CHAPTER V
NĀRĀYĀNA DĪKṢITA - THE DRAMATIST

The success of a dramatist depends upon three main factors: the selection of the plot incorporated with dramatic situations weaving and developing the main sentiment and presentation of ideas and emotions through conflicts and development of the characters. The dramatists must have the ability to make necessary alteration by cutting out those parts of the plot which are not conducive in achieving the aim of the drama and to introduce new themes for creating dramatic effect on the stage. For the success of a play, the playwright has to make use of earlier dramatic techniques and devices. When we draw the theme from famous works (Purāṇas Itihāsas, history etc.), for a playwright to alter entirely the core of a theme would be wrong.

The canons of dramatists have prescribed some principles on the selection of the sentiment in a play. With these
restrictions it is possible only for a dramatist of great calibre to display originality, novelty and creativity in their works.

THE PLAY.

The scope of a drama is greater than that of poetry. This is directly applicable to the audience/readers. This might have motivated N.D to write a play. As is the practice, he claims that his work as very great. According to Bharata, different types of dramatic arts are available. Dhananjaya describes the different terms and gives a detailed account of the form.

The identification of characters on the actors give birth to dramatic composition. This identification can be achieved by four varieties of acting Vācika, Āṅgika, Sātvika and Āhārya.

According to Indian dramaturgy Ṛṣupaka is of ten kinds. The basis of classification is based on the main sentiment, the
hero and the plot. Among these ten kinds, the nataka type secures the most important place. This belongs to the nataka variety. It has Śṛngāra as the main sentiment; the hero is a Dhirodāta and the theme is a historical with invented episodes.

THE PLOT.

Any creative writer dealing with contemporary persons and incidents has to be very careful. His readers or audiences know and have perhaps experience the events and known the persons. Therefore any change that he has made could make a bad impression and even disbelief. But if these are described exactly as they happen, there would be little dramatic effect. About events, the writer has to make them look realistic and not real.

As far as the characters are concern it is not sufficient that he depicts them as they are. He has to chisel them, polish them and dress them in such a way that the desired effects are obtained. He may have to mask some bad qualities of the hero.
and the heroine and add some good qualities that hardly exist in them. In the case of evil characters a few more bad qualities added to their already existing ones good also be effective.

When the episodes take place in a palace and the characters are kings, princess and queens, a little carelessness could be fatal. The characters should not be over praised. Then the audience will not accept it. They should not be caricatured, it would bring undesired laughter and wrong occasions. Moderation (मेधात्मक) is called for especially when the play is connected with the palace.

Nārāyana Dīkṣita has chosen an original dramatic theme based on contemporary history. He opens up carefully the love between the hero and the heroine. Here the hero is King Śāhaji, a wellknown king of Bhonsle dynasty of Thanjore; the heroine is the princess of Kāśi. The hero and the heroine see each other, and thus the seeds of love are sown. They meet and understand each other’s feeling. Surmounting the hurdles, their love develops and happily in marriage. Meanwhile, Śāhaji's wife
Queen Umādevi does not like her husband’s love affair. The playwright gets an opportunity to present a variety of passions.

According to the canons of dramaturgy a three fold division is prescribed for the development of the plot. The five sandhis carrying in each of the five stages of actions and the elements of the plot to their natural fulfillment. The avasthās or the stages through which an action is developed are five in number. The elements of the plot called Arthaprakṛtis are also five. A dramatist has to develop the plot within the restrictive rules. To a great extent, Nārāyaṇa Dīkṣita has succeeded in this matter.

The story in a play should be a complete whole in itself with a beginning, a middle and an end, so as to enable the work produce its own proper and effectively presents an organic unity of living creature. Nārāyaṇa Dīkṣita has at the beginning, the meeting of the hero and the heroine, in the middle the inevitable impediments, and in the end, the union of the hero and the heroine.
The story in the play has a magnitude with a duration of one and a half days. All the episode and even minor details are somewhat organically inter-related. The various strands of the play are connected together by technical devices like Viṣkambha, Praveṣaka etc. The act and the story in the acts are inter linked by these devices.

**DRAMATIC EFFECTS**

A play should have scenes of good theatrical effect. It should have powerful speeches which lead to vigorous confrontations, surprising discoveries, conflicts and dilemmas. All these contribute to stage effect. The dilemma of the king when he is caught between the love for the queen and desire for Lilavati, and the burst of fury on the part of the queen are the situations having high theatrical effect. But what is expected of a dramatic composition is not delineated in the play. Nārāyaṇa Dīkṣita has not applied his mind to make the theatrical effects effective.
DIALOGUE

Dialogue occupies the prime place among the natural modes of expression. Next comes gesture. It gives more stress to the emotions behind the dialogue. These two weapons provide a natural touch to the play. So dialogue has a very prominent place in visual arts. The prose and verse can be used but they should not be merely learned by heart and reproduced. A good actor has to use proper intonation, voice modulation, fast or slow temper etc. These devices are used not only for conveying the meaning but also to present the mood and emotion.

In this play both prose and verse are employed. The transition from prose to verse is handled satisfactorily. Appropriate metres are used to express the sentiments in the context. Alāṅkāras are used in plenty. But the dramatist has not succeeded to use them with sharpness and clarity. Funny expressions are often seen displayed. The dialogues between the queen and the other characters in the fourth act are quite appealing. Most of the sentences are having closed ends. There
are also lengthy ones. In short the dialogue in the play are not fully effective in the dramatic situations.

**DRAMATIC DEVICES.**

Works like Nātyasāstra on dramaturgy lay down rules and principles regarding the management of action. Action in general is divided into two parts Sūcya and Asūcya. The portions enacted on the stage are called Asūcya. This division of action contains strong feelings and sentiments. (What is seen on the stage is Sūcya. What is only hinted on the stage (and not shown) is Asūcya.)

Some elements in the story which are to be hinted only is called Sūcya. The incidents like war, seige, journey etc are only either indicated or reported. Incidents of long duration, the incidents which are not necessary for the present situation but

---

1. Āṣṭādhyāyī Chapter I P 54-68
necessary for continuity of the plot are also hindered or reported. And yet there are happenings and actions which form a vital part of the dramatic story and which can not be shown on account of the natural limitations of theatre stage or for reasons of social propriety and moral decorum. For indicating such Sucya part of the story the playwright is permitted the famous five technical forms of introduction. These devices interconnect the acts and ensure continuity. The playwright should have the power to present themes with as much vividness as to impress the spectators. Bharata stresses the poets of great calibre are those who closely associate at tune of the real world.

Viṣkambha, Pravesaka, Cūlika, Ankasya and Ankavatara are the main five dramatic devices which interlink the story and action. The playwright Narāyana Diksita uses most of them cleverly. The Viṣkambha is an explanatory scene introducing the incidents of past or indicating those of the future. Normally two characters belonging to the intermediate class are employed.

---

in the Viskambha. This dramatic device is used in the beginning or in-between two acts of the play. This has two divisions Suddavişkambha and Miśra viškambha. In the first, there will be characters of middle rank speaking Sanskrit. In the second, the characters are of middle and inferior ranks who speak Prākrit instead of Sanskrit.

The first act of the play is introduced by a Suddavişkambha in which the Chief Minister Medhavi and the Kançuki appear. The discussion reveals the attempts made by the Minister for the marriage of King Śahaji with the Princess, Lilavati. The positive and negative aspects of Śahaji's marriage with Lilavati are discussed. The fourth act is followed by a Miśra viškambha where her holiness Marudvṛda and Čandrakala appear. Both of them are seen indulging in talk. The talk throws light on the King's journey Vijayaprastana. Now King Śahaji has return to his kingdom and handed over a lady parrot to the queen. Some other information is also available from this part. Here, how things are unfolding the future is indicated. Another Suddavişkambha is seen in the
fifth act of the play. In this, Minister Medhāvi and Maitrāyaṇī come on the stage. They discuss the disappearance of princess Līlāvati who has come to participate in the Mahāmahotsava. Some more light we get from this part.

Pravesākās are similar to Viskambhas. In this part the past and future incidents are conveyed in an abbreviated form. All the characters who appear in Pravesāka belong to the inferior rank and speak only Prakṛt. Pravesāka can never be in the beginning of the play. The reason for this is that the introduction of low class characters in the beginning of the play bring down its dignity. In this play the Pravesāka is introduced in the third and sixth acts. In the first Pravesāka the two maid servants Mukharika and Čaturika are seen. They give an account of the meeting of the heroine with the hero and their sufferings. In the Pravesāka to the sixth act Kalāvati and Vidūṣaka are seen. Kalāvati explains the sad plight of the heroine who has been put in a cage. She seeks the help of Vidūṣaka in conveying the news to the king.
The Ankāvatāra is employed to suggest what follows in the next act. This is done by some characters at the end of an act. The words of the king and Vidūṣaka at the end of the sixth act give a clue to what will happen in the next act. Vidusaka's words at the end of the sixth act regarding Kalyāṇamaṇḍapa suggest what will happen in the seventh act. (The method of suggesting the actions in the coming act is called Ankāvatāra).

Devices like Ātmagata (Soliloquy) and Karṇeiva (Aside) are also employed in the play. In a soliloquy a character, alone on the stage gets an occasion to reveal his innermost thoughts and feelings. It helps the onlookers to understand what is going on in the mind of the concerned character and strengthen the intensity of the sentiment in the plot. King Śāhaji, QueenUmādevi, and the heroine, in Lilāvati in soliloquies, speak to themselves as they immerse in thinking or face conflicting ideas. In the technique Karṇeiva a character is whispering in the ear of another. It helps the playwright avoid repetition. Moreover this throws light on the mutual intimacy of the characters who
indulge in it. King Sāhāji whispers in the ear of Vidūṣaka who is eager to know what has happened during his absence.

Nārāyaṇa Dīkṣita, using each of these devices with propriety, has tried to enrich the theatrical effect in his play.

**CHARACTERISATION**

Conventional dramaturgy has made some prescriptions on characterisation. In Sanskrit no dramatist is free to overlook these rules. Hence characters with originality and individuality are very rare in Sanskrit plays. If the story is drawn from epics, the playwrights can satisfy the audience to an extent even though he has made some changes in the story. But if the story is drawn from outside the epics and purāṇas, (that is from society), within the rigid rules, even a playwright of great calibre fails to satisfy the spectators, if the story is not logical. A dramatist has to shape impressive characters paying due regard to the rigid rules of Sanskrit dramaturgy.
The hero in the AP is the patron of the playwright. Nevertheless Nārāyaṇa Dīkṣita has thrown light on the weaknesses as well as the strength of the hero. The other characters are also depicted with weakness and strengths. The River Ganges and Kavery are represented in the play with human form.

Nārāyaṇa Dīkṣita takes care to bring life into the conventional types. But his characters do not shine with vividness and individuality. In short the playwright does not succeed in his attempt to weave colourful characters into the texture of the plot in dramatical style.

DRAMATIC STYLE.

Different style or vṛtties are employed for the representation of different sentiments. "The production of different kinds of dramatic tricks on the stage would demand (it
is to be expected) different modes and styles of representation". A playwright has to choose one or another of the dramatic styles inorder to make the situations of emotions effective.

Vṛtti means "a way by which rasa is known". According to Bharata styles are "Kāvyamatṛkās". Every Vṛtti has its own appropriate costumes, gestures and diction. Vṛtties are not merely styles of literature --- they embrace the entire human activity. In short, Vṛtti is the content of dramatic writings and presentation. Hence Vṛtties are as existing in visual forms of art and rūtis in the other forms of literature. While Vṛtties are based on sense, rūtis depend upon sounds. But in plays these two forms are to be harmonised so as to have dramatic effect.

3. Bhattacharya G K Theatrical aspects of drama P. 78

The main four Vṛtties are Kaisiki, Ārabhati, Bhārati and Sālvaki. The graceful Kaisiki Vṛtti is the mode appropriate to arouse the love sentiment. Kaisiki Vṛtti is represented by a beautiful well dressed woman, love its after effects, galantry, music, dance etc. as accompaniments.

This Kaisiki Vṛtti is divided into four classes. Narma, Narmasphoorta, Narmasphota and Narmagarbha. The first Narma is used for bringing out gaiety among friends. Here the words are witty, and gestures, familiar and funny. Even the costumes should enrich the comical situation. These are associated with the sentiment of love. Nārāyaṇa Dīkṣita has used this Vṛtti effectively in the play. Kalavati’s accidental touch on Vidūṣaka by her foot also creates Narma among the spectators. Narmasphoorta is effectively used to depict and bring forth mutual love, as the hero and the heroine meet one another. The manifestation of love which is new and fresh is the third variety of Kaisiki Vṛtti Narmasphota. Kalavati’s description of Sārasika’s love in the second and third acts is an example of the variety. The fourth variety Narmagarbha deals
with the development of love on a higher degree. The decision of the heroine Sārasīka to commit her life and that of the hero King Sāhaji to meet Sārasīka in the evening is this variety of Kaisāti Vṛtti.

Sātvaki Vṛtti in its appropriate form is the depiction of valour, wonder and anger. The references of this Vṛtti can be found in the play. The third Vṛtti namely Ārabhati for depicting vigorous activity resulting from anger or excitement. This style gets good treatment at the hands of the playwright especially in the fourth and fifth acts. Bhārati the fourth variety of Vṛtti, is a matter of appropriate and effective use of sound. This is used for all sentiments. This is important to the male characters. This Vṛtti can be experienced easily by the reader who goes through the play.

A discerning reader or spectator can see how Narāyana Dīksita has justified all the four dramatic styles in this play.
LANGUAGE OF THE PLAY

Prose:

Narayana Diksita has meticulously followed the rules and regulations prescribed by Natyasatra for the speeches of different characters. The king, the minister, the sage and other characters or superior persons speak pure Sanskrit. Characters of inferior rank and women use only Prakrt. N.D uses classical Sanskrit and Prakrt fluently and vigorously. The four forms of prose namely Muktaka, Curnika, Utkalika and Vrtaagandhi get good treatment in this play. The words of the heroine Lilavati and those of the queen are some of the good examples for Muktaka type of prose. Curnika is the second type of prose in which few compound words are used. Vrtaagandhi is the third variety of prose in which one or more parts will have the tinge of rhythm. The prose of long compound words is the fourth kind of utkalikapravya. These two varieties of prose can be understood by any reader from the prologue and other parts of the play.
In verses Nārāyaṇa Dīkṣita employs suggestions effectively. This gives freshness as well as flow to his verses. He knows suggestiveness is the real soul of poetry (Kavyasyātma Dhvaśāh).

From the above, it is beyond doubt that Nārāyaṇa Dīkṣita is more of a poet than a dramatist.

**PRĀKṛT IN THE PLAY**

In Sanskrit plays, traditionally the higher class and educated characters speak Sanskrit and the lower class characters and all women speak Prākṛt. The reason is that Sanskrit was the language of the learned and women generally were illiterate. The servant class naturally were illiterate and Sanskrit was beyond them.

This was slight when the location of the paly was in north India. For example Sākuntala, Mālavikāgnimitra and Ratnāvahini...
For, most of the language in north India spoken by the ordinary people (regional languages) were either a crude form of Sanskrit or its derivatives (Prākṛt or Apabramsa). In this particular play the place of action is Tanjore on the South east cost of India. The language spoken by the common folk there has been, and is, Tamil, which has no connection whatsoever with Sanskrit. So at first it may seem incongruent that Sanskrit Prākṛt is used by the lower class in a Tamil country. But there is sufficient justification for this.

The action take place in Tanjore, on the Raja of Tanjore is a Marātha, whose native tongue is Marāthi, an Apabramsa of Sanskrit. Naturally the language of the Marātha court would be Marāthi. The servants who might have been Tamilians would have spoken Marathi in the Raja's house hold. Lilavati/ Sarasika comes from Kāśi and there is nothing unnatural in her speaking in Prākṛt. Marūdvṛda/ Mandākini are scholarly ladies representing Ganga and Kaveri and so they speak in Sanskrit. Hence the dramatist is not just following traditional in the use of Prākṛt, he has full justification in using Prākṛt.
It is necessary for the dramatists to know the prākrit language well enough to have the Sanskrit sentences translated into Prākrit. That is since all scholars think, speak and write in Sanskrit whenever they are writing sentences or ślokās for low characters to utter, they first create the sentences in Sanskrit. Since their thought process is in Sanskrit and convert it into one of the various forms of Prākrit.