of Bhāma in his *Locana*. Abhinava says, “That which has been defined as hyperbole is the whole of figured speech, that is, is every sort of figure of speech, for Bhāmaha has said: ‘An unusual or striking form of word or meaning (*vakrokti*) is considered an ornament (*alaṅkṛti*) of poetic utterance.’ For the ‘bent’ (*vakra*) form of a word or of a meaning (*ukti*) is its presentation in an unusual or striking form (*lokottīrṇena rūpeṇa*) and this constitutes the ornament of a figure of speech (*alaṅkārasyaḷaṅkāraḷ*).

Now hyperbole is precisely the property of being unusual or striking (*lokottaratā*). Hence hyperbole is a common property of all figures of speech. Thus . . . it is by this hyperbole that a meaning which has been worn out by everyone’s use of it can be given new variety and interest.” (3.36 L)

In *Vakroktijīvita*, Kuntaka also repeats the same observation. For him, *atīśayokti* which is the very life force of all ornaments of *kāvya* is present in all sorts of *vakrata* (477-78). He calls *atīśayokti sarvāḷaṅkāra-jīvitam*. The term *atīśayokti* in this context should not be understood in its limited sense as an individual *alaṅkāra*, but in its broader sense as an experience of surprise. The term *atīśayokti* in Sanskrit is composed of two words—*atīśaya* and *ukti*, meaning respectively ‘surprise’ and ‘speech.’ So the term *atīśayokti*, in its etymological sense, means any linguistic expression which causes surprise in the reader or spectator.

It is not surprising that Kuntaka, who espoused *vakrokti*, should agree that the essence of poetry is *alaṅkāra* or ornamental speech which differs from ordinary use of language. According to Kuntaka, *svabhāvokti* or “the presentation of an idea or entity in the way they are popularly presented or perceived in the society” is not an *alankara*.

According to Kuntaka, what makes a linguistic composition a *kāvya* or literary artefact is the presence of *alaṅkāra* (60), and the only *alaṅkāra* or ornament that can adorn a poem is *vakrokti*. What Kuntaka means by this statement is that *vakrokti* is the essence of all *alaṅkāras* and there is no *alaṅkāra* without it. Kuntaka says:

"These two—sound and sense [which constitute a poem]—are *alaṅkāryās*, things that are to be decorated. They are to be embellished by some *alaṅkāras*. What should function as the ornament of these two? . . . It is none other than deviant utterance or *vakrokti*. *Vakrokti* is that signification which is different from the popular usage. This is what I am driving at—in *kāvya*, both sound and sense have separate existence. We are not adorning them with different *alaṅkāras*. What serves as their ornament is their presentation in a deviant manner. Only this can cause beauty in poetry." (91-92)

Considering figurative deviation or *vakrata* as the vital component of *kāvya*, Kuntaka says that *svabhāvokti* or "the presentation of an idea or entity in the way they are popularly presented or perceived in the society" (93) does not have any space within the ambit of *kāvya*. Kuntaka presents his opponent's view that *svabhāvokti* is an *alaṅkāra* to systematically refute it:

"Here is an opponent's view: It has been stated by you [that is Kuntaka] that *vakrokti* is the only *alaṅkāra* and nothing other than *vakrokti* is an *alaṅkāra*. Why do you say so? The ancient *ālaṅkārikas* [literary theoreticians] have clearly stated that there is an *alaṅkāra* called *svabhāvokti*; this figure of speech is very charming."

"To refute this observation, I [Kuntaka] say so: Those *ālaṅkārikas*, who say that *svabhāvokti* . . . is an *alaṅkāra*, are undoubtedly immature. . . What is *svabhāvokti*? It is the act of stating the nature of objects in the way they exist in the world. If that is an *alaṅkāra*, then what can be used to decorate it to become the body of *kāvya*?" (92-93)

We have seen that *svabhāvokti* is the act of re-producing ideas and entities in the way they are dominantly perceived and presented in the world. The primary problem underpinning *svabhāvokti* is that it always goads the creative writer to verbatim re-produce an already existing familiar pattern of perception, thereby leaving little space for the author to be creative and original.

As opposed to simply re-creating what is generally considered the identity of an entity (*svabhāva*), Kuntaka is concerned with the creative transformation of the existing structures and never aims to reproduce the known and the familiar. Kuntaka opines that the task of a poet is to portray the world differently through *vakrata* (deviation from what is familiar), as opposed to confining to the familiar equations of perception or *svabhāva*. He clarifies his stand further:

"This is the gist of what I have said—the objects that poets describe are not newly created on earth. Poets impart ordinary objects a sublime and non-ordinary form. They are elevated to such a rare position where they appeal to the hearts of the responsive readers. . . . Thus, poets transform ordinary entities into a non-ordinary and rare state. In this way, the objects that are described transcend the habitual way they have so far been perceived, and shine forth as if they are absolutely new entities, and ultimately steal our hearts. This is why poets are called ‘creators. As it is stated [by Ānandavardhana]: In the endless world of poetry, poet is the only lord. The whole world transforms at his will." (342)

In Kuntaka’s poetic theory, if a statement wants to attain the status of an *alāṅkāra* and consequently that of a *kāvya*, it should always be characterized by *vakrata*. While *svabhāvokti* is a habitual act of re-presenting an object in the same way it has been dominantly conceived and never aims to explore the hither-to unseen facets of an entity, *vakrokti* is a ‘creative’ act that aims to transcend the habitual structures of perception. We can undoubtedly say that Kuntaka is an important figure in the history of alankara theory.

S.K. De’s observation about the contribution of Kuntaka is noteworthy in this context. According to De, “Alamkara system established by Bhamaha was given a new turn by Kuntaka. In fact, the Vakrokti system of Kuntaka may properly be regarded as an offshoot of the older Alamkara system. In spite of the obviously extreme nature of his central theory and his somewhat quaint nomenclature his work is of great value as presenting a unique system or

rather systematizing the Alamkara theory of earlier writers in a refreshing original way. Kuntaka clarified and vindicated his position by pointing out that the correct term for the figure is not just Alamkara, the ornament, or figure of speech; but, it is Kavya-alamkara, the poetic figure. Therefore Vakratva Vaicitrya which is a peculiar turn of expression depending on the Kavi-vyapara differentiates a poetic figure. This is the significant original contribution of Kuntaka to Sanskrit Poetics.” (History of Sanskrit Poetics – Pp. 187-89).

But this emphasis on *atisayokti* was not shared by all critics. Daṇḍin, who is the second most influential exponent of Alaṅkāra School, particularly disagreed with Bhāmaha's observation that *vārta* or report cannot serve as the ornament of poetry. Daṇḍin employed the term *svabhāvokti* to designate what Bhāmaha calls *vārta*. According to Daṇḍin, *svabhāvokti* is a figure of speech. This is in fact the first *alaṅkāra* he dealt with in *Kāvyaḍarśa*. He maintained that *svabhāvokti* which is also found abundantly in *śāstras* is well appreciated by connoisseurs of art as an *alaṅkāra*.

At this juncture, I would also like to point out that in Bhāmaha's theory, the idea of *rasa* is also relegated to the position of a figure of speech. We will see this concept in detail when we discuss the theory of *rasa* in the following classes. Although the idea of *rasa* was an important point of discussion in *nāṭyaśāstra* and was well known to literary critics from Bhāmaha onwards, none of the literary theoreticians until Udbhaṭa considered it to be a criterion of literariness or an independent category. For them, “*rasa* was clearly subordinate to a larger discourse on figures; it did not constitute the heart of literariness. Bhāmaha subsumes the idea of *rasa* under three verbal expressions of emotions such as *rasāvat* or *rasa*-laden expression, *preyaḥ* or ‘affectionate utterance’ and *ūrjasvin* or ‘haughty declaration’ (53-55). Like Bhāmaha before him, Daṇḍin also reserves no special category for *rasa* other than that of figuration. In Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa*, the idea of *rasa* is used in two different senses—first as a general term for any deviant linguistic expression (48, 50, 58-60) and secondly as a technical term for various instances of affective expressions such as *rasāvat*, *preyaḥ* and *ūrjasvin* (247).

In Udbhaṭa's critical corpus also the idea of *rasa* largely remains as a figure of speech. By adding ‘quiescent’ or *samāhita* to the already existing categories of *preyaḥ* (the affectionate), *rasāvat* (the *rasa*-laden) and *ūrjasvin* (the haughty speech), Udbhaṭa increases the number of *rasa*-related figures from three to four (50). He also mentions the components conducive for the production of *rasa* namely *vibhāva* (foundational factor), *anubhāva* (stimulant factors),

vyabhicāribhāva (transitory emotion), *sthāyibhava* (stable emotion), and *svaśabda* (proper name) (52). For all these literary theoreticians, the idea of *rasa* is precisely a figure of speech. It is with Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* that the idea of *rasa* makes its way to literary criticism as a prominent constituent of literariness. According to Ānandavardhana, among all the three varieties of *dhvani* “[i]t is just this meaning [*rasa-dhvani*] that is the soul of poetry” (113).

For Bhāmaha, it is the presence of *alaṅkāras* or figures of speech that beautifies language and makes it literary as opposed to ordinary. He defined *kāvya* as a combination of *śabda* and *artha*; *śabdālaṅkāras* and *arthālaṅkāras* collectively generate poetic beauty or literariness in *kāvya*. It is significant to note that there were two major views regarding the body of *kāvya*.

The first view was that *kāvya* was solely a product of *artha* (signification), and the second, that *kāvya* was constituted exclusively by *śabda* (signifier). Bhāmaha talked about these two camps at great length in his *Kāvyaṅkāra*. According to Bhāmaha, the first camp argued that *vibhāvas*, etc. which produce *rasa* in *kāvya* depended upon *artha*. Therefore *alaṅkāras* that relate to *artha* (sense) are the cause of poetic beauty. Reproducing the argument of this camp, Bhāmaha says: “Some *ālaṅkārikas* vehemently maintain that only *rūpaka*, etc. constitute its (*kāvya*'s) ornaments. (Because) a damsel's face, though beautiful, does not shine, if it should be devoid of ornaments” (I.23). Here the expression *alaṅkāra* denotes *arthālaṅkāra*. The second camp, on the other hand, claimed that only figures of speech pertaining to sound constitute poetic beauty: “Some people are of the opinion that figures of speech like *rūpaka* are external. They maintain that the proper disposition of nouns and verbs constitute the real ornaments of speech” (II.24). The argument of this school is that the beauty of a poem lies primarily in the ornaments of sound. Bhāmaha, who wished to strike a balance between these two views, maintained that poetry is the combination of both word and meaning: “Poetry is the combination of both sound and sense (*śabdārthau sahitaḥ kāvyaḥ*” (1.16). He was also the first literary theoretician to distinguish between *śabdālaṅkāras* and *arthālaṅkāras*.

Though literary theoreticians invented new linguistic components and considered them to be the soul of *kāvya*, *alaṅkāra* continued to occupy an important role in *kāvyaśāstra*. For instance, Vāmana, despite his predilection for the idea of *guṇa*, maintained that a poem without *alaṅkāra* will not appeal to the minds of readers. According to him, while *guṇas* make a poem charming, *alaṅkāra* adds to poetic beauty. According to Kuntaka, there is no poetry without figures of speech. Hemacandra listed *alaṅkāra* as an important constituent of

poetry along with *śabda*, *artha*, and *guṇa*. For Vāgbhaṭa II, *kāvya* is a linguistic composition marked by the presence of *śabda*, (*artha* (signification), *guṇas* (poetic excellence), and *alaṅkāras*. In *Candrāloka*, Jayadeva opined that *kāvya* is that special expression characterized by the absence of *doṣas* and the presence of *alaṅkāra* along with other poetic devices. Vidyānātha in *Pratāparudrīya* saw *kāvya* as that kind of *gadya* (prose) and *padya* (poetry) which is adorned by *guṇa*, *alaṅkāra*, *śabda* and *artha*, and is bereft of *doṣas*.

At this juncture, it is important to mention the debate between Jayadeva and Mammaṭa on the question of whether *alaṅkāra* is an important constituent for *kāvya*. Jayadeva criticised Mammaṭa for making *alaṅkāra* only an optional element in *kāvya*. Mammaṭa observed that “This [*kāvya*] is the [composition] of word and meaning without faults, qualities and sometimes without figures of speech” (*Kāvyaṅkṛatī*: I.4). Criticizing Mammaṭa’s stance, Jayadeva asks “Why does not that great scholar who considers a composition without *alaṅkāra* as a *kāvya* opine that the fire is bereft of heat” (I.8).

Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* marked a turning point in this extended discussion of figures of speech and rhetoric. For the first time in the history of *kāvyaśāstra*, critical attention shifted from figures of speech and tropes to aesthetic emotion or *rasa*. This does not mean that *alaṅkāra* lost its importance completely. *Alaṅkāra*, as opposed to being the central concern of theoretical analysis, was relegated to the position of a subsidiary, yet important, category. Ānanda’s observation bears testimony to it. According to Ānanda, *alaṅkāras* function like ornaments on a person’s body, while *guṇas* are like qualities such as courage” According to Ānandavardhana, *alaṅkāras* are countless in number (2.17). He is of the view that if carefully used, *alaṅkāras* can greatly add to the beauty of *rasas*. Ānanda observed that the employment of figure of speech in poetry should appear natural and spontaneous; it should be in conjunction with the *rasa* it aims to arouse. Any use of *alaṅkāras* by force can only destroy the beauty of the poem: “Only a figure which naturally occurs to the author during his/her preoccupation with *rasa* can befit the poem (2.15). His discussion of *alaṅkāra* in *Dhvanyāloka* is primarily in connection with the aesthetic emotion of the erotic or *śṛīṅgāra rasa*. Ānanda points out that *śabdālaṅkāras* (figures of speech pertaining to sound) such as *yamaka* can mar the beauty of *śṛīṅgāra rasa*. *Yamaka*, where phonetically identical duplicates are repeated, demands conscious effort on the part of the author, which might result in diverting his/her attention away from the main aim of evocation of *rasa*. Ananda further says, “A great poet can produce with a single effort some matters that contain *rasa* together with

figures of speech. But for composing yamakas and the like, he must make a separate effort even if he is well able to compose them. Therefore these figures cannot play a part subordinate to rasa” (2.15).

Despite occupying a central position in the discussion of poetics, alaṅkāra often came with what appears to be a statutory warning to not employ it to excess. Ānandavardhana repeatedly emphasized the need to subordinate alaṅkāras to the rasa that they should help in producing. Ānandavardhana exhorted poets to exercise samīkṣā or discrimination in the use of alaṅkāras and formulated the following principles to be adhered to with respect to alaṅkāra:

- 1) Alaṅkāras must be ancillary or aṅgabhūta.
- 2) They must never become main—pradhāna or aṅgin.
- 3) The main theme shall always be kept in view and figures, in consequence, must be taken and thrown away in accordance with the requirements of the main idea.
- 4) They must not be too much elaborated or overworked.
- 5) 5) Even if they are worked out, a good poet must take care to give them, on the whole, the position of aṅga only.

We have discussed all the major points with respect to the ontology of alankara. We saw that according to Bhamaha and others, what makes an alankara, alankara is figurative deviation of speech or vakrata. So, vakrata is the soul of alankara. Bhamaha opines that vakrata is identical with the figure of speech called atisaya. Bhamaha is of the view that varta where there is no figurative deviation ceases to become an alankara. The view of Bhamaha was later championed by critics like Anandavardhana, Abhinavagupta and Kuntaka. Kuntaka particularly believe that svabhavokti where something is presented without any vakrata ceases to get elevated to the status of an alankara. Kuntaka, w saw, uses the idea vakrokti synonymous with alankara.

Śaṅkuka is of the view that rasa is an imitation of the emotions of characters by the actor. Bhaṭṭa Tauta criticizes this opinion of Śaṅkuka from three perspectives--from the perspective of the spectator, that of the actor, and finally that of Bharata.