Comparison with the commentaries of

Tripurāri
Nānyadeva
Jaśaddhāra
Śeṣarāja Śarma
Jibānanda Vidyāsāgara
CHAPTER VIII

COMPARISON OF RASAMAÑJARĪ

WITH OTHER COMMENTARIES

A comparative evaluation of different commentaries on one and the same drama can enhance the knowledge and appreciation of the reader. An analysis of the commentaries with reference to comparisons and contrasts in them will throw light on the greatness of those works. Reading all commentaries on a play is refreshing. Most of the commentators in Sanskrit aim not only at explaining word meanings but presenting an assessment of the work. Thus commentaries are raised to the level of criticism. Their ways of criticism realize how much writers have transformed their individuality in the works. The identity of a writer seems to possess something beyond linguistic skills. The
criticism concentrates upon the necessity of an enquiry into how a work expresses the personality of the author.

A comparative study of the commentaries of Pūrṇasarasvatī, Tripurārī, Jregaddhara, Nānyadeva, Āessaśāja Šarma and Pandit Jībānanda Vidyāśāgara is attempted here. In several contexts while explaining a verse or a passage it is seen that these commentators differ. All of them take special care to point out the five avasthās, the different arthaprakṛtīs and the five sandhīs with all their subdivisions. This shows a wholesome view of the commentators. The reflections of the controversies and divergent views regarding the different dramaturgic concepts are to be seen in these commentaries. An attempt is made here to examine how a given situation is explained by various commentators.

The explanation of the verse by Tripurārī and Pūrṇasarasvatī is quite interesting.

यात्रा मुद्रारितकथा;पानं त- ।
दाबुत्सन्ततप्रभरिभं बहन्त्याः
दिशोःमुनेन च विषोःक्च पक्षालाक्ष्या
गाढ्य निखर्त इव मे शदये कटाशाः।। (Act I - 29)
And then, while going, by her having eyes with graceful eye-lashes, whose face with the neck repeatedly turned backwards resembled a lotus with its stem twisted, a side glance steeped in nectar and venom was planted deep in my heart.

Jagaddhara comments that this beautiful lady while leaving throws something that penetrates into Mādhava’s heart. The word nikhātaḥ indicates the unbearable nature of her glance. muhurvalitakandharam is indicative of the subtle changes of the glance. He comment: upon the expression āvyṛta vṛntasatapatranibham in a different way. Her face with twisted neck looks like the lotus giving out unequalled rays. He explains this just as a comparison tattulyamiti vā. Amṛtēna viśēṇa ca digdhaḥ is explained as follows - Primarily the glance causes bliss. So it is compared to nectar. Later it is compared to poison because of the interruption in getting the bliss of sight.

Pūrṇasarasvatī points out that the expression tat hints the idea that the beauty of her face was familiar to Mādhava. The other expression amṛtēna viśēṇa ca digdhaḥ is commented thus-
The first comparison indicates her favourable mind. The second denotes a doubt that she may not be obtained. He explains it in another way also. When she is nearby pleasure is experienced and while away agony is felt. The expression gāḍhaṁ nikhātaṁ is used to indicate that it is impossible to forget her glance.

According to Tripurārī amṛtēna denotes the pleasure derived from her glance and viśēna indicates the pain arising out of her separation. Though all these commentators have explained the text with much brilliance, Jagaddhara’s comments are felt more suitable here.

The explanation of the verse quoted hereunder is quite interesting.

कुबलयदव्यामोक्ष्यद्नर्दधतु परिभुजरं
ललितविकटन्यासनः श्रीमानु प्रथंगकनिभाननं।
हरिति विनयं बामो यस्य प्रक्षाशितसाहसं:
प्रवणस्यक्षुकृं पाणिः नेलकन्तकाङ्गुल्ल। (V - 5)

Though darkish like the petal of a blue lotus, has a body pale all round; who stepping gracefully looks majestic and has a countenance like the moon; and whose left hand, with human flesh flashing in it, from
which coagulated blood is dropping down and which
indicates his adventurous spirit, robs him of gentility.

Mādhava comes to the cremation ground to sell human flesh to
the goblins by whose blessings he can get back Mālatī. Seeing
him Kapālakunḍala remarks as above. Here Pūrṇasarasvatī takes
the adjective mṛgāṅganibhānana and comments upon it in a
different way. In his opinion this suggests the subtle viṣāda in
him. It is widely accepted that there is a black spot on the moon
that lessens her beauty. Triparāri and Jagadhara take it to mean
handsome. Triparāri points out the suggestion of sāhasa, vīra
and śānta here. As per Jagadhara’s comment the rasas contained
in this verse is vīra and bībhatta but raudra according to
Pūrṇasarasvatī.

Then Kapālakunḍala finds that the vendor of human flesh
is Mādhava and identifies him. The discussion regarding the
relevance of the adjective kā nandakīṣūḥṛṣṭputra reveals the insight
of the commentators. Triparāri opines that Mādhava’s attempt
to obtain his wishes of rescuing and marrying Mālatī is quite
proper as he is the son of a person who was the colleague of kāmandakī who has supernatural and superhuman powers.

But Pūrṇasarasvatī has given a different version. According to him this reference is clearly indicative of the rescue of Mālatī through Saudamini, the disciple of kāmandakī. Here we can see how Pūrṇasarasvatī relates every reference to future incidents. This shows the totality of his vision. Jagaddhara is silent on the passage. Pūrṇasarasvatī's interpretation seems more attractive and relevant to the context.

While describing the benedictory verse, sānandaṁ Jagaddhara says here the word nāsārandhra is enough to convey the desired meaning. The word agra therefore indicates the sudden entry of the frightened serpent and therefore indicates happiness (due to saving his own life). In another way it can be said that entry into the end is inevitable while entering into the nasal cavity. So the entry into the end portion is understood. When this is expressed by a word, the figure of speech can be uktipōṣa.

While commenting upon this verse Jibānanda Vidyāsāgara
points out a reason also for the pleasure experienced by the serpent king. He entered the nāsārandhra to protect his life; lest he should be eaten by the peacock.  

Like Pūrṇasarasvatī, Tripurāri also shows much interest in discussing the rasa aspects in the verses and in the play as a whole. While commenting on the verse gamanamalasarṇa śūnyā drṣṭīḥ (1-20) he points out the various vyabhicāribhāvās of Vipralambha like ālasya, cintā, glāni, śrama, viśāda, mōha and the avasthā as anusmṛti. Uddīpanavibhāvas are also pointed out. They are the madanodyāna, temple of cupid and the adjacent garden.  

Again in the verse bhāra kāyō (ix-37) Pūrṇasarasvatī has given long explanation for the words whereas Nanyadeva gives his explanation in another way. The word bhāraḥ is explained by the former as conveying the sense difficult to lift (because of weakness of the body). Likewise the expression kaśṭaḥ śūnyā has all the directions devoid of relatives and so lonely. Here Śeṣarāja Śarma points out jaḍatā. But the explanations of
Nānyadeva are much more appealing. A person bearing a weight may relieve himself by putting it down. Likewise by dropping the weight of body one may get relief and therefore by dying he can liberate himself from the pains. He adds that the life which does not end even by the loss of such a beloved person is just like a sharp instrument made of diamond causing injury.

He further explains that by comparing life to such a weapon the hardness and the nature of causing much pain are indicated. All directions are lonely because there is no use of them and all the indriyās are futile as they do not work properly in grasping their objects. Time is bitter because there is nothing to do and when you die the whole world will be dark to me. By the expression śāntalokaḥ, the poet indicates that any person having love and other emotions is liable to be an object to illusions so I may try to die. The reader gets a more clear picture by these explanation.

Pūrṇasarasvatī and agaddhara differ while pointing out the alankara aspect in the verse, līnēva pratibimbitēva (V-10) Pūrṇasarasvatī and Tripurāri find uprēkṣa there whereas
Jagaddhara understands upama. He states sarvatrātra laghnatvasya prakārabhēdēna upamābhēdaḥ.

Pūrṇasarasvatīs comments on the verse avimuktamadgrathitakēsarāli (V-8) reveals his knowledge in the Kāmaśāstra of Vātsyāyana. He gives a very beautiful interpretation by suggesting that the references are to the tilatāṇḍula style of conjugation. Connecting with this he points out that the verse, prēmārdāh (V-7) indicates the entreaty of reunion with the beloved which is long cherished and risen from the uninterrupted amusement. Further he points out that the present verse avimukta indicates that death immediately after embracing her is much covetable even when she is not obtained. Dr. T.G. Mainkar in his ‘Studies in Sanskrit Dramatic Criticism’ says that this comment is noteworthy as it came from an ascetic, as the word sarasvati in his name would indicate.

Tripurāri and Pūrṇasarasvatī had contrasting opinion about jokes. In the seventh act while commenting on the conversation of Buddharaksitā, Lavaṅgikā and Madayantikā, these commentators express their views. Madayantikā tells that she
has dreamed Makaranda. Then Lavaṅgiṅka teases her by saying that it was a sexual dream. Tripurāri takes it as a repugnant joke appropriate for a maid. Pūrṇasarasvatī opines that when such remarks turn to be a joke, it does not matter.

Another situation where Pūrṇasarasvatī differs from Jagaddhara is seen in the explanation of the verse: prēyō mitraṁ (VI -18) Jagaddhara is of opinion that the marriage is a gāndharva one.

But Pūrṇasarasvatī observes that it is a prājāpatya type of marriage. He says anayā ca vacōyuktyā prājāpatyōyaṁ vivāha na tu gāndharva iti sūcitaṁ. In support of his view he quotes from Dharmasāstra. It is common that the ideas arrived at by analysing the supporting factors available is likely to be superceded by the sense arrived at by another commentator. This is one of the features which elevates Sanskrit commentaries to the level of literary criticism.

Points of disagreement between Jagaddhara and Pūrṇasarasvatī can again be seen on the interpretation of the verses:
(V-1) and (V-2). Here Jagaddha says that śāntarasa is suggested by these verses. He quotes Nāṭyaśāstra in support of his view - śāntastu navamō rasaḥ⁷. Here any common reader may have a doubt. There are only eight rasas which can be represented on the stage. But in this drama and in this very point the commentator has interpreted against the tradition and quotes the passage from Nāṭyaśāstra in support of him. Śāntarasa cannot be represented on the stage as it is devoid of any action (nirvyāpāra).

Pūrṇasarasvatī points out that happy mood is suggested here. It is obvious that the latter excels the former. Moreover the text commented on being a drama, this commentary can be found most appropriate on this passage.

While explaining the nāṇḍīśīka, Jagadhara finds the suggestion of rainy season there. The entry of the serpent into the nostril of Vināyaka out of fear of Kārtikeya’s peacock is described as a sign of the rainy season. Tripurārī finds fault with this interpretation. He says that the readers do not feel this sense. Matters connected with the plot is indicated in the mukhasandhi. It is not necessary to describe the seasons there⁸. Therefore this sense is not intended by the dramatist.

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On almost all occasions Pūrṇasarasvatī takes each and every usage put forth by the poet and analysing it gives us a sense which is entirely different from those given by others. In the Vth act where Mādhava compares Mālatī to a timid fawn fallen in the hands of wolves, Mādhava happens to hear the utterance of Mālatī in despair at the cremation ground where he had come to sell human flesh for obtaining a boon to release the latter from the abductors. Here the comment of Pūrṇasarasvatī on the singular usage of the word mṛgī is significant. The singular suggests the idea of an innocent lady away from her class. This indicates her helpless condition.

Both Pūrṇasarasvatī and Jagadhara find an allegory in the play. But they differ widely in details. the former finds the union of Hari and Lakṣmī and of Hara and Pārvatī in the play. He interprets Mādhava, Mālatī, Makaranda and Madayantikā as the representatives of Viṣṇu, Lakṣmī, Śiva and Pārvatī. The principal sentiment is śrīṅgāra of which Viṣṇu is the presiding deity. The
name of the hero Mādhava is quite meaningful and suggests this fact. Other characters are also described as the manifestation of different deities.

Jagadharā opines that Bhavabhūti has derived the theme from nature and hence the characters are representatives of the spring and rainy seasons.¹⁰

Certain words are suggestive of this view. In act I Kalāhamśa qualifies Mādhava as makaranandandana. It means that Vasanta delights Makara as the latter flourishes during the vasanta season. Pūrnārasavatī accepts the reading -makaranadasahacara. Jagadharā accepts this reading also and comments that makaranda(honey) accompanies Vasanta (Mādhava). This explanation seems to be more acceptable. Pūrnārasavatī is unrivalled in explaining the suggested sense.

Pūrnārasavatī is unrivalled in explaining the suggested sense.

Evidently my beloved is killed and severally distributed in the forest. Her complexion being given to the fresh loddra flowers,
her eyes to the fawns, her gait to the elephants and her modest
demeanour to the creepers.

The word vipinē suggests that there is none to prevent her
from being subjected to cruelty. Priyā mē suggests the impropriety
of Mādhava being alive even after knowing that Mālatī is killed.
Jagadhara, Nānyadeva and Śesharāja do not find any suggested
sense here. The figure of speech according to Śesharāja is utprēkṣa
but anumāna according to Pūrṇasarasvatī.

In Act I Mādhava tells Makaranda that he has met Mālatī
in the temple of God of Love. An attendant of Mālatī came near
Mādhava and told him ... समासादवल्ल सरस एवं भत्तिदारिकायाः
कण्टाबलमन्महापतामिति.

Here the double meaning of garland and embracing is
indicative of the love of Mālatī to Mādhava. Jagadhara explains
this as a case of śleṣa. But Pūrṇasarasvatī finds
śabdāśaktimūladhvani here. Pointing out the differences of the
two he establishes the prevalence of dhvani in this passage.

Going through all the commentaries is a fruitful intellectual
exercise for a connoisseur. Perhaps all the commentaries put
together will give a complete picture of the mind of the dramatist.
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