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**VAKROKTI AND ADAPTATION: STOPPARD'S ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN
ARE DEAD AS AN ADAPTATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET.**

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ABSTRACT

Comparative Aesthetics discusses the manner in which the idea of aesthetics and beauty are perceived and conceived in different cultures around the world and how they influence people's attitude towards refinement of expression. My paper deals with a significant area of such intersections between the Eastern and Western branches of aesthetics. It applies the Indian theory of *Vakrokti* in order to examine Tom Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Although the two characters around whom the play revolves are taken out of the Shakespearean masterpiece *Hamlet*, they are much unlike the original characters. My paper would insist that they are intentionally made 'different' in order to attain new and significant results.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead emphasizes the close connection between real life and the world of theatrical performance. Numerous features of the play work to underscore this connection, as the two minor characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* are given the scope of telling their story from another perspective. The play brings back references from the original *Hamlet* through quotations, visual cues, original scenes and other motifs like play within a play. Stoppard includes many of *Hamlet*'s most notable scenes in a way that cast them in a new light. In order to explain the ironic reuse of the original text in the adaptation of a western text, my paper would use the Indian aesthetic theory of *Vakrokti*. This would prove the universality and relevance of such theories which are usually taken to be obsolete.

KEYWORDS: *Vakrokti*, Adaptation, Aesthetics, Stoppard, *Hamlet*

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world the students and scholars of English literature are taught western classical thoughts propounded by thinkers like Homer, Virgil, Plato, Aristotle, Longinus and Horace. These thinkers have theorized on the nature of art and the elevated feeling inspired by it. These theories can readily be applied to western texts. However one should not forget that the Indian Aesthetic theories are also equipped to examine

the feeling of elevation inspired by any form of art and therefore it is possible to trace a significant area of intersection between the Indian and Western thinking.

Poetics is one of the fields of knowledge in which Indian scholarship has made significant contributions, the others being the Indian religion, philosophy, art and literature. Unlike them, however, Indian poetics has not been properly appreciated by scholars. It has not received the acclaim accorded to the other fields of ancient Indian knowledge. There is indeed a need to counter and correct the prejudiced mind by arguing for and developing applicational models from Indian Sanskrit literary theories to treat a wide variety of English texts.

Sanskrit theories are the result of *tap* or devotion of ancient Indian acharyas and they are capable of dealing with each part of a literary text systematically. These theories are not suited to Indian context only but are universally valid. One such Indian theory that deals with a specific part of a literary text is the art of *Vakrata* or *Kavi-vyapara* (the poetic genius) as propounded by Kuntaka. Kuntaka introduced the theory of *Vakrokti* in his well-known treatise *Vakroktijivita*. *Vakroktijivita* means that *vakrokti* is the life of poetry where the term *vakrokti* denotes crooked speech or deviant language. This theory of *vakrokti*, hence, examines poetry essentially in terms of language of its expression. It considers poetic language as language of metaphor and suggestive communication (Raghavan&Nagendra50).

Although these theories can profitably be applied to Western texts, while applying them one should be very cautious and should not apply them blindly. Kuntaka devotes nearly the whole of his text which has four chapters, with the exception of the introductory portion of the first chapter, to the definition, classification and illustration of the six varieties of *vakrokti*. He has classified *vakratā* into forty nine sub-varieties under six major heads, such as *varna-vinyāsa-vakratā* (phonetic obliquity) *pada-pūrvārdha-vakratā* (lexical obliquity), *pada-parārdha-vakratā* (grammatical obliquity), *vākya-vakratā* (sentential obliquity), *prakarana-vakratā* (episodic obliquity) and *prabandha-vakratā* (compositional obliquity). However four types of *vakrokti* out of the six (i.e., *varna*, *pada-purvardha*, *pada-parardha*, *vakya*) are usually applied to the analysis of poetic forms. The other two *prakarana-vakratā* and *prabandha-vakratā* are slightly different and problematic and they come nearer to Victor Shklovsky's concept of 'defamiliarization' as propounded in his essay "Art as Technique" than simple lexical and sentential deviation. The concept of *vakrokti* remains a powerful tool in the hands of a critic to evaluate any literature including English.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this paper I have used two types of *vakrokti* namely *prakarana-vakratā* and *prabandha-vakratā* in order to look at the process of adaptation as a form of literary and artistic production. The text that I have chosen for analysis is an adaptation of the Shakespearean classic *Hamlet* and it is entitled *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. The literary academic or student reads many texts throughout their learning career and the more texts they read the more echoes, parallels, and points of comparison they identify in the texts that they encounter. In fact a gamut of commentaries exists on this topic. The late twentieth century made a particular virtue out of querying the ability or even necessity of being 'original'. Edward Said suggested in 'On Originality' that 'the writer thinks less of writing originally, and more of rewriting' (Said 135). Jacques Derrida noted that 'the desire to write is the desire to launch things that come back to you as much as possible' (Derrida 157). The 'rewriting' impulse, which is much more than simple imitation, is often articulated in theoretical terms such as intertextuality. In the field of anthropology Levi-Strauss conducted many of his researches in terms of identifying repeating structures across cultures. In the literary sphere, Ronald Barthes declared that 'any text is an intertext' (Barthes 39), suggesting that works of previous and surrounding cultures were always present in literature. Barthes also highlighted the ways in which texts were not solely dependent on their authors for the production of meaning, indicating how they benefited from readers who created their own intertextual networks. Julia Kristeva, herself a product of scientific and anthropological training under Levi-Strauss, formulated the term *intertextualite* in her essay 'The Bounded Text' to describe the process by which any text was 'a permutation of texts, an intertextuality' (Kristeva36). Therefore literary texts often seem to emanate from systems, enigmas and traditions established by previous works of literature. Adaptation and appropriation are processes that are inevitably involved in the performance of such textual echo and allusion.

Adaptation both appears to require and perpetuate the existence of a canon, although it may in turn contribute to its ongoing reformulation and expansion. As Derek Attridge has astutely observed: “The perpetuation of any canon is dependant in part on the references made to its earlier members by its later members (or would-be members)...’ (Attridge169). The required ‘reading alongside’ of source and adaptation, the signifiers respectively of ‘tradition’ and ‘individual talent’, in Eliot’s terminology, demand a knowledge on the part of the reader (or spectator) of the source when encountering the derivative or responsive text (Sanders 9). Therefore an analysis of the art of adaptation would become most clear if one takes up the adaptation of a canonical literary text like one of the Shakespearean plays. Therefore I have decided to look at Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, a text which is not only canonical but has by now taken the shape of a cultural myth. The art of ‘*Vakrokti*’ differs from that of ‘adaptation’ on this point as *vakrokti* can be successfully applied to even non-canonical texts.

Adrienne Rich’s ‘When We Dead Awaken: Writing A Re-vision’, first published in 1971 states that ‘Revision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction...We need to know the writing of the past and know it differently than we have ever known it, not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us’ (Rich369). Adaptation is frequently involved in offering commentary on a source text. This is achieved most often by offering a revised point of view from the ‘original’, adding hypothetical motivation, or voicing the silenced and marginalized. Yet adaptation can also constitute a simpler attempt to make texts ‘relevant’ or easily comprehensible to new audiences and readership via the processes of proximation and updating. This can be seen as an artistic drive in many adaptations of so-called ‘classic’ novels or drama for television and cinema. Shakespeare has been a particular focus of these ‘proximations’ or updatings (Sanders 19).

One such play is Tom Stoppard’s 1967 play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* which indulges in an appropriative adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, one which tries to imagine a back story for two minor characters who are Hamlet’s former friends and attendant lords, with a quasi-parodic approach to the absurdist theatrical practices which were in the ascendant when Stoppard created his play. The other clear intertext for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is Samuel Beckett’s 1952 play *Waiting for Godot*. Stoppard creates his attendant lords in the image of Beckett’s endlessly philosophizing tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, who for the majority of their play wait on a largely bare stage for something to happen. The opening stage direction makes this connection clear: ‘Two Elizabethans passing the time in a place without any visible character’ (Stoppard 11). The joke is that the audience unlike Rosencrantz and Guildenstern knows what will happen, because they know the script and therefore the outcome of *Hamlet*. Hence Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are already dead, even before they have started their play. We know only too well the plotline of the sea journey and exchanged letters and their disappearance from the stage of Shakespeare’s drama. The play-text exploits the idea of ‘every exit being an entrance somewhere else’ (Stoppard 28). One sees Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in their offstage moments; the irony being that their *Hamlet*’s offstage is this play’s onstage. Stoppard does not simply impose his themes on a Shakespearean framework. In many instances he finds precedent for his dramaturgical decisions in the Shakespearean precursor. For example, Elizabethan and Jacobean plays often began with attendant lords in discussion (Sanders 56).

After discussing the viewpoints of the western theorists regarding the art of adaptation, I will now move on to investigate whether the Indian aesthetic theory of *vakrokti* can be used to analyse the remarkable features of the adaptation of a western text. The *prakarana-vakratā* deals with the oblique use of *prakarana* (episode). According to Kuntaka, when the projected object of art is capable of maintaining suspense all along and is the product of the unique, boundless skill of the artist underlying it, we have what is called *prakarana-vakratā* (episodic obliquity). This is a condition in which the writer, overwhelmed with the passion of creation, creates an alluring charm in the subject-matter. According to him, this very charm is nothing but *prakarana-vakratā*.

Kuntaka further divides *prakarana-vakratā* into nine sub-varieties. These are: *bhāvapūrnasthivakratā* (obliquity of emotional states), *utapādyalāvanyavakratā* (obliquity of modified source story), *prakaranaupakārya-upakārahāvavakratā* (obliquity of episodic relationship), *viśismhaprakarnavakratā* (obliquity of particular event and episode) , *angirasanisyanandikasavakratā*

(obliquity of dominant rasa), *apradhānaprasangavakratā* (obliquity of secondary episodes), *prakaranātaravakratā* (obliquity of play within play), *sandhiviniveśavakratā* (obliquity of juncture). *Prabandhavakratā* (compositional obliquity) on the other hand is divided into five sub-varieties namely: *rasāntaravakratā* (obliquity of changing the rasa), *samāpanavakratā* (obliquity of winding up the story), *kathā-vicchedavakratā* (obliquity of intending end), *anusāngika-phalavakratā* (obliquity of contingent objective), *nāmakarana-vakratā* (obliquity of title), and *tulya-kathā-vakratā* (obliquity of identical subject). *Utapādyalāvanyavakratā* (obliquity of modified source story) is a sub-variety of *prakarana-vakratā*. This variety is associated with the portrayal of the pictures of life which are not faithful copies, accurately rendered in words but are modified by a predominant imagination of the writer. In this way, imagination plays an important role in transforming or changing the source material of the composition. Using it the writer may change the details of the source story to make the characterization more consistent; may give a hint for future development; may insert events of his own creation. Besides the invention of something new, he may significantly rearranges the source story. The writer also aims at introducing universal elements into the modified story unlike the constrained concerns of the source story. He makes the art not mere reproductions of facts but truths embedded with those facts that apply to all places and times. The script of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is of course a modified source story and the source story is Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*. The script is blatantly derivative, not only in its reliance for frame on *Hamlet*, but in its collage of themes and theatrical devices so clearly drawn from an assortment of major modern playwrights. Stoppard also introduces certain universal elements into the play which are beyond the major concerns of the original play *Hamlet*, it being focused on the story of an individual. Even a first reading of the play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* reveals its concern with such universal issues as the absurdity of human existence, alienation, the reality and illusion of theatre, the significance of history. These concerns and their modes of expression readily call forth Pirandello, Brecht, Beckett and many others (Keysar-Franke 85). Therefore, on these terms one can say that Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is a perfect example of the use of *Utapādyalāvanyavakratā* as it is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Once the play has commenced, Stoppard's strategy is not to satisfy the audience's curiosity but to enlarge it. Time and again, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern confuse each other's names. Almost throughout the play, they are trying to kill time by playing word games and spinning coins. Already from the opening of the play they appear as mere objects caught in the cogs of an inscrutable mechanism. However long they keep flipping coins, the result is always "heads". It is as if they are lost in a senseless wheel-work in which they happen to be thrown. We are told in the initial notes that Rosencrantz is not at all surprised that the coins always come up heads (his gain), that Guildenstern is not really concerned about the loss of money but aware of the peculiarity of the "luck." This repetitive game of spinning coins and its repetitive results; the repetitive loss of memory leading to the confusion of identity; and the repetitive nature of word games are all perfect examples of *viśismhāprakarnavakratā* (obliquity of particular event and episode). Defining it, Kuntaka says that when a meaning in the episodes of a piece of art, even being repeated again and again, embellished with new kind of ornaments each time, produces a striking beauty, we have this sub-variety of *prakarnavakratā*. Ordinarily, this kind of repetition is a flaw but the writer of a high talent, uses this repetition as a device to renew the object each time. In fact, this is the result of a state of the impassioned writer who, charged with passions, does not count the repetition of the same meaning in the composition. Likewise, a sensitive reader, too, is carried away by an impassioned utterance. Therefore even though such repetitions appear to be odd and baffles the audience at one level, at another level it increasingly makes them ready to accept that the world on stage is not like any world we know, and that in this world, almost "anything can happen next," as Rosencrantz will assert at the end of Act II.

This initial scene is a self-conscious game, and the audience is to be made aware both of the drama's playfulness and its self-consciousness. When Guildenstern says in his first line that "There is an art to the building up of suspense," or when Rosencrantz suggests a few speeches later that it's "Getting a bit of a bore, isn't it?" each is clearly talking about the play and thus forcing us to look at the play as a play (Stoppard 12, 13). Stoppard wants to establish initially, and he will reemphasize repeatedly with lines

and events of similar effect, that his play is not the same kind of experience as the witnessing of or participation in an event, and that we are not to lose ourselves in the world of the play and become one with it. From the beginning, Stoppard asserts strongly that these men on stage are actors playing characters, distinct in their characters and worlds from us, that the play is a conscious creation, an illusion (or at least a separate reality), and a play. The cue which he gives the audience that this game is analogous to sport, when the score is rallied as "Seventy-six-love," clarifies further that he wants the audience to perceive the events on the stage just as a game. Tennis provides an apt metaphor for the verbal volleying which occurs between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and for our experience of continually turning our attention from one to another with only moments of reprieve (Keyssar-Franke 89). Such clues given through dialogue and phrases are perfect examples of *apradhānaprasangavakratā* (secondary episode), a sub-variety of *prakarnavakratā*. According to Kuntaka a talented writer inducts a charming small reference or event within an episode for the sake of achieving the primary aim. In order to achieve this effect he arranges interesting and meaningful secondary references or episodes within the episodes of his main plot. The induction of the secondary references or episodes in such cases is not merely decorative and they have a prominent purpose just as in this case to remind the audience constantly that they are actually watching a play. From the title of the play and its obvious relationship to *Hamlet*, through the emphasis on the Player and the number of speeches about theatre, which all act as secondary references, Stoppard stresses that *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is an investigation of the nature and experience of theatre, past and present.

This relationship of the play on stage to an audience is emphatically and provocatively expressed in a passage in Act Two. Guildenstern responds in "fear and derision" to the Player's declaration that what actors do best into die and to kill saying, "The mechanics of cheap melodrama! That isn't death! You die so many times; how can you expect them to believe in your death?" (Stoppard 83). But this quotation from *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* also explains Stoppard's choice to rewrite and reemphasize *Hamlet*: for him, at least, the strategy of *Hamlet* works in a different way than he would wish, or simply does not work for a mid-twentieth-century audience. Stoppard therefore turns from the grand hero to two supernumeraries, from the historical setting to a barren no-place, from a specific time to no-time (Keyssar-Franke 87). Under the umbrella of the Indian aesthetic theory this is an example of the use of *Tulya-kathā-vakratā* (obliquity of identical subject), a sub-variety of *prabandha-vakratā*. According to Kuntaka, the whole work based on an identical subject of the source text may be oblique, with new instructions and new ways of success. He holds that artists have their own approaches to and view of looking at an identical subject and because of their individuality, they give entirely a new design. This is why although the plot design of *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is the same, the later turns out to be a very different play when compared to the original *Hamlet*.

So far we already had one audience watching the performance of one set of players; now new characters identified as players enter the stage creating an audience on as well as off stage. With the entrance of the Player and Tragedians, Stoppard begins the process which will eventually allow the audience the partial understanding of the psychic trap laid down by him. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's encounter with the Players also extends for the audience the illusion of the possibility of freedom for the central characters. Compared to the Players, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern appear free to act: the latter are now in the position of an audience, but not a captive one; they can attend or not attend, demand, request, reject. The Players, however, have a repertoire of scenes to perform. They can only move from performance to performance; at this point in the play Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are functioning outside the script of *Hamlet* even though they are connected to that script by the very presence of the Players from *Hamlet*. Thus they appear not only to be "free" as an audience, but free as actors to extend, alter, and recreate their given roles. This mutual relationship working among the various episodes of a piece of art is an apt example of what Kuntaka call *sprakaranaupakārya-upakārahābhāvavakratā* (obliquity of episodic relationship). Defining it, he writes that this is an organic unity which strikingly underlines various incidents described in different parts of the work leading to the intended end, each bound to the other by a relationship of mutual assistance. By this Kuntaka means that all incidents should be complementary to one-another just as

in the case of Stoppard's play the Hamlet episode and the Rosencrantz and Guildenstern episode are complimentary to each other. These episodes as per Kuntaka's comments assist one another mutually in achieving the intended end. The introduction of the Players or Tragedians within the plot of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is an excellent example of *prakaranātaravakratā* (obliquity of play within play) a sub-variety of *prakarnavakratā* in which a set of actors other than the characters already employed, is introduced in the composition of the play.

Immediately upon the departure from the stage of the Players, Stoppard moves his audience further into the "real" world of *Hamlet*. In the initial pantomime of Ophelia's encounter with Hamlet, as well as the subsequent scene of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's introduction to Claudius, both Gertrude and Polonius are humorous and informative. In essential action and in words these scenes are as they are in *Hamlet*, but they function in a manner similar to a cartoon. Our response to a cartoon has to do with both recognition and distortion. In this instance the audience is presumed to recognize at least that these are Shakespearean characters, if not precisely who they are or what they are doing. The distortion lies in the context, which may alter meaning.

Act ii of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* concludes with the following lines: "We've come this far. And besides, anything could happen yet." At this point the audience can still see the future as open, freedom as a possibility. The tension for the audience is that in calling attention to the future, Rosencrantz reminds it of the actual ending of *Hamlet*. Finally in Act iii Stoppard shatters the audience's expectations regarding change in events and one finds Guildenstern saying, "We are brought round full circle to face again the single immutable fact-that we, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, bearing a letter from one king to another, are taking Hamlet to England" (Stoppard 101). The manner in which the two characters Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hop in and out of the play *Hamlet* requires an extraordinary arrangement of junctures. If the several parts played by these two characters interrupted in the middle by the Players and Tragedians are not arranged properly in a sequential manner then the predominant *rasa* will not be produced. These points of juncture working within the plot of the play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and connecting one episode to another is what Kuntaka calls *sandhiviniveśavakratā* (obliquity of juncture), a sub-variety of *prakarana-vakratā*.

According to Kuntaka, junctures should be arranged in accordance with the *rasa* and the matter should be modified accordingly and this is what exactly happens in the play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. The movement or juncture of events in Act iii reveal just how completely Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are now limited or entrapped. They are not only unable to escape to another time, another place, but they are being manipulated inexorably towards death. Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's primary desire it is to escape death; if they have an antagonist, it is the playwright or the "director" who forces or allows them to play their roles. This implies that what they need, what they should be striving for, is freedom of will. What Rosencrantz and Guildenstern discover during the course of the play is that they are not free, that they cannot escape their roles, and that they therefore cannot escape death. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern recognize that they are nothing more than characters created and controlled by Shakespeare to act out specific roles in *Hamlet*. As characters they cannot escape the playwright's plot; as actors they cannot remain on stage and escape their roles; as men they cannot stay in this world and escape death (Keyssar-Franke 96). Such a sense of finality reached at by the end of the play gives rise to the feeling of *vibhatsarasa* and this can be considered to be an instance of *ofangirasanisyardanikasavakratā* (obliquity of dominant *rasa*), a sub-variety of *prakarana-vakratā*. However one must note that the *vibhatsarasa* which emerges from the play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is different from the ultimate *karunarasa* that emerges out of Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*. Therefore this is again an instance of *rasāntara-vakratā* (obliquity of changing the *rasa*), a sub-variety of *prabandha-vakratā* which probably Stoppard uses in order to prevent the monotony of expression, by altering the determined *rasa* of the original *Hamlet* text, by changing the focus on certain events. If the audience or *sahrdaya* is able to feel the *vibhatsarasa* as the intended dominant *angirasa* emanating from the play, rather than the *karunarasa* of the original *Hamlet*, then one might actually consider Stoppard's play to be a successful adaptation to which the theory of *vakrokti* can be effectively applied.

In Act iii Stoppard by highlighting the disappearance and thereby the death of the minor characters Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who are only passingly mentioned in the original text is indulging in what Kuntaka would call *samāpana-vakratā* (obliquity of winding up the story), a sub-variety of *prabandha-vakratā*. In this case the writer in order to give up the insipidity of the source story, winds up the modified story with the help of a particular episode lifted from the source story, the episode here being Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's travel to England along with Hamlet, which determines matchlessly the character of the protagonist, the central protagonists here being Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and not Hamlet. This is also an example of *kathā-viccheda-vakratā* (obliquity of intending end), another sub-variety of *prabandha-vakratā* in which the writer dissects the natural development of the source story and achieves his intended end in the middle of the source story. Stoppard's play too disturbs the natural development of the original Hamlet story and achieves the intended end by concentrating on a small incident and smaller characters found to be operating in the middle part of the source story, *Hamlet*.

In the source story of *Hamlet* nothing is mentioned about Guildenstern reading the letters given to him by Claudius to find that the king Claudius has actually ordered for the execution of Hamlet. There are also no references to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern reading the orders of their own execution after the letter has been replaced by Hamlet. In fact here Stoppard provides Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with a choice which is denied to them in the original text of *Hamlet*. However being given a choice, they cannot choose. Guildenstern deliberately denies that he is capable of knowledge and the responsibility that goes with it. He insists on being a little man, without choice or significance (Egan 67). And Rosencrantz goes along with him; moments later, they declare that they "don't know what's in the letter" (Stoppard 112). Thus both of them specifically opt for a mode of life without meaning, even if it is to be earned at the expense of someone else's illogical and unjust death. In a sense, all that follows is anticlimax where Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are concerned. In fact this episode acts as an example for *anusāngika-phal-vakratā* (obliquity of contingent objective), a sub-variety of *prabandha-vakratā* where the protagonists obtain their provisional objectives that are unknown to the source story. Kuntaka states that *anusāngika-phal-vakratā* is used to make the protagonist obtain different results of the same worth instead of the proposed results, during the course of action. Therefore Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's denial to make a choice yields a significant result and leads us to the end of their life and to the end of the play.

In Act iii, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's discovery of their fate not only creates a new self-image for them, but deeply alters the way in which the audience can respond to them. The specific knowledge of the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern means that they will "disappear," and one cannot ignore that condition or respond to it coldly. One must feel something at that loss of presence and loss of hope. The anguish and terror that is felt at the loss of presence is precisely what one must feel personally about death. If Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have to die, so do we (Gruber 307). Therefore one might say that the final unfolding of the play does actually justify the title of the play given by Stoppard. This is also an example of *nāmakarana-vakratā* (obliquity of title), a sub-variety of *prabandha-vakratā* which stands for the oblique use of title in a work of art. Kuntaka holds that the title of a good work of art is also replete with a kind of *vakratā*. He adds that sometimes even a symbolic mark or name of the source story produces a remarkable beauty. The title of the work attracts the reader due to its striking meaning. Hence, a great writer entitles his work in such a way that it vibrates with strikingness, indicating the tilt being given to it. Such a title enables the reader to know the main idea of the work, in either of the ways—symbolic or literal. Thus for Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is an appropriate title.

CONCLUSION

In spite of having their origin in ancient India, theories like *Varokti* are valid and viable even in modern situations. They are not only suited to the Indian context but are universally valid. Unhesitatingly, therefore these theories can be profitably applied to Western texts. Such applicational models developed from Sanskrit theories when applied in the right perspective, can help develop a genuine branch of criticism which could even offer preferable alternatives of Western models.

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