

**FROM POETICS TO PHILOSOPHY: EXPLORING THE
PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SUGGESTIVE
MEANING IN *DHVANYĀLOKA***

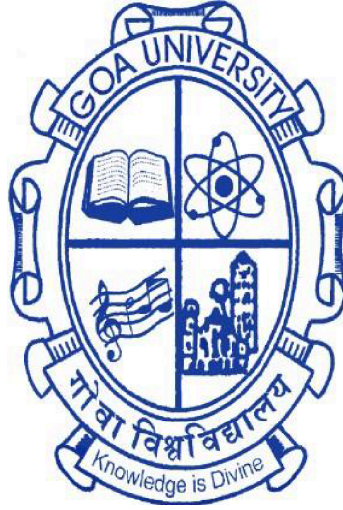
A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF

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GOA UNIVERSITY



By

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May 2026

DECLARATION

I, Akash Sadanand Naik Salgaonkar, hereby declare that this thesis represents work which has been carried out by me and that it has not been submitted, either in part or in full, to any other University or Institution for the award of any research degree.

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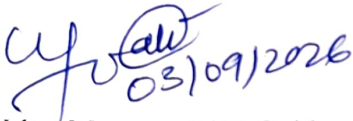
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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the above Declaration of the candidate, Mr Akash Sadanand Naik Salgaonkar, is true and the work was carried out under my supervision.



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without any of the degrees, without any of the achievements, who always
said even if I was thrown in the darkest and the deepest ditch, I would thrive
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Contents

1 Suggestive Meaning: An Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 <i>Dhvanyāloka</i> of Ānandavardhana.....	10
1.2.1 Outline.....	11
1.2.2 Key Concepts.....	12
1.2.3 <i>Dhvani</i>	19
1.2.4 <i>Dhvanyartha</i>	22
1.3 Nature and Scope of Study.....	25
1.4 Hypothesis and Objectives of the Study.....	26
1.5 Methodological Framework.....	27
1.6 Raison d'être.....	29
1.7 Summary of the Thesis.....	30
2 The Aesthetic Turn: From Grammarians to Ānandavardhana	35
2.1 Introduction.....	35
2.2 Ānandavardhana: A Visionary Aesthetician.....	36
2.3 Discourse on <i>Dhvanyartha</i> by Grammarians.....	42
2.4 Discourse on <i>Dhvanyartha</i> by Nyāyayikas.....	45
2.5 The Systematic Approach of Ānandavardhana.....	49
2.5.1 <i>Prathama Udyota</i> of <i>Dhvanyāloka</i>	65
2.5.2 <i>Dvitiya Udyota</i> of <i>Dhvanyāloka</i>	68
2.5.3 <i>Tritiya Udyota</i> of <i>Dhvanyāloka</i>	70
2.5.4 <i>Chaturtha Udyota</i> of <i>Dhvanyāloka</i>	72

2.6 <i>Dhvanyartha</i> : A Scholarly Debate.....	75
2.6.1 <i>Anumāna</i> and <i>Dhvanyartha</i>	77
2.6.2 <i>Arthapatti</i> and <i>Dhvanyartha</i>	80
2.6.3 <i>Lakṣaṇā</i> and <i>Dhvanyartha</i>	81
2.6.4 <i>Abhidhā</i> and <i>Dhvanyartha</i>	84
2.6.5 <i>Tātparyavrtti</i> and <i>Dhvanyartha</i>	85
2.6.6 <i>Vakrokti</i> and <i>Dhvanyartha</i>	87
2.7 Summary of the Chapter.....	88
3 <i>Samvādaśakti</i>: The Power of Suggestive Meaning	91
3.1 Introduction.....	91
3.2 <i>Dhvanyartha</i> and the Analytical Tradition.....	95
3.3 <i>Dhvanyartha</i> of Aestheticians.....	102
3.4 <i>Dhvanyartha</i> of Linguists	105
3.5 <i>Samvādaśakti</i> : the Means of <i>dhvanyartha</i>	109
3.6 The Evolution of <i>Dhvani</i>	114
3.7 Summary of the Chapter.....	118
4 <i>Dhvanyartha</i>: Oneness of Language, Meaning and Experience	121
4.1 Introduction: <i>Dhvani</i> and Other Literary Theories.....	121
4.2 <i>Dhvani</i> and Hermeneutics.....	125
4.2.1 Hermeneutics.....	126
4.2.2 A Comparative Study.....	129
4.3. <i>Sahyodaya</i> : Meaning and Experience Intertwined.....	138
4.3.1 The Importance of Tacit Experience.....	153

4.3.2 <i>Sahṛdaya</i> and <i>dhvanyartha</i>	157
4.4 From Experiential Understanding to Reason.....	158
4.5 From Hermeneutic Rationality to Speculative Philosophy.....	160
4.6 Summary of the Chapter.....	165
5 Conclusion: <i>Dhvanyartha</i> an Epistemic Source for Philosophical Explorations	169
5.1 Introduction: Social Epistemology of <i>Dhvani</i>	169
5.2. The Two Paths: Through <i>Samvādaśakti</i> and <i>Śabdaśakti</i>	172
5.3 <i>Samvādaśakti</i> and the <i>Prasthāntrayi</i>	178
5.3.1 The Great Saying of <i>Upaniśads</i>	179
5.3.2 The Logic of <i>Śrīmad-Bhagavadgītā</i>	182
5.3.3 The argumentative <i>Brahmasūtra</i>	184
5.4 <i>Ānanda</i> : Aesthetics of Experience and Reason.....	186
5.4.1 The Quintessence of <i>Rasa</i> and <i>Ānanda</i> in <i>Dhvani</i> Theory.....	191
5.4.2 <i>Raso vai saḥ</i> : Ānandavardhana and <i>Upaniśad</i>	195
5.5 Philosophical Significance of <i>Dhvani</i>	199
5.5.1 <i>Śabdhārthadoṣa</i> : Superfluous in <i>dhvanyartha</i>	200
5.5.2 Understanding <i>Sahṛdaya</i> as a Philosopher.....	203
5.6 Conclusion.....	212
Bibliography.....	231

Chapter 1

Suggestive Meaning: An Introduction

Agrataḥ caturo vedāḥ prṣṭhataḥ saśaram dhanuḥ|

Idaṁ brāhmaṇaṁ idaṁ kṣātraṁ śāpādapi śarādapi||¹

Sarva-Jnyaane Sadānande Sarva-Ruupe Namō Namah |

Sampannaayai Kumaaryai Ca Sarvajnye Namō Namah ||²

1.1 Introduction

The present doctoral research undertakes a philosophical investigation of *dhvanyartha*, the suggestive meaning, as theorised by Ānandavardhana in the *Dhvanyāloka*, extending its

¹ अग्रतः चतुरो वेदाः पृष्ठतः सशरं धनुः। इदं ब्राह्मं इदं क्षात्रं शापादपि शरादपि॥52॥*Bramhan Purān*. Learned in with the knowledge of four *Vedas*, master skilled in the use of bow and arrows, embodied existence of knowledge and bravery, can slay with both words and arrows (Caturvedī, 1956, p. 228). I begin this thesis on suggestion (*dhvani*) with *śloka*’s consisting suggestive meaning (*dhvanyartha*) to salute lord Paraśurama, the creator of the Paraśuramabhumi asking for strength like him to be good with weapons and with knowledge! My weapon here being the pen to write this thesis and the knowledge to do it with.

² सर्वज्ञाने सदानन्दे सर्वरूपे नमो नमः । सम्पन्नयै कुमार्यै च सर्वज्ञे नमो नमः ॥12॥ *Parātatva Stuti*. “With all of knowledge, always blissful, the embodiment of existence, salute to you, *Sadānanda*! (my father), The goddess of giving prosperity, goddess of all values, in the form of purity, salute to you the omniscient one! (*Śarada*)” (Venkata, 2020, p. 12). I also bow down laden with gratitude bow to Sadānanda, the cause of my existence, and surrender to the goddess of all wisdom, who is perpetually joyful; all-knowing divinity Śarada. I begin writing now; let this endeavour lead to completion and fulfilment forever.

significance beyond Sanskrit poetics into epistemology, hermeneutics, philosophy of language, and social philosophy. The study challenges the conventional confinement of the *dhvani* theory to literary aesthetics and argues for its recognition as a pre-conceptual, experiential, and dialogical source of meaning and knowledge. Drawing upon Indian linguistic–philosophical traditions, especially *Nyāya*, *Vyākaraṇa*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Vedānta*, and Aesthetics, the thesis establishes that meaning originates in tacit experience, precedes conceptual articulation, and is stabilised through philosophical systematisation. The research further places *dhvani* in comparison with the Western tradition of hermeneutic rationality, identifying the similarities and differences, thereby opening a comparative philosophical space.

The central hypothesis of the study is that *dhvani* is not merely an aesthetic or poetic domain, but extends its scope and relevance to the foundational epistemic and philosophical realm. Meaning arises first as tacit experience, which is shared through dialogical expression, the *Samvādaśakti*, a strength of communication, which later transforms into linguistic articulation, the *Śabdaśakti*, a strength of words and philosophical interpretation. Consequently, *dhvanyartha* must be recognised as an experiential mode of knowing, capable of functioning as a valid epistemic source, especially within social and dialogical contexts.

The thesis attempts to discuss the philosophical issue concerning the origins of meaning and the connection between words, ideas and meaning, and how the text relates to what it depicts, whether emotional or otherwise. This has been an issue debated by both Eastern and Western scholars who have been keenly interested in this area of the study of meaning in language. The theory of meaning might have been a problem of philosophy in contemporary Western philosophy, making it a relatively new topic of linguistics, but the theory of meaning has been a thriving field of research for Indian philosophy and the Indian linguists. Grammarians,

philosophers, thinkers, aestheticians, logicians, psychologists, linguists, anthropologists, axiologists, and rhetoricians from the likes of Pāṇini, Kumārila, Prabhākara, Bharatamuni, Ānandavardhana, Mammaṭācārya, in the east and Bertrand Russell, Wittgenstein, Austin, and de Saussure in the West have all studied it and discussed it.³ The very difficult task here is to take that legacy forward, as the investigation has become complicated by the large amount of content on contemporary perspectives, but by the absence of it on traditional indigenous perspectives. Many prominent linguists have sought to derive meaning from a predefined language; scholars around the world attempt to extract meaning from a more positivist or scientific approach to linguistics, since the underlying issues facing scholars and students in semantics are so extensive. Accordingly, Bloomfield states, every object and event in the universe is an example of situations that cause people to speak, for example, the seafarers. Bloomfield argues that all individuals and groups have their own unique method of communication, to quote,

Minor groups who are in any way cut off from the great mass use clearly-marked varieties of speech. Thus, seafaring men used to speak their own type of non-standard English. Tramps and some kinds of law-breakers have many speech-forms of their own;

³ Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is primarily a grammatical treatise, but it laid the structural foundation for later discussions on meaning in Sanskrit philosophy. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, representing the Bhāṭṭa school of Mīmāṃsā, argued for the theory of *abhihitānvaya* (connected meaning after denotation). According to him, individual words first convey their independent meanings, and sentence meaning arises subsequently through syntactic connection. Prabhākara proposed the theory of *anvitābhidhāna* (denotation as already connected). Bharatamuni discussed meaning primarily in relation to drama, performance, gesture, emotion, and rasa, in his *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Ānandavardhana revolutionised Sanskrit poetics by arguing that the true meaning of poetry lies in *dhvani* or suggestion, in the *Dhvanyāloka*, he established *dhvanyartha* (suggested meaning) as superior meaning. Mammaṭācārya synthesised earlier Sanskrit poetic theories, including *dhvani*, *rasa*, *alaṃkāra*, and *vakrokti*, in the *Kāvyaśāstra*, he examined how meaning functions in poetry through the interaction of words, sentences, poetic figures, and suggestion. Whereas, Russell approached meaning through logic and analytic philosophy. He argued that meaning arises through logical reference and denotation. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein argued that meaning arises through logical representation and correspondence between language and reality. However, in his later work, *Philosophical Investigations*, he radically shifted his position and argued that "meaning is use." According to this later theory, meaning emerges from language-games. Austin in his book "How to Do Things with Words" developed the Speech Act Theory and argued that language is fundamentally performative. Meaning does not merely arise from words or sentences but from actions. Saussure argued that meaning arises structurally through differences within the linguistic system. For Saussure, language is a system of signs where meaning emerges through structural opposition and social convention rather than direct reference to reality.

so do circus people and other wandering entertainers. Everyone speaks for something (Bloomfield, 1994, p. 50).⁴

One must possess scientifically sound knowledge about the speaker's situation and surroundings in order to provide a valid definition of meaning that is accurate and pertinent to each form of language. If this way of thinking is considered, it reveals that in the truest sense, the scope of human understanding is highly limited. According to him, therefore, until the level of human understanding progresses to greater heights, much beyond its current condition, “the statement of meaning is, therefore, the weak point in language study and will remain so” (Bloomfield, 1994, p. 140). The assumption that every word in the language must have a clear and concise meaning and that we cannot discuss meaning rationally until we are able to clarify everything that words signify may be the basis of this defeatist mindset. However, everyone uses language, even those who lack this expertise, and it functions fairly effectively. Numerous philosophical schools in India, such as the Sanskrit grammarians, Nyāyayikas, dialecticians, and rhetoricians, gave careful consideration to the issues of general linguistics and linguistic philosophy. They developed a variety of theories to explain the various facets of language behaviour. Western authors, *albeit* acknowledging the significance of Pāṇini's approach in the field of formal analysis of language and the formal analysis of the Sanskrit language into a system of roots, stems, and suffixes, have not yet given adequate consideration to Indian theories of the different facets of meaning. The great Indian thinkers Bhartṛhari, Kumārilabhaṭṭa, Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta's discussions on the problem of meaning demonstrate exceptional linguistic and philosophical

⁴ Bloomfield viewed language primarily as a social and behavioural phenomenon rooted in human communication and collective activity. According to Bloomfield, meaning is not isolated within words alone but emerges through social usage, context, and shared patterns of understanding among groups of speakers. His discussion of specialised speech forms among sailors, tramps, entertainers, and other social groups demonstrates that language develops according to the practical experiences, identities, and communicative needs of communities.

acumen and are replete with insightful observations that can greatly aid in clarifying complex issues in contemporary discussions on the topic.⁵

Modern expositions of Indian general linguistics theories have already been somewhat developed. The Philosophy of Sanskrit Grammar and the Linguistic Speculations given by the Indian scholars generate in the contemporary world a taste of the immense wealth of Indian contributions to meaning and philosophy. Some contemporary expositions of Indian philosophical systems, including D. M. Datta's *The Six Ways of Knowing*, Ganganatha Jha's *Purvamimamsa in Its Sources*, S. C. Chatterjee's *The Nyaya Theory of Knowledge*, Kuppaswami Sastri's *A Primer of Indian Logic*, and V. A. Ramaswami Sastri's *Introduction to the Tattoabindu*, have addressed various facets of the meaning problem. Scholars Edgerton, Siddheshwar Varma, K. A. Subrahmanya, and Kunjunni Raja have recently made significant contributions to many issues related to the Indian theory of meaning.⁶ In the same field, much more work needs to be done. In the pages that follow, an effort is made to provide a concise overview of the *dhvani* theory of Ānandavardhana and its way of understanding the meaning and also various views on *dhvani* held by the various schools of Indian thought and to highlight its importance in contemporary debates over meaning. In the Indian linguistic thought, the ideas of the

⁵ Bhartṛhari argues in his *Vākyapadīya* that meaning ultimately arises from the sentence as a holistic and indivisible unit through the doctrine of *sphoṭa*. Kumāṛila Bhaṭṭa, in works such as the *Ślokaṭīkā*, maintains through the theory of *abhihitānvaya* that meaning primarily arises from individual words. Ānandavardhana, in the *Dhvanyāloka*, shifts the discussion from literal meaning toward aesthetic suggestion, he argues that the deepest meaning does not arise merely from words or sentences but from *dhvani*. Abhinavagupta further develops Ānandavardhana's theory in his commentary *Locana* on the *Dhvanyāloka* and in the *Abhinavabhāratī*. According to him, the ultimate source of meaning lies in aesthetic and experiential realisation through *rasa*.

⁶ Franklin Edgerton contributed significantly to the Indian theory of meaning primarily through his work *The Meaning of Sphoṭa*, in this study, he examined the linguistic philosophy of Bhartṛhari and the Grammarian tradition. Siddheshwar Varma contributed through the *Critical Studies in the Phonetic Observations of Indian Grammarians* and his research on *Indian linguistic philosophy and semantics*. K. A. Subrahmanya Iyer contributed extensively to the understanding of Indian theories of meaning through his editions, translations, and studies of texts such as the *Vākyapadīya* of Bhartṛhari and works on Sanskrit poetics. K. Kunjunni Raja made major contributions through his influential work *Indian Theories of Meaning*. In this text, he systematically analysed various Indian approaches to meaning developed by Grammarians, *Naiyāyikas*, *Mīmāṃsakas*, Buddhists, and Aestheticians.

*khaṇḍapakṣa*⁷ and the *akhaṇḍapakṣa*⁸, which are roughly comparable to the Gestalt theory and the Association theory in psychology, are the two primary methods used in Indian thought to investigate the meaning problem. The *khaṇḍapakṣa*, or analytical method, holds that a word is an independent unit of thought and sense, that language studies are based on words, and that a sentence is a concatenation of words. The idea that a single word has a single meaning is generally prevalent in all schools of Indian philosophy from ancient times, and in the case of nouns, the word is taken as the name of the thing. This is true in the early stages of linguistic studies in India as well as other countries. Therefore, the meaning of a word, that which a word means, is the literal meaning of *padārtha*, the common philosophical term for a thing. The Sanskrit word *nāmarupā*, which means world of things, also conveys the idea that an object's

⁷ The supremacy of the word (*padā* or *śabda*) is the focus of the *khaṇḍapakṣa*. *Khaṇḍapakṣa* views the word as a separate conceptual and semantic entity. Words are the main focus of this language study, and the sentence is seen to be an assemblage of these words. By seeing words as independent, self-explanatory entities, the *khaṇḍapakṣa* limited its investigation to the meaning of the words. The statement, its structure, and its overall meaning were all overlooked. It just said that a phrase is just a collection of words, and its meaning is the total of the meanings that each word carries. The renowned *mīmāṃsaka* Sabaraswamin also contends that a sentence's meaning is inextricably linked to the meanings of the words that make it up. A sentence's meaning can only be understood by understanding the meanings of its constituent components. The meanings of the words that make up the statement are the only meaning it can have on its own. This notion, called *abhihitā, nvayavāda*, is thought to have originated from the Grammarian Vajapyayana, who said that a sentence's meaning is the *samsarga*, or the relationship between the meanings of each individual word. Additionally, certain scholars of the Nyaya School and the *mīmāṃsakas* of the Bhatta School endorsed the *abhihitānvayavāda*. Another *mīmāṃsaka*, Kumārila Bhatta, asserted that a sentence's meaning is always expressed through the meanings of its constituent words. The statement lacks a meaning of its own, unlike the words (Raos, 2017, p. 6).

⁸ *Akhaṇḍapakṣa* maintained that the phrase is a single basic linguistic unit (*samvit*). The statement is indivisible (*Akhaṇḍa*); as a whole, it conveys a certain meaning that cannot be broken down into its component parts. Therefore, the meaning is in the phrase as a whole, in its whole, rather than in the individual words, which are only portions (*Akhaṇḍa*). In other words, certain units are used in the statement to arrive at a clear meaning. The sentence's wholeness or integral character is what gives it its meaning, not the units' inherent significance. Even if the placements of the words in a statement change, the sentence's meaning stays the same. Prabhākara's *anvitābhīdhāna* hypothesis states that solitary words are ineffective for conveying thoughts. According to him, a word's suggested meaning can only be understood when it appears in a phrase. However, Prabhākara considered the words to be true, genuine components of the language. He asserts that every word in a language has a certain meaning. Thus, his theory claims that the function of words is solely to serve the sentence as a component, even if it does not discount the significance of words' meaning and their indicative force (*abhidhā*). This argument was about the fact that a sentence is an indivisible integrated unit; and, without a structured sentence, the individual words do not convey a sense or the intent of the speaker by themselves. Words alone are abstractions and unreal and do not convey a definite meaning apart from a sentence. It claimed that the sentence with its meaning is one indivisible whole (*Akhaṇḍa*). The sentence is indivisible (*Akhaṇḍa*), but it has the power of manifestation through various letters and words (Raos, 2017, p. 7).

name or outwardly visible shape can be used to understand it and that these elements together make up an object's essence. The *Nyayasūtras* exclusively address the characteristics of individual words; subsequent *Nyaya-Vaiśeṣika* works are the only ones that address the *padārtha* or elements required for sentence comprehension. Yaska and his adherents focus on the etymological study of word meanings, while grammarians like Pāṇini, Kātyāyana, and Patanjali are primarily concerned with the derivation of the right forms of words. The *Mīmāṃsā* school was the first to begin a thorough analysis of sentences and create complex canons of interpretation, but even this analysis was primarily based on words and word meanings, so the relationship between words and sentences, as well as between word meaning and sentence meaning, continued to be a major issue (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 6).

However, there were certain academics who highlighted the fictitious nature of words even in ancient India. Yaska alludes to Audumbarāyaṇa's belief that the fourfold classification of words into noun, verb, *upasarga*, and *nipāta* is not valid and that the statement as a whole is what is consistently present in the hearer's perceptual capacity (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 7). Even in daily life, words are utilised for naming due to their universal application and ease of use due to their simplicity. Bhartṛhari mentions this viewpoint and claims that Vārtākṣa likewise subscribed to the belief that the hearer's mind is regularly filled with simply the speech. There are two opposing viewpoints on the nature of verbal comprehension that results from a phrase, even among people who acknowledge the existence of words. According to the *abhihitānvayavāda* hypothesis, which is held by some *naiyayikaās* and the Bhatta school of *mīmāṃsakās*, we first recall the individual meanings of words before a contemporaneous collective memory provides us with the same as mutually connected information (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 8). Sentence meaning is made up of syntactically connected word meanings. Every word in a sentence serves

to express its own distinct meaning before ceasing; the grammatical relationships are expressed through word meanings rather than words. The Prabhākara school's *mīmāṃsakās* embrace the *anvitābhidhāna* idea, which is a development of the earlier one. This means that the words themselves progressively and step by step reveal the meaning of the associated sentence. A word must always be syntactically connected to an imperative verb; otherwise, it has no meaning outside of the sentence's context. The sentence serves as the speech unit, but the word that emerges from the analysis of the sentence can be thought of as the linguistic unit. Both theories acknowledge the necessity of *samnidhi* (proximity), *yogyatā* (consistency), and *ākāṅksā* (mutual-expectancy) for a syntactic relationship between words in a sentence. “A minimum meaningful unit of a sentence is *pada* and a collection of *padās*, having expectancy (*ākāṅksā*), compatibility (*yogyatā*) and proximity (*samnidhi*) is called, a sentence” (Rath, 2012, p. 83). They also acknowledged the significance of contextual elements and the speaker's intention in interpreting words. In Bhartṛhari's *akhaṇḍapakṣa*, the sentence is the fundamental linguistic fact.⁹ “Bhartṛhari's ontological teaching is usually identified with the concept of linguistic Absolute (*Śabda-Brahman*) and with the three levels of speech” (Desnitskaya, 2023, p. 132). It interprets the statement as a Gestalt with irrelevant elements. Although Bhartṛhari developed the idea into a comprehensive theory that could explain all irregularities in language, it was inspired by Audumbarāyaṇa's theory. The individual letters and phrases that make up the statement show that it is a single integral symbol (*vākyasphoṭa*), which is regarded as an entire and indivisible language symbol, conveying the meaning. “To the *vākyavādins* or the *sphoṭavādins* the *vākyā-sphoṭā* or the indivisibility of the sentence is the only significant unit of speech” (Nair,

⁹ Seneviratne (2019) argues Bhartṛhari motivates and defends the primacy and indivisibility of sentential meaning (*akhaṇḍapakṣa*), positioning it against word-level primacy approaches (Seneviratne, 2019, p. 224). Park (2023) develops this in terms of the semantics of *sphoṭa*, emphasising Bhartṛhari's “sentence-*sphoṭa*” as the final unit of meaning conveyed/recognised in communication (Park, 2023, p. 77).

1990, p.109) Additionally, *pratibhā* describes it as a smiling flash of insight or intuition of meaning.¹⁰ The meaning is partless, and the words are merely clues that help the listener derive meaning; they have no inherent reality. Following Bhartṛhari's example, Ānandavardhana created his notion of *dhvani*, or suggestion. He included the emotive components and the socio-cultural significance of utterances, inferred with the aid of contextual variables, in addition to the cognitive and logical meaning of words under the term *artha*, that is, meaning. Philosophers and logicians may be content with the precise, accurate, and objective study of a fraction of an utterance's overall meaning, while poets and linguists cannot disregard large swaths of linguistic behaviour as unreal or inexplicable. Ānandavardhana promotes the *dhvani* theory, which is also known as *vyañjana*, or suggestion, usually applied to poetry, and places considerable emphasis on the suggestive component of poetry. The many Indian systems of philosophy also examine the issue of meaning shift. In contrast to the study of meaning shift in the West, the circumstances for a metaphorical transfer of meaning are primarily examined there from a synchronic perspective.

Language is essential to communication. Patanjali's *Yogasūtra* claims, “word, idea, and object are really distinct entities, and although in ordinary experience they are found to be interrelated, they may be separated from one another by a process of abstraction” (Kaviraj, 1923, p. 7). The basic foundation of discursive thought is the notion that all three of these components have a true identity as a result of the non-recognition of this distinction. Every school of thought in India has claimed a direct connection between *śabda* and *artha*, and Ānandavardhana argues for a connection of suggestion with both, individually and plurally, which is why this research is very

¹⁰ The word *Pratibhā*, which literally means a flash of light, a revelation' is usually found in literature in sense wisdom characterised by immediacy and freshness. It might be called the supersensuous and supra-rational apperception, grasping truth directly, and would, therefore, seem to have the same value, both as a faculty and as an act, in Indian Philosophy as Intuition has in some of the western systems (Kaviraj, 1923, p. 1).

significant for understanding the arrival of the suggested sense of meaning. The popularity of the topic is such that even a non Indologist says,

....although there is a sketch of the rhetorical poetics that preceded Ānandavardhana, it would be difficult for the nonspecialist Indologist to understand from the introduction that the *Dhvanyāloka* is a watershed between the analysis of poetic language as figures (*alamkara*) and its analysis as suggested meaning (Gitomer, 1993, p. 380).

1.2 *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana

Ānandavardhana, a seminal figure in the realm of Sanskrit poetics, is best known for his groundbreaking text, the *Dhvanyāloka*, composed in the ninth century CE. This work marks a significant departure from previous literary theories by emphasising the concept of *dhvani* (suggestion) as the cornerstone of poetic and linguistic beauty. At the core of Ānandavardhana's philosophy lies the notion of *dhvani*, which refers to the subtle, often implicit meanings conveyed through emotive resonance in language. "Ānandavardhana used verses from his own compositions to exemplify varieties of *dhvani* in *Dhvanyāloka*. He was also a philosopher and is believed to have written the verbally intricate *Devīśataka*" (Chandran & V.S., 2021, p. 14). He posits that the true essence of poetry transcends mere literal interpretation, venturing into the realm of emotional and intellectual engagement. Ānandavardhana categorically differentiates between three levels of meaning in poetry: *vāchyārtha*, the literal meaning, *lakshyārtha*, the inferential or indicative meaning, and *dhvanyārtha*, the suggestive meaning.¹¹ The latter,

¹¹ Vācyapratīyamānākhyau tasya bhedāvubhau smṛtau || वाच्यप्रतीयमानाख्यौ तस्य भेदावुभौ स्मृतौ ||1/2|| *Dhvanyāloka* (Henceforth, DL). The explicit (meaning) and the implicit (meaning) are regarded as its two aspects. Pratīyamānam punaranyadeva vastvasti vānīṣu mahākavīnām | yat yat prasiddhāyavātiriktaṁ vibhāti lāvaṇyamivāṅganāsu ||1/4|| प्रतीयमानं पुनरन्यदेव वस्त्वस्ति वाणीषु महाकवीनाम् | यत् यत् प्रसिद्धावयवातिरिक्तं विभाति लावण्यमिवाङ्गनासु ||1/4|| *Dhvanyāloka* (Henceforth, DL). The implicit aspect as another quite different (meaning) from this. The (second) implicit (suggestive) known in the words of first rate poets as the one shines supreme and towers above the beauty of striking external constituents even as charm in ladies (All English translation of *Dhvanyāloka* for this thesis are taken from: Krishnamoorthy (1999). *Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavarhana*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publication).

dhvanyartha, is where the greatness of the poet shines, as it calls for the reader's active engagement in unravelling the deeper significance embedded within the text. Ānandavardhana argues that a successful work of poetry and literature elicits an emotional or aesthetic response by evoking imagery, feelings, and ideas that resonate with the reader.

1.2.1 Outline

The *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana is one of the foundational texts of Sanskrit poetics and Indian aesthetic philosophy. The text is divided into four chapters known as *udyotās* (illuminations), through which Ānandavardhana progressively develops and defends the theory of suggestive meaning (*dhvanyartha*). The *Dhvanyāloka* consists of 117 *kārikās* in total, distributed across the four *udyotās*. Each *udyotās* contains concise metrical aphorisms which Ānandavardhana tries to establish are called *kārikās* along with an explanatory prose commentary known as *vṛtti*, both traditionally attributed to Ānandavardhana himself.

The first chapter consists of 19 *kārikās* introduces the foundational concept of *dhvani* and establishes it as an independent mode of meaning distinct from *abhidhā* (literal) and *lakṣaṇā* (indication). Ānandavardhana defines *dhvani* as the suggestive meaning that transcends literal expression and argues that it constitutes the very essence of poetry.¹² This chapter critically examines objections raised by scholars who attempted to reduce *dhvani* to inference (*anumāna*). The second chapter has 33 *kārikās* elaborates the various classifications and forms of *dhvani*. The third chapter consists of 48 *kārikās*, which discuss the poetic excellence produced by *dhvani* and analyses the relationship between suggested meaning and poetic composition. The fourth chapter consists of 17 *kārikās* and it addresses criticisms directed against the *dhvani* theory and

Note: *Vṛtti* that arrive after *śloka* by Ānandavarhana will be referred to with the *śloka* number and the letter v. For example (DL: I.1v).

¹² *kāvyasyātmā dhvanirīti budhairyaḥ samāmnātapūrva-kāvyasyātmā* || काव्यस्यात्मा ध्वनिरिति बुधैर्यः

समाम्नातपूर्व-काव्यस्यात्मा || (The essential soul of poetry is *dhvani* as has been said by the scholars) (DL: I.1).

further strengthens its philosophical and aesthetic foundations. The final section of *Dhvanyāloka* provides a critique of previous and contemporary poetic theories, including the works of the rhetoricians of the time, such as Bhāmaha¹³ and Dandin¹⁴. Ānandavardhana's work thus serves not only as a foundation for new poetic thought but as a bridge that connects past literary traditions to future developments in Sanskrit aesthetics. *Dhvanyāloka* has left an indelible mark on the field of Sanskrit poetics and the broader landscape of Indian literature.

1.2.2 Key Concepts

Undoubtedly, the key concepts of this thesis are *dhvani* and *dhvanyartha*; the next section explains them in detail; therefore, this section focuses on the other essential key concepts of the thesis. Primary among them is the concept of *sahṛdaya*. The term *sahṛdaya*¹⁵ literally means the with heart or with the same hearth, but here it does not only go for the physical existence of a beating heart but for one who possesses a refined, sympathetic, emotive heart. “*Samānam hṛdayam yasya saḥ saḥṛdayaḥ*”, *sahṛdaya* means the one who has a heart like that of the poet, *sahṛdaya* is the one of the most beautiful given to the human agent. In this regard Subramaniyan says,

¹³ Bhāmaha, who is believed to have initiated the rigorous analysis of literature through his work *Kāvyālaṃkāra*. He was renowned as an *ālankārika* who focused on the nature of poetic language, especially figures of speech. The fact that later theoreticians like Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta quote him with respect is evidence enough of his stature in the field (Chandran & V.S., 2021, p. 12).

¹⁴ Dandin is supposed to have written *Prākṛitmanorama*, a commentary on Vararuci's Prakrit work. Dandin's *Kāvyādarśa* contains aspects that appear to refute some of Bhāmaha's views. Scholars believe he was from South India and was a court poet of the Pallava kings. *Daśakumāracarita* and *Avantisundarikathā* are other works that are attributed to Dandin; both are incomplete prose texts. Although Dandin is associated closely with the way in which he identified certain qualities that were essential to a literary work, he also had insightful observations on the use of figurative language (Chandran & V.S., 2021, p. 13).

¹⁵ Some major terms used for a connoisseur in Sanskrit (poetics or aesthetics) works are *sahṛdaya*, *sāmājika*, *saceta*, *bhāvaka* and *rasika*. The term *sāmājika* was first used by Bharatamuni in his *Nāṭyaśāstra*, followed by other ancient scholars, while the term *sahṛdaya* has been employed by poeticsians such as Ānandavardhana. *Rājaśekhara* in his celebrated work *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* has coined the term *bhāvaka* and he even classifies the *bhāvakas* in four categories (Pejathaya & Pradeep, 2021, p. 258).

The word for a 'critic' in Sanskrit is *sahr̥daya*. *Sahr̥daya* literally means 'of the same or similar heart', i.e. of the same heart as that of the artist. The emphasis is not on the head, but on the heart. A *sahr̥daya* is one who through constant reading and exposure to works of art is capable of entering into the feelings and expressions of the artist and communicating through his criticism the same pleasure that he derives from a work of art (Subrahmanian, 1978, p. 368).

Sahr̥daya is the one, who can, not only understand but also can feel the plight of others. In Indian aesthetics, the *sahr̥daya* is the ideal appreciator of art, literature, and meaning. The concept emphasises that aesthetic experience does not arise solely from the creator or the text, but also depends on the interpreter's sensitivity and preparedness. A *sahr̥daya* possesses emotional refinement, intellectual openness, cultivated imagination, and aesthetic receptivity. Such a person is capable of transcending narrow egoistic concerns and entering into the emotional universe created by the poet or philosopher. Understanding *dhvanyartha* through *dhvani*, therefore, requires participation rather than detached observation, and a participant that is a *sahr̥daya*.

Another key concept is the concept of *saṃvādaśakti*, which means the suggestive power behind communication or dialogue, the communicative force through which understanding emerges in relational interaction. The concept emphasises that meaning is not static or isolated within words; rather, it unfolds dynamically through engagement, responsiveness, and shared consciousness. The Sanskrit term *saṃvāda* implies genuine dialogue rather than mere exchange of information. In philosophical traditions, dialogue has often been central to knowledge formation. It can be witnessed in the *Upaniṣadic* teacher-disciple conversations, the dialogical method of Socrates, and modern hermeneutics all recognise that truth emerges relationally. *Saṃvādaśakti* extends this insight by emphasising the experiential and suggestive dimensions of communication. Socially, *saṃvādaśakti* also highlights the collective nature of knowledge (Sumaryani et al., 2023, p. 3).

The next key concept is *bhāṣāśakti*. *Bhāṣāśakti* refers to the power or strength behind language, understood not merely in Sanskrit but in all languages, or language as a whole. Not only found through grammatical brilliance or richness of vocabulary, but it is also the creative force through which human beings shape reality, communicate experience, preserve culture, and construct meaning. Indian linguistic philosophy often regards language as ontologically significant. Speech is not simply a tool; it possesses transformative potency. In Vedic thought, speech (*vāk*) itself is sacred and cosmically creative. Language mediates thought, emotion, memory, identity, and spiritual realisation. *Bhāṣāśakti* includes the capacity of language to denote objects, evoke emotions, suggest meanings, shape social consciousness, preserve tradition, and reveal metaphysical truths (Sharma, 2022, p. 111). Unlike reductive theories that treat language as merely referential, *bhāṣāśakti* recognises its symbolic, emotional, and experiential dimensions. Poetry, philosophy, ritual, and scripture all demonstrate that language can transform consciousness itself. In relation to *dhvani*, *bhāṣāśakti* becomes especially important because suggestive meaning depends upon the deeper expressive capacities of language.¹⁶ Words function not only through explicit definition but also through resonance, silence, symbolism, rhythm, and context. According to Chandan,

Śabdaśakti is a renowned concept in the realm of Indian linguistics. *Śabdaśakti* means the semantic power or strength behind words through which meaning becomes possible. *Śabdaśakti-mūla* is that variety of *dhvani* where a word or a set of words implies a figure of speech” (Chandran & V.S., 2021, p. 109).

The Classical Indian philosophers analysed language with remarkable sophistication and distinguished multiple levels of semantic operation. The literal denotation is the way words

¹⁶ A 2024 critical study that presents *dhvani* as the aesthetic suggestiveness of words, centered on the relation among literal, indicated, and suggested meaning. It also argues that *vyanjana*, or suggested meaning, is central to the richness of poetry and proposes reading British and Indian texts through that lens (Sinha, 2024, p. 1-8).

communicate their direct conventional meaning. The indirect or inferential indication is where the meaning shifts when literal interpretation becomes contextually inadequate and meaningless. The suggestion then erupts through words, where due to *dhvani* they evoke meanings beyond literal and indirect expression. The *śaktis* of *śabda* are therefore valued as seen below,

According to Bhartṛhari, the phenomenal world is a manifold appearance of *śaktis* which *śabdabrahman*, the seed of all (*sarvabija*), is assumed to have and which in themselves are not susceptible of modification (*aparīnamini*) (Ogawa, 1999, p. 15).

Among these, suggestion becomes central in *dhvani* because it explains how words communicate emotional and experiential depth. Without suggestion, language would remain confined to factual description. *Śabdaśakti* demonstrates that words possess layered semantic potential. A single expression may simultaneously operate at literal, symbolic, emotional, and philosophical levels. This multi-dimensionality makes literary and philosophical discourse rich and inexhaustible.

One of the most significant concepts for Ānandavardhana is the concept of *ānanda*, which signifies transcendental bliss or profound fulfilment. Unlike ordinary pleasure, which is temporary and sensory, *ānanda* refers to a deeper state of existential harmony and spiritual realisation. In *Vedānta*¹⁷ philosophy, *Brahman*, the ultimate reality, is described as *sat-cit-ānanda*, a pure being, consciousness, full of bliss, and Ānandavardhana believes that it is

¹⁷ *Vedānta* which means the end or culmination (*anta*) of the *Vedas*, originally denoted the *Upaniṣads*, the ancient *Vedic* texts which concern the ultimate reality, *Brahman/Atman*, and the means to attain salvific knowledge (*jñāna*) of this ultimate reality. The *Upaniṣads* declare that our true transcendental Self (*ātman*) is intimately related to, or in some sense ontologically akin to, the divine reality *Brahman*. We are ignorant of our true nature as the divine *ātman* due to our attachment to worldly pleasures, which leads us to identify with the superficial body-mind complex. Therefore, according to the *Upaniṣads*, we must renounce sense pleasures and worldly attachments, and engage in meditative practices, in order to break our identification with the body-mind complex and attain knowledge of our true divine nature (Maharaj, 2020, p. 1).

his duty to live up to his name and increase the *ānanda* in and for all. “The *Upaniṣadic* absolute is the unity of being (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*) *sat-cit-ānanda* or *saccidānanda* achieved through higher knowledge” (Wilkinson, 2007, p. 26). Thus, *ānanda* is not merely an emotion but an ontological condition associated with ultimate reality itself. In aesthetics, the experience of *rasa* culminates in a refined form of *ānanda*. When an individual deeply experiences art, personal ego and practical concerns temporarily dissolve. The spectator enters a universalised emotional state that transcends ordinary psychological limitations. This aesthetic *ānanda* is transformative because it reveals the possibility of experiencing emotions without attachment or suffering.

Another key concept is *rasa*; this *rasa* is indispensable for experiencing *ānanda*. Bharata Muni developed the foundational theory of *rasa* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. “*Rasa* theory is not only the backbone of the *dhvani* theory, but the unifying element synthesising the beginning, the middle and the end of the whole of Indian poetics” (Prasad, 1994, p. 1). *Rasa* literally means essence, or taste, or aesthetic relish. It refers to the refined emotional experience evoked through art, poetry, music, and drama.¹⁸ *Rasa* is not identical with ordinary emotion. Rather, it is emotion transformed into aesthetic contemplation.¹⁹ Personal feelings become universalised, allowing the spectator to experience emotional states without practical involvement. Classical Indian

¹⁸ The word *rasa* is composed of two letters *ra* and *sa*. Etymologically, *ra* means to give, and *sa* means motion. *Ra* and *sa* put together i.e., *rasa* has several meanings according to Pāṇini's grammar, all of which are not related to one another. V.B. Apte lists several meanings of the word *rasa*, to flow, to make wet all over, to soak or saturate in liquid, to taste or relish, water, potion, flavour, fluid, liquid, sauce, condiment, pleasure, delight, happiness, charm, interest, elegance, beauty, etc. The dictionary of Monier Williams also lists several meanings of the word *rasa*, both used as a verb and as a noun. Used as a verb, it means to roar, cry, sound, reverberate, scream. And used as a noun, it means juice of plants, juice of fruit, any liquid or fluid, the best or finest or prime part of anything. The milk of cow is called *gorasa*. It is held in our mythological culture that beneath this vast earth, a legendary river called *Rasa* flows. Therefore, that particular region is called *Rasātala* (*rasa* = river + *tala* = floor). Like the word *Sarasvatī*, the word *Rasa*, has, came to denote a river (Prasad, 1994, p. 2).

¹⁹ The aesthetic theory of *rasa* dominates more than hundred years of aesthetic and literary criticism in Sanskrit and encompasses in its ambit all the leading Sanskrit critics of ancient times, we know of. Indeed, this theory of *rasa* is the fruit of nearly two thousand years of Indian contemplation on art, drama and poetry. But what is more, it is not only a theory of aesthetics or literature, but a living principle governing the whole of our life (Prasad, 1994, p. 1).

aesthetics identifies major *rasas* such as: *śṛṅgāra* (romance/love), *vīra* (heroism), *karuṇa* (compassion), *hāsyā* (humour), *raudra* (anger), *bhayānaka* (fear), *adbhuta* (wonder), *bībhatsa* (disgust) (Bharata, 1995, p. 154) and *śānta* (tranquillity). “*Rasa* emerges through the interaction of *vibhāva*, that is, determinants, *anubhāva*, that is, consequents and *vyabhiṣāribhāva*, that is, transitory emotional states” (Prutvishree, 2025, p. 112). The spectator experiences aesthetic delight because emotions are purified and universalised. In *dhvani*, *rasa* often constitutes the highest form of suggested meaning.

The tacit experience is another key concept in this research work. The roots of tacit experience can be traced in the West to Michael Polanyi, who introduced the influential idea that “we know more than we can tell” (Polanyi, 2009, p. 7). Tacit experience refers to forms of understanding that remain implicit, embodied, intuitive, and difficult to articulate explicitly.²⁰ Tacit experience operates beneath formal conceptualisation. Human beings often rely upon unspoken familiarity and experiential awareness rather than explicit analytical reasoning in knowing. *Dhvani* strongly resonates with this idea of tacit experience because it is the *sahrdaya* who experiences the tacit through suggested meaning depending upon the tacit cognition. The deepest meanings in language and poetry cannot always be paraphrased propositionally. They must be experienced inwardly. Tacit experience also demonstrates the limitations of reductionist epistemology. Not all knowledge is propositional or scientifically measurable. Human understanding includes intuitive, aesthetic, emotional, and embodied dimensions that exceed formal language. Thus, tacit

²⁰ Throughout the ages many philosophers have been aware of limits to what we can make explicit but they did not pursue the theme, perhaps because it was an embarrassment. For a powerful motive in modern philosophy has been the desire to be in complete control of oneself: intellectually and epistemologically, in order not to be led into error; and morally and politically, in order not to be subject to another's will or external law. But can we be assured of being in control only in respect of what we can make explicit to ourselves, of what we both know and know that we know. This ideal of total self-determination is radically challenged by Polanyi's demonstrations that our knowledge and action are always tacit integrations in which we attend from one set of things to another. Though we can often make explicit and put into articulate form some of the subsidiary clues from which we attend, we can never make all of them explicit nor the ways in which we integrate them (Polanyi, 2011, p. 5).

experience goes hand in hand with *dhvani* in understanding that meaning often arises through resonance and experiential participation rather than just formal or direct statement.

The thesis further exemplifies the significance of *dhvani* and *dhvanyartha* through the concept of the *Prasthānatrayī*. *Prasthānatrayī* means the “threefold canonical foundation”²¹ of Indian philosophy consisting of the *Śruti-prasthāna* (*Upaniṣads*), the *Smṛti-prasthāna* (*Bhagavad Gītā*), and the *Nyāya-prasthāna* (*Brahmasūtras*). The thesis focuses on the great saying of the *Upaniṣads*, the Logic of *Bhagavad Gītā* and the argumentative approach of the *Brahmasūtras*. These texts collectively establish the philosophical authority of the entire *Vedānta* tradition in Indian philosophy. The *Upaniṣads* provide the primary metaphysical teachings concerning *Brahman*, *Ātman*, consciousness, and liberation. The *Bhagavad Gītā* synthesises spiritual disciplines such as *jñāna*, *karma*, and *bhakti* within an ethical and practical framework. The *Brahmasūtras* systematise and organise *Vedāntic* doctrine. Major Vedāntic philosophers such as Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānuja, and Madhvācārya wrote commentaries on the *Prasthānatrayī* to establish their philosophical systems. The interpretive diversity of *Vedānta* demonstrates the richness of *dhvanyartha* in these texts. The same scriptures yield multiple philosophical conclusions depending upon interpretive methodology, emphasising the centrality of *dhvani* in Indian philosophy.

²¹ The threefold foundation refers to the three canonical texts that form the epistemic and spiritual basis of *Vedānta*. These texts are not just literary treasures they are metaphysical maps guiding seekers toward the realization of Brahman, the ultimate reality. *Upaniṣads*: These are the concluding portions of the *Vedas* and are considered *apauruṣeya* (not belonging to any single human). They explore the nature of reality, consciousness, and liberation. Think of them as the mystical whispers of ancient seers. *Bhagavad Gītā*: Nestled within the *Mahābhārata*, this dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna is a practical guide to spiritual living, integrating *karma*, *bhakti*, and *jñāna yoga*. *Brahma Sūtras*: Also called *Vedānta Sūtras*, these aphoristic texts by Bādarāyaṇa distil and logically organize the teachings of the *Upaniṣads* and *Gītā*. They are the scaffolding upon which *Vedānta* schools build their interpretations (Sharon & Jaiswal, 2025, p. 162).

1.2.3 Dhvani

Ānandavardhana developed the concept of *dhvani* as the foundational principle of higher means of delivering poetic and aesthetic excellence through communication in his seminal work *Dhvanyāloka*. “His concept of *dhvani* became the most important theoretical concept since *rasa*” (Chandran & V.S., 2021, p. 13). The term suggestively means suggestion; the literal and indicative meaning of the term is sound and resound, respectively, but because of the brilliance of Ānandavardhana, the term philosophically signifies a mode of meaning that transcends direct verbal expression. “Ānandavardhana states that while primary meaning is based upon *śabda* only, the suggestiveness is based not only upon words but also upon senses. Thus, suggestiveness relates to both words and senses” (Shrawan, 2019, p. 112). *Dhvani* is used to make the literal meaning of a statement secondary and serves merely as a vehicle for a deeper, implied significance. This significant suggestion is not mechanically decoded; rather, it is aesthetically and intuitively apprehended. “This concept of *dhvani* which transports the reader to a state of the underlying higher reality of the poet's experience need not work merely on the principle of *Atmā* and *Brahma* (Shrawan, 2019, p. 119).” Philosophically, *dhvani* demonstrates that truth and meaning are often indirect, relational, and experiential rather than explicitly propositional. This insight places *dhvani* close to phenomenological hermeneutics and existential thought, where lived meaning exceeds conceptual formulation.

“*Pr̥thivyāṃ trīṇi ratnāni jalam annaṃ subhāṣitam, mūḍhaḥ paṣāṇa khaṇḍeṣu ratnasamjñā vidhīyate*” (Cāṇakya, 1971, p. 6).²² On this Mother Earth, there are but three jewels or precious things, which are water, food, and good utterances that are good thoughts in meaningful verses.

²² पृथिव्यां त्रीणि रत्नानि जलमन्नं सुभाषितम्। मूढैः पाषाणखण्डेषु रत्नसंज्ञा विधीयते॥ (Cāṇakya, 1971, p. 6). On this planet, there are only three jewels water, food and subhashitam (sanskrit texts). But the fool calls pieces of stone, gold, diamonds etc as jewels (Gupta, 2022, p. 57).

Only the fools see pieces of stone and metals as jewels. Thus spoke the great scholar Kauṭalya Cāṇakya in his remarkable text on ethics titled *Cāṇakya Nīti*. While there would be few detractors to the first two ideas, linguists, philosophers, and scholars are not entirely in agreement on the third, that is, with the constitutive elements of a good utterance. What makes any utterance, sentence, phrase, or statement good in the first place? According to Ānandavardhana, a good statement is one that which consists of *dhvani*. Ānandavardhana emphasises *dhvani* as its central element. “Some have said that the soul of poetry, which has been handed down from the past by wise men as suggestion (*dhvani*)” (Ingalls, 1990, p. 47). *Dhvanyārtha* is the meaning conveyed by the *dhvani* power of the words or sentences, in other words, their aesthetic suggestiveness. This is what gives poetry multiple layers of meaning, its suggestiveness distinguishing it from other forms of writing (Sinha, 2024, p. 4). Without *dhvani*, a literary statement or poetry is soulless. *Dhvani* was first proposed by Ānandavardhana, a universally acclaimed scholar and one of India’s most outstanding and influential literary critics. He was a great Indian thinker who first came up with the concept of the *dhvani* in his brilliant and wisdom-giving work, titled *The Dhvanyāloka*. The nearest possible translation of the *dhvani* is suggestion.²³ It is something which is not said in exact words and yet suggested. That which suggests and the process of suggestion is *dhvani*. According to the theory of *dhvani*, the actual meaning of the sentence is entirely different from the literal meaning of the statement. One can only understand this different meaning because it is suggested by *dhvani*. His genius and epoch-making work set the proper and robust foundation for literary criticism and inspired all the later poets and critics. “For the first time in the history of Indian thought, he asks basic questions

²³ In Indian poetics, *dhvani* (ध्वनि) is commonly translated as “suggestion”—i.e., a kind of implied/indirect meaning (often contrasted with direct, denotative meaning). In other words, the text “suggests” an additional layer of meaning that the reader recognises through context, word-relations, and poetic convention. The literal meaning or *vāchyārtha* of the word *dhvani* would be sound, the *lakshyārtha* would be re-sound and the *dhvanyārtha* is suggestion. The brilliance of Ānandavardhana can be seen here as to same the *dhvani* theory, he used suggestion, he borrows the name from the grammarians.

relating to aesthetics and semantics and answers them systematically like a philosopher” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. xxiii). This research aims to critically analyse the *dhvani* through the perspectives of contemporary thinkers, using both primary and secondary sources of texts. The *dhvani* has significant importance in Indian linguistic philosophy, propounded by the Kashmiri scholar Ānandavardhana; it is considered a watershed moment in Indian literature. Ānandavardhana was the pioneer scholar to theorise the *dhvani* and thoroughly explain it like a philosopher, and changed the entire dynamic of poetry in Indian literature. *Dhvani* is grounded in the concept of suggestion, which implies that the true meaning of a poem lies deeper to be realised through suggestion; what it conveys is completely different from the literal meaning of words. Ānandavardhana argued that the suggestion in a poem is more important than the literal meaning of the words and that the suggestion is the source of poetic pleasure. He also argued that the suggestion should be conveyed using figures of speech, such as similes and metaphors. The *dhvani* theory is therefore a significant aspect of Indian aesthetics and literary criticism. Understanding the genesis and evolution of the *dhvani* is crucial for scholars and enthusiasts alike, as it sheds light on the intricacies of Indian literary traditions and provides a framework for analysing and appreciating literary works. *Dhvani* and *Dhvanyāloka* shaped Indian literary traditions, particularly poetry, drama, and aesthetics. It provided a framework for analysing and appreciating literary works' emotional and aesthetic impact, emphasising the importance of suggestion and resonance. The *dhvani* theory has had a profound impact on Indian literature. It has inspired generations of poets and writers to explore the depths of their creativity and to use figures of speech to convey powerful and evocative messages. Ānandavardhana's *dhvani* theory is a testament to the power of suggestion and its importance in conveying the true meaning of a poem. The world owes tremendous gratitude to Ānandavardhana for his groundbreaking work in

this field. His work changed the entire dynamic of poetry in Indian literature. It gave a set of rules, values, and goals to be creative and generate unforgettable poetry. The very first utterance in the *Dhvanyāloka* is: “*kāvyaśya ātmā dhvani riti budhairyah samāmnāta pūrvah*” 1.1, *Dhvanyāloka*²⁴, which clearly states that to indicate that learned scholar men of yore have repeatedly declared that the soul of poetry lies in suggestion.

The soul, as the text says, does not reside in any specific part of the body of the sentence, but it resonates with the entire body of the sentence. This soul, according to Ānandavardhana, lies in suggestion. That is why *dhvani* has expressive significance in Indian linguistic doctrine, and this era-forming composition altered the whole dynamic of poetry in Indian literature. *Dhvani* is grounded in the conception of suggestion and implies that the authentic meaning of a verse lies in the suggestion it conveys rather than in the literal meaning of its terms. Ānandavardhana asserted that the suggestion in a lyric is more significant than the literal meaning of the terms and that the suggestion is the source of poetic gratification. The ground of Indian linguistic philosophy is a vast and priceless repository of wisdom; among the numerous jewels of Indian linguistic doctrine, the *dhvani* of Ānandavardhana stands out as a drop of the nectar of eternity.

1.2.4 *Dhvanyartha*

Dhvanyartha refers to the suggested meaning that emerges through *Dhvani*.²⁵ If *dhvani* is the suggestion, then *dhvanyartha* is the suggested. It is not the surface meaning of language, but the deeper significance disclosed through implication, emotional resonance, symbolic association,

²⁴ काव्यस्यात्माध्वनिरिति बुधैर्यसमा म्नातपूर्वः॥ (Some have said that the soul of poetry, which has been handed down from the past by wise men as suggestion -*dhvani*) (DL: I.1).

²⁵ यत्रार्थः शब्दो वा तमर्थमुपसर्जनीकृतस्वार्थो। व्यङ्ग्यः काव्यविशेषः स ध्वनिरिति सूरिभिः कथितः ॥. (The kind of poetry, wherein the conventional or literal meaning renders itself moot and the secondary meaning is also redundant, and while both the meanings becomes secondary the third meaning takes primacy and supremacy that is the suggested meaning known as *dhvanyartha*, the meaning that is arriving from *dhvani* (DL: I.13).

and contextual sensitivity. *Dhvanyartha* is apprehended through intuition and reflective participation rather than purely analytical reasoning. In literary aesthetics, *dhvanyartha* often produces emotional depth. The explicit statement becomes secondary to the experiential atmosphere it generates. *Dhvanyartha* reveals that meaning which is deeply layered and inexhaustible. A text does not possess a single fixed meaning; instead, significance unfolds through interpretive engagement. This makes understanding dynamic and participatory. Different readers may perceive different dimensions of *dhvanyartha* depending on their cultural background, emotional refinement, philosophical insight, and experiential maturity. *Dhvanyartha* also demonstrates the limitations of purely literal communication. Certain experiences of realities that transcend our mundane experience, such as love, loss, grief, mystical realisation, or aesthetic delight, cannot be fully expressed through direct, literal, conceptual, or formal language. They require suggestive communication that immediately awakens insight through indirect words. Hence, *dhvanyartha* becomes central not only to poetry but also to philosophy, spirituality, and human communication itself.

According to Ānandavardhana, the first ever occurrence of *dhvanyartha* was recorded, harnessed, and experienced through the poetry of Maharṣi Vālmiki, the author of the *Ramayana*. Vālmiki is in the jungle for his morning habits. While enjoying a bath in the neighbouring stream to the hermitage, he spots two Krounch²⁶ birds making love. The atmosphere is delightful, with a mellow ambience and a fortunate vibe. Abruptly penetrating through the cloud of bliss arrives an arrow from a huntsman's bow, slaying one of the Krounch birds. The other weeps with anguish, observing such an emotionally ponderous scene. Vālmiki erupts with pain and anger and says:

“*mā niṣāda pratiṣṭhāṃ tvamagamaḥ śāśvatīḥ samāḥ, yatkrauñca mithunādekam avadhīḥ*

²⁶ A mythical bird from Sanskrit literature who only mate with one partner forever in their life, and in loss of a partner forever lament in grief of its only partner and pass away due to drowning in the tremendous well of sorrow.

kāmamohitam” (Vālmiki, 1888, p. 15).²⁷ The reader or listener feels the muse's passion, heartache, sting, anguish, and wrathfulness because of *dhvani*. According to Ānandavardhana, because the poet laments in pain, he punishes the hunter for eternity for simply doing his duty of hunting, saying “no fame be thine for endless time, because, base outcast, of thy crime, whose cruel hand was fain to slay, one of this gentle pair at play!” (Griffith, 1895, p. 7). The critics enunciate that it was the experience of sentiment that the minstrel endured when he witnessed a felled bird and the lamenting companion that caused him to author the verse. Even so, what the muse endured, and what we, his audience, are still feeling, is not the sentiment as it was felt by the bird, which had lost its companion, but the essence of the poet's sentiment. “The *rasa* is experienced through suggestion, not by Vālmiki's statement, ‘The bird was sad’” (Rustomji, 1981, p. 83). This *rasa* is witnessed through suggestion, that is, *dhvanyartha*, also understood as *vyangyārtha*, not by the statement or the verses uttered by Vālmiki, according to Ānandavardhana. “What one does experience is the *rasa*, the essence, of the universal emotions of grief and fear” (Rustomji, 1981, p. 81). It is authentic, as Wordsworth says: “Poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (Eliot, 1909, p. 14). According to Ānandavardhana, the roots of *dhvani* in poetry are with this narrative of Maharṣi Vālmiki, which means *dhvani* was already previously in use before Ānandavardhana theorised it and framed a methodical appraisal and analysis of the theory, and only the poetic origins lie with Vālmiki, but the philosophical origins predate the *Rāmāyana*, to the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*. That is why Ānandavardhana can give illustrations and examples in his magnum opus, *The Dhvanyāloka*, of varied poets and philosophers who used the *dhvani* and *dhvanyartha* in their works before the existence of the theoretical text.

²⁷ मा निषाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः शाश्वतीः समाः । यत्क्रौञ्चमिथुनादेकमवधीः काममोहितम् ॥ (1/2/15) (Vālmiki, 1888, p. 15). Hey hunter, attaining prestige will forever deceive you, even for infinite years, because you have killed one of the Kṛonch birds while mating, but only with the cause of self-sufficiency!

1.3 Nature and Scope of Study

This study is philosophical, analytical, interpretative, and interdisciplinary in nature, focusing on the theory of *dhvani* as expounded by Ānandavardhana in the *Dhvanyāloka*. Traditionally understood as a foundational theory of Sanskrit poetics and aesthetics, *dhvani* is examined in this research not merely as a literary principle but as a philosophical framework for understanding meaning, communication, experience, and knowledge. The study investigates the concept of *dhvanyartha* and argues that meaning transcends literal linguistic expression and emerges through a deeper realisation. By analysing the language, imagery, symbolism, and communicative structures within the *Dhvanyāloka*, the research seeks to trace the philosophical foundations of suggestive meaning and demonstrate how *dhvani* functions beyond poetry in broader linguistic and epistemological contexts. The study further engages with Indian philosophical traditions such as Vyākaraṇa, Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, and aesthetics, while comparatively reflecting upon modern theories of meaning, hermeneutics, and philosophy of language. Through this approach, the research attempts to reposition the *Dhvanyāloka* from a text confined to poetics into a broader philosophical inquiry into the nature of meaning, experience, and understanding.

The scope of this research is primarily centred on the *Dhvanyāloka* and the philosophical possibilities emerging from Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani*. The study explores the transition of *dhvani* from poetics to philosophy by examining its relevance to language, communication, dialogue, tacit experience, *rasa*, hermeneutics, and social epistemology. It analyses how suggestive meaning operates not only within literary texts but also within the broader process of communication and shared understanding. The research draws upon

interpretations of major Indian aestheticians, grammarians, and philosophers in order to contextualise the emergence and development of the theory of meaning, while selectively engaging with Western theories of language and interpretation for comparative purposes. However, the study remains limited in its primary textual focus on the *Dhvanyāloka* and does not attempt a complete historical survey of all schools of Indian poetics or philosophy of language. Its principal concern remains the philosophical expansion of Ānandavardhana's theory beyond aesthetics into the domains of meaning, experience, and epistemology. Consequently, while the study transcends the poetic limitations traditionally imposed upon *dhvani*, it remains methodologically grounded in philosophy.

1.4 Hypothesis and Objectives of the Study

The central hypothesis of this thesis is that suggestive meaning (*dhvanyartha*) does not originate merely within poetic language but emerges from a deeper philosophical and experiential foundation rooted in tacit experience, dialogue, and communicative experience. Drawing upon Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*, the study argues that *dhvani* pre-exists literary aesthetics as an ontological and epistemic principle that first manifests through *saṃvādaśakti*, the power of dialogue and lived communication, and later evolves into *śabdaśakti* through textual interpretation and philosophical systematisation. The thesis further hypothesises that the plurality of Indian philosophical schools emerging from singular foundational texts such as the *Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, and *Brahmasūtra* becomes possible because of the inherent suggestive capacity of *dhvani*. Through the operation of *dhvani*, identical textual sources generate diverse interpretive traditions such as *Advaita*, *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, and *Dvaita*, demonstrating that meaning is never exhausted by literal expression but continuously unfolds through experiential realisation, hermeneutic engagement, and contextual understanding.

The primary objective of this thesis is to investigate the philosophical origins, foundations, and epistemological implications of suggestive meaning in Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* by extending *dhvani* beyond its conventional confinement within Sanskrit poetics into broader domains of philosophy, hermeneutics, language, and social epistemology. The study aims to demonstrate that *dhvani* functions not only as *śabdaśakti* but also as *bhāṣāśakti* and *saṃvādaśakti*, thereby revealing multiple dimensions of meaning-generation grounded in tacit experience and dialogical consciousness. Another major objective is to establish the relation between *sahṛdaya* and tacit experience, arguing that just as poetic suggestion requires aesthetic receptivity, philosophical insight requires experiential realisation prior to conceptual articulation. The research also seeks to analyse how philosophy, literature, and artistic traditions emerge as pedagogical extensions of tacit wisdom, transforming metaphysical insight into communicable and socially accessible forms through narrative, symbolism, and aesthetic expression. Furthermore, the thesis aims to comparatively engage *dhvani* with Western hermeneutic traditions in order to identify convergences and differences between suggestive meaning and interpretive meaning, while ultimately arguing that *dhvani* constitutes a comprehensive philosophical theory of meaning that integrates language, experience, communication, interpretation, and collective knowledge into a unified framework.

1.5 Methodological Framework

The present PhD thesis adopts a qualitative research methodology, specifically employing a Grounded Theory approach²⁸ adapted to philosophical inquiry. While grounded theory is

²⁸ It is perhaps best to start with how the creators of grounded theory defined their method, in their foundational book which launched grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). They defined it as the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained and analysed in social research. The key point here is that the theory produced is grounded in the data. (Urquhart, 2022, p. 4).

conventionally associated with social sciences, this study demonstrates its applicability to philosophy by treating classical texts as sites of lived meaning, conceptual emergence, and dialogical experience, rather than as repositories of fixed doctrines. The research adopts a qualitative, conceptual, and interpretive methodology, employing an adapted grounded theory approach within philosophy. Classical Sanskrit philosophical and aesthetic texts are treated as qualitative data, allowing concepts to emerge inductively rather than being imposed deductively. Key methodological features include a textual and hermeneutic analysis of the primary and secondary texts. The qualitative research will be an approach of the Grounded Theory Research.²⁹ The thesis will also include a brief comparative philosophical analysis of the Indian and Western traditions of thought with respect to the Suggestive Meaning. The thesis will also concentrate on the essence of an experience-centred interpretation of the primary text. The methodology mirrors the very process of meaning-generation in *dhvani* discussed in the thesis, thereby ensuring theoretical coherence. The qualitative methodology is justified by the nature of the research problem itself. The thesis seeks to investigate *dhvani* as a pre-conceptual, experiential, and dialogical phenomenon, which cannot be adequately studied through quantitative or formal-logical methods. Philosophical meaning here is subtle, contextual, and suggestive, aligning with the qualitative concern for depth, interpretation, and emergence rather than measurement or verification. The inquiry is therefore interpretive, phenomenological, and hermeneutic in orientation, while remaining textually grounded in Sanskrit aesthetics.

The core textual corpus consists of the works of Ānandavardhana, especially the *Dhvanyāloka*, supplemented by relevant writings from Nyāya, Vyākaraṇa, and Vedāntic traditions, including

²⁹ How the discovery of theory from data-systematically obtained and analysed in social research-can be furthered. We believe that the discovery of theory from data-which we call grounded theory is a major task confronting sociology today, for, as we shall try to show, such a theory fits empirical situations, and is understandable to sociologists and layman alike (Glaser & Strauss, 2009, p. 1).

dialogical philosophical texts such as the *Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavad-Gītā* and *Brahmasūtra*. These texts are treated as qualitative data sources, not merely as authoritative statements but as expressions of experiential insight, dialogical meaning-making, and evolving philosophical positions. Rather than imposing a pre-existing theoretical framework onto these texts, the study allows conceptual categories to emerge inductively from sustained engagement with the material. This mirrors Ānandavardhana's own insistence that meaning is not constructed artificially but recognised through attentive experience and interpretation.

1.6 Raison d'être

Taking a cue from Ānandavardhana, one realises that the experience comes first, and sharing of experience is not possible through normal means, which is why *dhvani* is used to realise suggestive meaning (*dhvanyārtha*). The objective here is to bring forward the essentiality of the suggestive meaning in philosophy, and to claim that the philosophical texts also give birth to suggestive meanings. The research also attempts to explore the possibility of language and communication being a meaningful unit through *dhvani* with the evolving role of *dhvaniśakti* by examining *śabdaśakti*, *bhāśaśakti* and *Samvādaśakti*. The research also attempts to understand the significance of philosophising in *dhvani* by exploring how *dhvani* makes philosophising necessary. The research also attempts to go beyond the limitations of the *dhvani* theory and attempts to explore *dhvani* as an epistemic source of knowledge, and argues for the social epistemology of the *dhvani* to verify it as a valid source of knowledge. This research will focus on a previously unexplored phenomenon, the use of *dhvani* in philosophical texts. The *dhvani* theory has existed for a long time, but it has never been applied to any text beyond the realm of aesthetics. This research aims to break with the tradition and expand beyond the pre-established

boundaries of the *dhvani*. A deeper dive will be done into the origins of *dhvani*, as its existence in philosophical texts is to be explored.

1.7 Summary of the Thesis

The first chapter establishes the conceptual and philosophical foundation of the thesis by examining the problem of meaning within both Indian and Western traditions of philosophy of language. It critiques purely semantic and analytic approaches that reduce meaning to denotation and logical structure, arguing instead that meaning is fundamentally experiential, contextual, and affective. The chapter introduces the distinction between *abhidhā*, *lakṣaṇā*, and *dhvani*, demonstrating that literal and indirect meanings are insufficient to explain the fullness of human understanding. Through discussions of Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, and other aestheticians, the chapter argues that *dhvanyartha* represents a tacit and pre-reflective dimension of meaning that precedes linguistic articulation. It formulates the thesis hypothesis that meaning first arises through lived experience and only later becomes systematised through language and philosophy. The chapter further outlines the scope, objectives, methodology, and conceptual vocabulary of the study, including *rasa*, *ānanda*, *sahṛdaya*, and tacit *experience*, while positioning *dhvani* not merely as a poetic principle but as a philosophical framework capable of explaining communication, understanding, and knowledge itself.

The second chapter reconstructs the historical and intellectual genealogy of *dhvani* by tracing its roots in Nyāya, Vyākaraṇa, and Mīmāṃsā traditions before Ānandavardhana. It demonstrates that suggestive meaning was already implicit in debates concerning sentence meaning, implication, inference, intention, and contextual understanding. The chapter argues that grammarians and *Naiyāyikas* viewed meaning as holistic and communicative rather than

confined to isolated words, thereby preparing the ground for Ānandavardhana's systematic formulation of *dhvani* in the *Dhvanyāloka*. Through an examination of the four *udyotās*, the chapter analyses how Ānandavardhana transformed the discourse on meaning by elevating *dhvani* as the soul of poetry and an independent mode of cognition irreducible to *anumāna*, *arthāpatti*, *abhidhā*, *lakṣaṇā*, *tātparyavṛtti*, or *vakrokti*. It critically evaluates competing theories of meaning and establishes that *dhvanyārtha* contains an experiential surplus that cannot be fully explained through logic or inference alone. By integrating grammar, logic, aesthetics, and philosophy, the chapter positions *dhvani* as a unifying and expansive theory of meaning that transcends disciplinary boundaries.

The third chapter expands the scope of *dhvani* beyond poetics into a universal philosophy of communication and language. Rejecting the assumption that isolated words or sentences are the primary units of meaning, the chapter argues that dialogue, communication, and holistic linguistic interaction constitute the true locus of meaning-generation. It introduces the concepts of *śabdaśakti*, *bhāṣāśakti*, and *saṃvādaśakti*, proposing that *saṃvādaśakti*, the power of dialogue and communicative exchange, is the primordial source of meaning. Through examples such as the dialogical structure of the *Upaniṣads*, the chapter demonstrates that meaning emerges intersubjectively through context, lived experience, and shared understanding rather than through static linguistic structures. It further argues that *dhvani* operates not only in poetry but also in everyday language, gestures, idioms, and social interaction, where communication constantly exceeds literal meaning. Engaging critically with Analytic Tradition and linguistic theories, the chapter exposes the limitations of purely rational and semantic models in accounting for emotive and experiential dimensions of understanding. It ultimately concludes that meaning is co-created

through communicative participation and that *dhvani* functions as a universal epistemic principle operative across literature, philosophy, and social life.

The fourth chapter constitutes the philosophical core of the thesis by conceptualising *dhvanyartha* as an experiential and tacit mode of knowing that transcends mere interpretive rationality. The chapter critically compares *dhvani* with hermeneutics, showing that while both reject literalism and recognise contextual interpretation, hermeneutics remains primarily interpretive and rational, whereas *dhvani* culminates in experiential realisation through *rasa*. It develops the notion of tacit experience as a pre-reflective and embodied form of knowing that precedes conceptualisation and serves as the foundation of philosophical insight. Central to this discussion is the reinterpretation of *sahṛdaya* as a philosophical agent who actively participates in the co-creation and experiential apprehension of meaning. The chapter argues that genuine understanding cannot arise solely through abstract speculation or logical analysis but requires emotional, intuitive, and existential participation. By distinguishing experiential realisation from detached philosophical speculation, the chapter critiques purely rationalist epistemologies and demonstrates that *dhvani* integrates cognition, intuition, emotion, and lived experience into a holistic mode of philosophising. It concludes that philosophy without experiential grounding remains incomplete and that *dhvanyartha* provides the necessary bridge between tacit insight and articulated philosophical knowledge.

The concluding chapter synthesises the arguments of the thesis and advances its central claim that *dhvanyartha* functions as a legitimate epistemic source and a comprehensive philosophical framework. The chapter examines the social epistemology of *dhvani*, arguing that meaning is continuously negotiated through suggestive communication rather than explicit propositional assertion. It analyses the two developmental paths of meaning through *saṃvādaśakti* and

śabdaśakti, illustrating this through the *prasthānatrayī*, the *Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, and *Brahmasūtra*, where a single textual tradition gives rise to multiple philosophical schools because of the suggestive openness of *dhvani*. The chapter further addresses the problem of multiplicity of meaning and *śabdhāṛthadoṣa*, arguing that valid plurality is regulated through *rasa* and *ānanda* rather than interpretive arbitrariness. It establishes that *dhvanyārtha* is not error-based meaning but an experiential form of understanding accessible only to the *sahṛdaya*, who functions as a philosopher capable of tacit realisation. By linking aesthetic bliss with philosophical knowledge, the chapter demonstrates continuity between *rasa*, *jñāna*, and *ānanda*. The thesis concludes by repositioning Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* from a text of poetics into a comprehensive philosophy of meaning, communication, interpretation, and knowledge, thereby making an original interdisciplinary contribution to Indian philosophy, aesthetics, hermeneutics, and social epistemology.

Chapter 2

The Aesthetic Turn: From Grammarians to Ānandavardhana

dhvaninātigabhīreṇa kāvyatattvaniveśinā | ānandavardhanaḥ kasya
*nāsīdānandavardhanaḥ ||*³⁰

2.1 Introduction

Indian intellectual history witnesses a gradual yet profound transition from grammatical and logical analyses of language toward an aesthetic philosophy centred on experience, suggestion, and emotional resonance. Before Ānandavardhana, discussions concerning meaning were largely dominated by grammarians and *Naiyāyikas*, who examined linguistic cognition through denotation, implication, inference, and epistemological precision. Although these traditions developed sophisticated theories regarding the nature of meaning and communication, they remained insufficient in explaining the unique experiential and emotional force produced by poetic language. The emergence of the *dhvani* theory marks a decisive aesthetic turn in this discourse, where meaning began to be understood not merely as semantic communication but as

³⁰ ध्वनिनातिगभीरेण काव्यतत्त्वनिवेशिना । आनन्दवर्धनः कस्य नासीदानन्दवर्धनः ॥ (Rājaçekhara, 1887, p. 4). For whom did Ānandavardhana, who incorporated the deepest suggestions and profound essence of poetry, not become a source of ultimate bliss/delight? This is a *śloka* with suggestion in it in the praise of Ānandavardhana, asking the question for whom did he not live up to his name? (His name being Ānandavardhana the person who increases the joy) All he did his entire life was to bring more joy to the world, and ultimately with his work of *Dhvanyāloka* he blessed the world with permanent access to transcendental bliss! The suggestive question is implying that his brilliant poetic theories brought supreme joy, bliss and delight to all true critics and scholars.

a subtle and suggestive revelation capable of evoking *rasa*, aesthetic bliss, and deeper states of consciousness. This chapter explores the genesis of this transformation by tracing the intellectual background of *dhvani* and examining how Ānandavardhana elevated suggestive meaning, *dhvanyartha*, into the central principle of literary and aesthetic experience through his seminal work, the *Dhvanyāloka*.

This chapter further examines Ānandavardhana's contribution as a visionary aesthete who transformed Sanskrit poetics into a sophisticated philosophy of language and aesthetic consciousness. Through the four *udyotas* of the *Dhvanyāloka*, Ānandavardhana systematically establishes the autonomy and indispensability of *dhvani*, demonstrating that poetic meaning transcends literal expression and emerges through suggestion, emotional resonance, and contextual experience. The chapter critically analyses major debates surrounding *dhvanyartha* in relation to *anumāna*, *arthāpatti*, *abhidhā*, *lakṣaṇā*, *tātparyavṛtti*, and *vakrokti*, showing how Ānandavardhana defended *dhvani* as an independent mode of meaning and aesthetic cognition. By moving from grammatical analysis to aesthetic experience, the *dhvani* theory reoriented Sanskrit literary criticism toward the exploration of language as a medium capable of revealing profound emotional and philosophical truths. The chapter ultimately argues that this aesthetic turn represents not merely a literary innovation but a significant philosophical reconfiguration of meaning itself, where language becomes a vehicle for experiential insight, shared emotional understanding, and the realisation of deeper dimensions of human consciousness.

2.2 Ānandavardhana: A Visionary Aesthete

A pivotal and revolutionary role in the history of Sanskrit poetics and Indian literary criticism is held by Ānandavardhana. He is widely recognised as one of India's finest aestheticians and

literary thinkers, having flourished in Kashmir during the ninth century CE under the patronage of King Avantivarman (Kunjunni Raja, 1998, p. v). His influence goes beyond only creating literary masterpieces; by developing the *Dhvani*, he revolutionised our understanding of poetic meaning. By defining suggestion as the essence of poetry, in his masterwork, the *Dhvanyāloka*³¹, he radically changed the direction of Indian poetics. Ānandavardhana is regarded as a visionary aesthetician whose views influenced later literary criticism, hermeneutics, and *rasa* theory because of this profound philosophical and aesthetic understanding. Regarding Ānandavardhana's private life, very little conclusive historical evidence is known. Scholars, however, often date him to between 820 and 890 CE (Kunjunni Raja, 1998, p. 3). Kashmir was one of India's most active intellectual and cultural hubs during his time, and he thrived there. Ānandavardhana inherited the rich intellectual legacy of Kashmir, which had previously produced a number of notable intellectuals in the fields of grammar, philosophy, poetics, and aesthetics. Ānandavardhana..

....too was a native of Kashmir and was fortunate to have lived during the best of days of literature, which was the rule of King Avantivarman in the 9th century. Kalhana's *Rājataranginī*, which is considered to be a chronicle of Kashmir, mentions four stalwarts of the court of Avantivarman, one of whom is Ānandavardhana" (Chandran & V.S., 2021, p. 13 & 14).

Ānandavardhana developed his groundbreaking theories on poetic language and aesthetic experience in this intellectually stimulating setting. In addition to being a theorist and a

³¹ Ānandavardhana composed *Dhvanyāloka* with 138 *kārikās*, 8 brief poems that are meant to be memorised. Nearly all of the verses are written in śloka or āryā meter. A prose commentary (*vṛtti*) that elaborates on the lines is around twenty times their length. The twenty-nine short lines of this literary commentary are identical in style to the *kārikās*, although they are typically started with a statement like this is a supportive (*parikara*) stanza or herewith a summarising (*sanksepa*, *saiigraha*) stanza." The fact that the prose *vṛtti* never addresses these summarising and supporting stanzas is another way to set them apart from the *kārikās* (Ingalls, 1990, p. 25).

philosopher, Ānandavardhana was a skilled poet. He is credited with a number of literary works³², but the *Dhvanyāloka* is still his most well-known work. Because of his poetic sensibility, he was able to see that poetry had aspects of significance that go beyond literal expression and to transcend strict formalism. Many literary theorists prior to Ānandavardhana concentrated mostly on rhetorical embellishment, stylistic brilliance, and figures of speech known as *alaṃkāra*. Ānandavardhana recognised the significance of these components but came to the conclusion that they were insufficient to describe the profound emotional and artistic impact of great poetry. As a result, he looked for a more fundamental idea that underpins both poetic beauty and communication.

The uniqueness of Ānandavardhana is the realisation that language has a third power, *dhvani*, or the power of suggestion, in addition to denotation and indication. According to Ingalls;

Some have said that the soul of poetry, which has been handed down from the past by wise men as “suggestion” (some say it) does not exist; others, that it is an associated meaning (*bhākta/lakṣṇa*); while some have said that its nature lies outside the scope of speech: of this (suggestion) we (Ānandavardhana) shall here state the true nature in order to delight the hearts of sensitive readers (Ingalls, 1990, p. 47).

He maintained that neither inference nor metaphorical indication could adequately capture this suggestive function. He meticulously maintained the autonomous standing of *dhvani* in the *Dhvanyāloka* against critics who tried to use language or logic alone to explain poetic meaning. According to him, poetic language conveys concepts that are inferred rather than explicitly expressed, and this nuanced communication is what makes poetry really beautiful. Integrating

³² Ānandavardhana's other works include the *Viṣamabāṇalīlā* and *Arjunacarita*. The *Viṣamabāṇalīlā* was in the form of a play written in *Mahārāshtri* Prakrit, and *Arjunacarita* was a *mahākāvya* in Sanskrit (Chandran & V.S., 2021, p. 14).

dhvani and *rasa* was one of Ānandavardhana's finest accomplishments. *Rasa* was mostly explored by earlier theorists in relation to dramaturgy, particularly through Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. By stating that *rasa-dhvani*, or the suggestion of aesthetic feeling, is the highest sort of suggestion, Ānandavardhana expanded the idea into literary criticism. “His greatest contribution was that he was able to merge the concepts of *rasa* and *dhvani* in a manner that had not been attempted until then” (Chandran & V.S., 2021, p. 15). He claims that the ultimate goal of poetry is aesthetic enjoyment rather than just intellectual comprehension. Poetry reaches its pinnacle of greatness when it offers meaning that awakens a blank space in the reader's brain. This realisation led Indian poetics to adopt a more reader-focused and experiential aesthetics. By promoting *śānta rasa* as a separate *rasa*, Ānandavardhana also made a groundbreaking contribution. Ānandavardhana made a solid case for the addition of *śānta* as the ninth *rasa*, despite the fact that previous traditions typically recognised just eight *rasas*. He identified calm and detachment as authentic aesthetic feelings that may be represented artistically in an effort to show their psychological foundation and literary validity. He went on to say that the *Mahābhārata*³³ was essentially based on *śānta rasa* (Kunjunni Raja, 1998, p. 30). Because it linked literary aesthetics with metaphysical and spiritual experience, this was a daring and intellectually significant contribution.

Ānandavardhana was a visionary aesthetician who saw literature as a means of higher cognition and emotional realisation rather than just decorative discourse. “He called this power *dhvani* when it is in its purest form, that is, when it predominates over the other semantic powers in the

³³ The *Mahābhārata* is the great canonical example of such a poem, first discussed as such by Ānandavardhana in his *Dhvanyāloka*. Through his reading, the *Mahābhārata* is to be seen as a *śāntarasa* text because, through the lamentable ends to which even the ‘victors’ in its cataclysmic war are reduced, it inculcates despair with all worldly endeavour, inducing readers to turn instead to the path of renunciation by explicitly invoking *śāntarasa* (McCrea, 2013, p. 179).

sentence” (Ānandavardhana, 1990, 14). Poetry, in his opinion, has the power to expose realities that regular discursive discourse cannot. As Ingalls states,

Ānandavardhana considered to be of all semantic powers the most valuable for poetic expression, a power which in its most general aspect he calls *vyanjakatva*, the power of suggestion, or, more literally, the power of revelation (as of a lamp which reveals the objects upon which it casts its light). He calls this power *dhvani* when it is in its purest form, that is, when it predominates over the other semantic powers in the sentence (Ingalls, 1990, p. 14).

According to him, excellent poetry allows the reader to experience greater levels of awareness through resonance, suggestion, and emotional intuition. This realisation foreshadows several subsequent conversations in reader-response theory, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. As a result, his aesthetic philosophy moves beyond technical literary criticism and into the fields of philosophy of language and speculative philosophy. Ānandavardhana's focus on the function of the *sahṛdaya*, or the perceptive and learned reader, is another noteworthy feature of his worldview. According to him, meaning in poetry develops via interactions between the poet, text, and reader rather than being mechanically fixed within words. The crux of the argument can be seen below:

The gist of what Ānandavardhana says is that if a reader can create the possibility of *dhvani* in a context, irrespective of whether the speaker/author intends it or not, that suggestive meaning, which the *sahṛdaya* creates on his own, will fall in the ambit of *dhvani*” (Chandran & V.S., 2021, p. 120).

Daniel H. H. Ingalls explains the words of Ānandavardhana: The *sahṛdaya* is able to understand proposed meanings because of his creative sensitivity and emotional refinement. As a result,

rather than being solely rational, poetry knowledge becomes an experience and an interactive process. As a result, Ānandavardhana was among the first philosophers to acknowledge the reader's interpretive role in literary experience. Later Indian aesthetics were greatly influenced by Ānandavardhana. In the renowned *Locana* commentary on the *Dhvanyāloka*, Abhinavagupta developed and extended his thoughts. Even when they disagreed with him, other theorists were forced to discuss the *dhvani*. Later breakthroughs in Sanskrit poetics, particularly theories pertaining to *rasa*, imagination, aesthetic consciousness, and literary communication, were built upon his work. Because of this lasting impact, Ānandavardhana became known not just as a literary critic but also as one of the finest Indian philosophers of art. The life and writings of Ānandavardhana therefore mark a pivotal moment in the intellectual history of India. He transformed literary criticism into a deep philosophical field by revealing the persuasive power of language and establishing a connection between poetry and aesthetic realisation. Accordingly, Ānandavardhana

...argues for the aesthetic power of *dhvani* as a bridge between sound and sense, claiming that phonetic attributes generate indirect evocative meanings beyond literal interpretation. It connects *dhvani* to layered emotional/intellectual experience and discusses its continued significance for understanding language and creative expression (Bari, 2025, p. 83).

Through his perspective, poetry became a vehicle for spiritual insight and emotional revelation rather than just a decorative form of expression. Because of this, Ānandavardhana is still regarded as a visionary aesthetician whose theories are still fundamental to Indian poetics, philosophy and aesthetic literature. “However, nobody would deny the importance of

Anandavardhana's concept of *dhvani* as a distinctive feature which marks a literary work” (Chandran & V.S., 2021, p. 122).

2.3 Discourse on *Dhvanyartha* by Grammarians

Sanskrit grammar, initiated by Pāṇini in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*³⁴, was followed by commentary traditions such as Kātyāyana's *Vārttikas*³⁵ and Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*³⁶. The grammarians sought to explain how *śabda*, that is, utterances, convey meaning, how morphology and phonology operate, and how linguistic rules regulate correct speech. In the process, they developed theoretical notions of sign, meaning, form, and cognition (Cardona, 1997, p.300). Patañjali introduces the terms *sphoṭa* and *dhvani* in his commentary. For instance, Patañjali writes that “*evam tarhi sphoṭaḥ śabdaḥ dhvaniḥ śabda guṇaḥ*”³⁷ which means that the *sphoṭa* then is the word and *dhvani* is the quality of the word. According to Patañjali, the uttered sound component known as *dhvani* is a variable which may differ with speaker, speed, and intonation, whereas the meaning-bearing invariant that is *sphoṭa* always remains constant across variations, like the prominent Vedic example, the sound ‘k’ may be uttered differently every time, but the

³⁴ Pāṇini's grammar of Sanskrit written in the sixth century B.C., is the earliest linguistic description of the language and is the source and inspiration for the development of comparative philosophy and modern linguistics. The *Aṣṭādhyāyī* remains the most correct and complete grammar ever written and is considered a model for all grammars (Pāṇini, 1989, p. i).

³⁵ The *Vārttikas* of Kātyāyana (c. 300–400 BCE) are critical annotations on Pāṇini's foundational Sanskrit grammar, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. There are approximately 4,000 *Vārttikas* covering about 1,500 *Pāṇinian* rules, serving to explain, amend, or supplement Pāṇini's work to ensure accurate linguistic usage (Halder, 2022, p. 128).

³⁶ The *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali is an encyclopaedic and authoritative work on Sanskrit Grammar. On the strength of references to the Maurya kings, the wealth of the *Nandas*, the Siege of Ayodhya and the sacrifice performed by King Pusyamitra, it is believed to have been composed in the second century B. C. Barring the *Pratisakhya* works, if they are looked up as works on Vedic grammar, Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is looked upon as the oldest existing work on Sanskrit Grammar. The *Vārttikas* of Kātyāyana and others which number more than five thousand, are short pieces of comment upon the several topics of grammar which are found in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, and the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali is a scholarly brilliant gloss upon the *Vārttikas* which the author was able to collect from different centres of the study of Pāṇini's *Vyakarna* in the vast country from Gandhara in the North – west to Vanga and Suhma in the south-east. There are stories about the break of continuity in the traditional instructions of the *Mahābhāṣya* and the consequent revisions of the text (Abhyankar, 1974, p. iv).

³⁷ एवं तर्हि स्फोटः शब्दः ध्वनिः शब्द गुणः then the *sphoṭa* is the word; *Dhvani* is the quality of the word (Mahābhāṣya on Pāṇini 1.1.70 v. 5).

sign-unit, the letter ‘k’, remains always the same. “According to Patañjali... *sphoṭa* is not identical with *śabda*. It is rather a permanent element of *śabda*, whereas *dhvani* represents its non-permanent aspect” (Cardona, 1997, p. 350). Thus, the suggestive element is not always necessarily present, but it is added to language and can only be known through the experiential element. Therefore, *dhvani*, in the grammatical tradition, is primarily a technical term for the acoustic manifestation, the “vehicle” of meaning, with the potency of suggestion, rather than the enriched notion of suggestion in aesthetics, as shown by Ānandavardhana.

Bhartṛhari, a brilliant scholar and grammarian, further develops the *sphoṭa* doctrine, ignoring the significance of *dhvani* as an essential component. Bhartṛhari’s elaboration “*upāsanīyaṃ yatnena śāstraṃ vyākaraṇaṃ mahat, pradīpabhūtaṃ sarvāsāṃ vidyānāṃ yadavasthitam*”³⁸ (Pāṇḍeya, 2005, p. 25) can be referred to in the *Vākyapadīya*³⁹. He distinguishes between *varṇa-sphoṭa*, *pada-sphoṭa*, and *vākyā-sphoṭa*, which is the difference between the burst of meaning through the letter, the word, and the sentence. In his account, the temporal sound stream of the *varṇas* uttered is a mere manifestation; the meaning arises when the entire sentence-*sphoṭa* “bursts forth” in the hearer’s mind. The audible has its place in *dhvani*, with the potency of suggestion, but the ontological weight lies strictly with *sphoṭa* according to the grammarians. Bhartṛhari writes that *dhvani* should be known just as the audible sound earlier recognised with the object through suggestion, but now rarely used in regular language:

³⁸ उपासनीयं यत्नेन शास्त्रं व्याकरणं महत् । प्रदीपभूतं सर्वासां विद्यानां यदवस्थितम् ॥ One should diligently study that great science of grammar, which serves as a beacon of light for all branches of knowledge. Just as no object is visible in the darkness without a lamp, similarly, it is impossible to grasp the true meaning and essence of any other discipline without a knowledge of grammar (Pāṇḍeya, 2005, p. 25).

³⁹ *Vākyapadīya* can be treated as the Magnum opus of Bhartṛhari. This is probably the first book which laid down a new path way to the philosophy of grammar in India. Later, philosopher-grammarians like Kaṇḍabhaṭṭa and Nāgeśa accept *Vākyapadīya* as the authentic text to explain their views (Bhartṛhari, 2015, p. iii).

*Athavā pratītapadārthako loke dhvaniḥśabdaḥ ucyate, iti vyākaraṇa mahābhāṣyam, sa
 sphoṭaśśabdajaśśabdo dhvanirityucyate budhaiḥ,
 pratyayairanupākhyaairgrahaṇānugrahaistathā, dhvaniprakāśite śabde
 svarūpamavadhāryate, alpīyasā'pi yatnena śabdamuccāritaṁ matiḥ, yadi yā naiva
 grhṇāti varṇaṁ vā sakalaṁ sphuṭam, śabdasyordhvamabhivyaaktervṛttibhedāstu vaikṛtāḥ,
 dhvanayaḥ samupohante sphoṭātmā tairna bhidyate, iti vākya-padīyam⁴⁰.*

Dhvani now only carries the potency of suggestion, which may vary with each context, but the underlying written sign has only a specific meaning, which is invariant and known through *sphoṭa*. Thus, grammar theory begins to recognise that meaning is not simply the sum of audible units but involves a deeper cognitive event through the recognition of knowledge. Recognising knowledge through the uttered sound is not a simple event. According to the grammarians, they believe that the uttered sound that is *dhvani* is distinct from but very instrumental to meaning via *sphoṭa*, but the meaning is not simply reducible to mere sound only because of suggestion. Grammarians argue that recognising that the hearer's cognition of meaning is holistic via *vakya-sphoṭa* and so allows for resonance beyond the literal parts of the sound manifestation. Grammarians do not at all explicitly discuss suggestion in the sense of poetic implication; however, by positing that meaning emerges via a flash-cognition of the sentence and that the sound manifests but does not exhaust meaning, they open the space for “unsaid but suggested” meaning. Scholars describe this as the foreshadowing of the *dhvani*: “The theory of *dhvani* was based on the *sphoṭavāda* of grammarians...” (Mishra, 1964, p. 209). Patañjali's distinction of

⁴⁰ अथवा प्रतीतपदार्थको लोके ध्वनिःशब्दः उच्यते । इति व्याकरण महाभाष्यम् । स स्फोटशब्दजशब्दो ध्वनिरित्युच्यते बुधैः ॥ प्रत्ययैरनुपाख्यैर्ग्रहणानुग्रहेस्तथा । ध्वनिप्रकाशिते शब्दे स्वरूपमवधार्यते ॥ अल्पीयसाऽपि यत्नेन शब्दमुच्चारितं मतिः । यदि या नैव गृह्णाति वर्णं वा सकलं स्फुटम् ॥ शब्दस्योर्ध्वमभिव्यक्तेर्वृत्तिभेदास्तु वैकृताः । ध्वनयः समुपोहन्ते स्फोटात्मा तैर्न भिद्यते ॥ इति वाक्यपदीयम् ।

There is a slight difference in the first verse of '*Locan*'. Spottism is the theory of evolution. When we speak a word (e.g. Kamal), we pronounce one, one varṇa (ka, ma, la m). Yet how can the listener understand the meaning of that word? How does the full meaning appear before the listener? Therefore, when a whole sentence is spoken, how is the entire sentence understood after each word in it is pronounced? This principle has arisen from the consideration of that question (Shah, 2018, p. 328).

dhvani and *sphoṭa* implies that the audible vehicle alone does not guarantee complete meaning, and the suggestive capacity and potency lie in the invariant sign. Even Bhartṛhari's sentence-level, that is, *vākya-sphoṭa*, implies that meaning is not built piece-by-piece but received as a whole; this point allows suggestion to exist as meaning beyond the literal concatenation of units. However, the grammarians were more concerned with normative grammar, correct utterance, meaning-cognition, not with aesthetic effects, emotional resonance, or the notion of poetry's suggestion as such. They lacked the evaluative dimension that Ānandavardhana introduces in *Dhvanyāloka*. Due to Ānandavardhana, the term *dhvani* is prominently revived and reinterpreted according to its pre-existing potency among aestheticians, not simply as audible sound, but as suggestion also known as *vyañjanā*, which arouses aesthetic bliss through experiential emotions of *rasa*, making it the soul of literary texts. The grammarians' distinction enabled this reinterpretation through holistic cognition; thus, suggestion may be the latent content elicited through the interplay of sound and sign. Thus, the grammatical prehistory is indispensable. "But the grammarians' concern was not with poetry proper; hence their philosophy of *sphoṭa* or 'meaning revealed in a flash' had no specific reference to any aesthetic use of language" (Krishnamoorthy, 1985, p. 115). The grammarians' distinction enabled this reinterpretation through holistic cognition; thus, suggestion may be the latent content elicited through the interplay of sound and sign. Thus, the grammatical prehistory is indispensable.

2.4 Discourse on *Dhvanyartha* by Nyāyayikas

The Nyāya tradition was founded on the fundamental basis of the *Nyāya-sūtras* of Gautama. He posits four *pramāṇas*: *pratyakṣa* (perception); *anumāna* (inference); *upamāna* (comparison); and *śabda* (testimony). In the Nyāya view, *śabda* is capable of providing valid knowledge when it is

properly used and heard from trustworthy sources. This emphasis on *śabda-pramāṇa* elevates linguistic meaning to the epistemic level, making language not just a communicative or informative tool, but a source of knowledge that reveals reality. In the Nyāya semantics, meaning is derived via sign-inference: one hears a word, recognises its referential domain known as *jāti*, *guṇa*, *dravya*, and infers a particular understanding. Take the most prominent example of the cowness, a nominal expression like *govām*, of cows leads to cognition of cowhood. Although the focus is on literal reference, the mechanisms of inference anticipate how meaning can extend beyond the immediate denotation for the hearer to use contextual, experiential and background knowledge to arrive at what is meant, not just what is said. This semantic richness is relevant to *dhvani* because suggestion often relies on experiential elements, emotional inferential and exclusionary processes where what is not said, but what is evoked, matters more. Although Nyāya does not systematically treat *dhvani* as later aestheticians do, several of its theoretical features matter, such as the validity of testimony. When the words are considered to be valid cognition, their implied meanings may also be recognised under conditions of trustworthiness and context, hence suggestion in literary language might be ‘valid’ if valued as reliable testimony and seen as the speaker's intention. Another feature used by *Nayāyikas* and *dhvanivādins* is the inferential reach to arrive at a meaning and understanding of a word or sentence. Nyāya's analysis of inference, that is, *anumāna*, demonstrates that cognition arises from signs and symbols, enabling the idea that suggestions are indirect signs in language that can produce legitimate cognitive effects beyond their literal meaning. Another feature used by both *Nayāyikas* and *dhavnivādins* is the contextual and pragmatic dimension. The hearer's background knowledge and experiences, the joint context between speaker and listener, and inference from context matter in Nyāya analyses. A poet's suggestion likewise depends on

cultural and situational context in literature and on the reader's sensitivity to the emotional experience, making one a *sahṛdaya* or someone with *sahṛdayatva*. Although Nyāya does not explicitly use that term, the mechanism is analogous. Through *dhvani*, the hearer infers not just the literal meaning but an emotional state, a cultural reference, an implied mood. For Nyāya, the hearer uses knowledge of linguistic signs and context to make valid inferences; if the poem's sound, context and associations are legitimate, the suggested meaning might function like a secondary inference. Thus, what later theorists and linguistic scholars call *vyañjanā* could be conceived within the Nyāya framework as a valid inference arising from linguistic signs and cultural knowledge. However, the Nyāyikas' focus was epistemic and logical, rather than aesthetic. They did not evaluate the theory of literary suggestion as a criterion of beauty, nor did they classify kinds of suggestion into *vastu*, *alaṃkāra*, and *rasa-dhvani*. Nor did they integrate the concept of *rasa* into their semantics. Their normative interest lies in when language gives valid knowledge, not when language evokes aesthetic emotion. Until the time a suggestion provides valid knowledge through a suggestive method and experiential understanding, it can be considered a valid source of Knowledge according to the *Nyāyikas*. Nyāya's methodology makes *śabda* one of the central *pramāṇas*, the means of valid knowledge cited in the system: testimony is a source of knowledge about matters outside immediate perception. This emphasis reinforces that language is epistemically potent and that words can convey knowledge; this general premise makes it plausible to treat subtle effects of speech, including suggestion, as legitimate objects of analysis (Dasti, 2022, p. 2). Classical *Nyāyikas* were careful to analyse how words convey meaning. Some Nyāya discussions engage questions overlapping with grammatical debates: are words directly connected to universals? Are meanings grasped compositionally or via some non-compositional mechanism? While Nyāya is mainly

epistemological and logical, it nonetheless developed a fine-grained account of linguistic evidence and semantics that informs later hermeneutic claims (Dasti, 2022, p. 3).

Nyāyika analyses relevant to suggestion and poetic implication, in *sādhāraṇa-janaka*, that is, general terms and inference: Nyāya theory of inference, *anumāna*, analyses how one moves from signs to hidden properties; poetic suggestion often depends on inferential leaps, and the reader infers an unstated emotional state. Nyāya's account of sign-inference provides a formal template for how non-explicit content can be rationally derived from textual cues. The epistemic legitimacy of *Śabda* is valid cognition because Nyāya grants testimony epistemic legitimacy like the *Vedas* as *apauruṣeya* testimony; any statement's suggestive force could, in principle, be a legitimate cause of cognitive states in the audience, poetic suggestion would not be irrational but a recognised source of knowledge, albeit of a different kind, aesthetic rather than mundane. "Navya-Nyāya analysis identifies *śakti* as the relation between a word token and its referent - not an intrinsic property of the word-type but a conventionally established relation (*nimittā*) that grounds the word's capacity to generate linguistic cognition (*śabdabodha*)" (Thakur, 1988, p. 61). Nyāya's emphasis on the conditions under which words are trustworthy influences how one might evaluate whether a suggestion is warranted. Poetic suggestion, an implicature that is not expressly stated, can fit naturally into Nyāya's conceptual scheme as a form of inference based on textual marks and cultural background.

The grammarians provided a mechanism of sound, meaning, and cognition; the Nyāyikas provided standards of inference and validity. Combined, these traditions made it conceptually permissible to claim that suggestion in language is not accidental but systematic and worthy of evaluation. Ānandavardhana seized this possibility: by insisting that *dhvani* is the essence of literature, he transformed an implicit possibility present in grammar and logic into a full-blown

systematic aesthetic norm. The classical Sanskrit grammarians laid the foundation stones for the linguistic basis of the later aesthetic use and revival of the *dhvani* theory. Their work on the relation between sound and meaning, the nature of the sign, and sentence-level cognition did not themselves produce a doctrine of poetic suggestion but created the conditions of possibility for it. Although the Nyāya tradition did not specifically address *dhvani* as an aesthetic suggestion, it established crucial semantic and epistemic foundations: that words convey valid meaning, that inference from signs is legitimate, and that cognition depends on context, sign-vehicle, and the listener's competence. “Ānandavardhana was clearly indebted to earlier grammarians, especially Bhartrhari, who first espoused *sphoṭa* theory, which describes the 'bursting' of meaning upon the hearing of an utterance” (Koppikar, 2014, p. 350). Without these foundations, the aesthetic theory of *dhvani* would have lacked philosophical grounding. Understanding this lineage enriches the history of Indian poetics by demonstrating how the concept of suggestion in poetry was prefigured in linguistic and epistemic traditions. Understanding this pre-poetic genealogy enriches our appreciation of Ānandavardhana's theory as rooted in, rather than severed from, the linguistic tradition.

2.5 The Systematic Approach of Ānandavardhana

The origins of the *dhvani* theory can be traced back to the ancient Indian traditions of aesthetics and literature. Influenced by the *Nāṭyāśāstra*, *rasa* theory, *alaṃkāra śāstra*, and *kāvya* literature, Ānandavardhana synthesised these ideas in his seminal work, the *Dhvanyāloka*. “The evolution of Indian poetics can be traced down to the Vedas” (Kumar, 2023, p. 406). By introducing the concept of *dhvani*, Ānandavardhana revolutionised the understanding of poetry and literature, emphasising the power of suggestion and resonance. *Dhvani* continues to be a significant aspect of Indian literary criticism, reflecting the rich intellectual heritage of India. *Dhvani*, a

fundamental aspect of Indian aesthetics and literary criticism, traces its origins to ancient Indian philosophical and literary traditions. Theorised by Ānandavardhana in the 9th century, this theory revolutionised the understanding of poetry and literature by emphasising the power of suggestion and resonance. After exploring the origins of the *dhvani*, the knowledge allows us to delve into the rich tapestry of Indian intellectual heritage and understand the philosophical underpinnings that shaped this influential concept. Ancient Indian literary traditions have played a pivotal role in shaping the cultural and intellectual landscape of the Indian subcontinent. From the sacred hymns of the *Vedas* to the profound philosophical insights of the *Upaniśads* and the treatise on dramaturgy, *Nāṭyāśāstra*, “The earliest systematic work on dramaturgy is Bharatamuni’s *Nāṭyāśāstra*, which contains the formative ideas on poetics that have been incorporated into the various branches of Indian aesthetics” (Kumar, 2023, p. 406). These literary works have left an indelible mark on Indian civilisation.

“Ānandavardhana included Bharata's doctrine of *rasa* within the purview of the comprehensive scheme of *dhvani* and thus gave it a new shape. He combined the two strains of Sanskrit poetics, developing them into a unified theory” (Shrawan, 2019, p. 121).

Additionally, the early references to *dhvani* in Sanskrit literature, particularly Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* and Abhinavagupta's commentary, have further enriched the understanding of literary aesthetics. Ānandavardhana’s work marked a significant departure from this tradition, as he prioritised the suggestive capacity of poetry, arguing that the true beauty of poetic language is often found in what is left unsaid. This shift reflects broader philosophical investigations into language, truth, and experience that characterise Indian thought. While earlier theorists emphasised technical prowess and rhetoric, Ānandavardhana’s articulation of *dhvani* fosters an

appreciation for the emotive and experiential qualities of poetry. Ānandavardhana provides various illustrations to support his arguments about *dhvani*, like Kālidāsa's ability to infuse simple imagery with profound emotional resonance. Ānandavardhana similarly exemplifies in his thesis, wherein *dhvani* becomes a pivotal force shaping the reader's aesthetic experience.

Prior to Ānandavardhana, Sanskrit poetics heavily emphasised *abhidhā*, or the direct referential meanings of words, as the primary source of poetic expression through its positioning and figures. Scholars like Bhāmaha⁴¹ and Dandin⁴² highlighted the role of figures of speech but did not fully explore the depth of suggestion that *dhvani* encompasses.

He gives great importance to the *guṇas* and *doṣas* (merits & defects) in poetry. He believes that the reader should be able to distinguish between good poetry and the bad ones. He divides literature into three: poetry, prose and a fusion of both (Kumar, 2023, p. 406).

In Indian linguistic philosophy, three such powers are believed to exist behind words concerning their meaning, not just one of *abhidhā*. Because of the *dhvani*, there can be three meanings behind a single statement, with *dhvanyartha* itself being the third meaning, *abhidhā* and *lakṣaṇā* being the other two. Scholars and philosophers give independent levels of importance to the multiple ways of understanding the meaning of the same individual statement. "The concept of *Dhvani* arose out of the demand for explaining how the emotional content of a poem is transmitted to a reader to produce *rasa* in him/her" (Joshi, 2018, p. 503). Scholars like Bharata

⁴¹ Bhāmaha (7th century), apparently the foremost Sanskrit poet from Kashmir, glorifies the art of poetry and concludes that eloquence devoid of the gift of poetic expression is worthless. He critiqued the *sphota* doctrine of the grammarians and the Buddhist linguistic doctrine of *apoha*. In *Kavyalaṃkāra* he describes the specific nature of poetic language and several figures of speech (Kumar, 2023, p. 406).

⁴² Dandin lived in Kanchi during the 7th century. His most important contribution is *Kāvyaadarshan* and the prose narratives *Dashakumāracharitam* and *Avantisundarikatha* (Kumar, 2023, p. 407).

Muni, Mammaṭācāryacārya, Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, and all other literary scholars agree upon the following three powers behind words, also known as the three strengths of the terms; one can reach the meaning of any statement by consciously using any of the strengths stated. *Abhidhā*, the literal meaning, which is the simple, straightforward meaning of the word. *Abhidhā*⁴³ here means the literal meaning of any statement. Any listener or reader understands the direct meaning, and the meaning does not need further clarification or interpretation. It is to be understood as it is. Nothing more is to be explored or expressed in or through that statement. The most straightforward meaning and explanation of any statement is the *abhidhā* meaning. The meaning that one achieves through the use of *abhidhā* is known as *vāchyārtha*. The next in the series is *Lakṣaṇā*, the intended meaning or indicative meaning. *Lakṣaṇā* is a statement where the literal meaning of the statement is senseless or baseless, unclear, or beyond one's understanding. There must be a literal meaning to reach the intended meaning⁴⁴. In *lakṣaṇā*, one has to go beyond the literal meaning of a statement or expression and try to understand the intent or the denotative meaning of the statement or the expression. Even in a grammatically correct statement if the literal meaning of the same is redundant, then the *lakṣaṇā* meaning of the statement is to be understood. That is known as the *lakṣaṇā* meaning, *lakṣyārtha*. *Dhvani* or *vyamjanā*, the suggestion.⁴⁵ Suggestive, denotative, interpretive, poetic and metaphysical meaning achieved through suggestion, that meaning is known as *dhvanyārtha*. For *dhvanyārtha* or *vyangyārtha* to exist, there does not need to be any error or senseless meaning, neither in the *abhidhā* meaning

⁴³ The conventional meaning is also known as *gamyārtha*. Thus *vyamjanā/dhvani* is distinct from *abhidhā* because they have *viśayabheda* (different scopes). *Abhidhā* conveys the *vācya* sense which is directly related to the things, persons or places. *Vācārtha* is the literal meaning of things, places or individuals, signifying factual knowledge (Shrawan, 2019, p. 104).

⁴⁴ (*The Poetic Light: Kavya Prakasha of Mammaṭācārya*, 1977)

⁴⁵ Anandavardhana, have to lend scope for '*lakṣaṇā*' as they evidently involve stultification (*badha*) in the expressed sense. Thus the difference is that while Anandavardhana and others do not accept '*lakṣaṇā*' in the first variety where there is no superimposition at all, Śobhakara advocates the same even in the first variety for reasons mentioned previously. Mammaṭācārya and Ruṣya follow this division indicated by Anandavardhana (Parthasaradhy Rao, 1992, p. 110).

nor the *lakṣaṇa* meaning; there only needs to be *dhvani*, that is, suggestion. The *dhvani* meaning can exist even in an entirely sensible statement, with a sensible literal and indicative meaning, yet suggesting a completely different meaning. According to scholars like Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, *dhvani* can only be understood by *sahṛdaya*, i.e, someone with an emotive understanding of knowledge of language and the world.⁴⁶ The meaning that one achieves or realises through the experience of emotions because of *dhvani*, that meaning is known as *dhvanyartha* or *vyamgyārtha*. The *dhvanyartha* is something beyond words and needs to be experienced and understood through philosophising. Many authors, such as Bharatamuni, Mammattacharya, Maharshi Bhamah, and Mahakavi Dandin, considered various aspects such as *rasa*, *alamkara*, *riti*, and *guna-dosha* as the essential parts of the poem. However, Ānandavardhana is one step ahead. According to Ānandavardhana, the aspects mentioned above are the body of any poetry, and the *dhvani* is the soul. In short, they are an essential part of poetry, but only sometimes necessary. Whereas *dhvani* is the soul of poetry.⁴⁷ Without *dhvani*, poetry is soulless. Just like the human body is not alive without a soul, poetry is also lifeless without *dhvani*. Furthermore, it can also be used for rational outpouring of thoughts and to convey multiple meanings not only from statements but even from a singular word, using the power of *dhvani* in individual words, in the same way Ānandavardhana uses it by naming the suggestive meaning as the *dhvanyartha*. The literal meaning of *dhvanyartha* would be the meaning of a sound, the intended meaning would be the formally understood meaning given to

⁴⁶ Abhinavagupta defines *sahṛdaya* in his commentary on the Dhvanyāloka called Locana as those appreciators who: i) have been exposed to appreciation of literary work and who have made it a habit to think about the literary work ii) who, because of this previous exposure, attuned their minds to create the reflection of poetic emotions in their minds; iii) who, because of this reflection, could get themselves assimilated, as it were, with the emotions experienced by the character ; and iv) whose stable emotions are capable of being triggered into a sym- pathetic resonance with the emotions portrayed (Halder, 2022, p. 265).

⁴⁷ *Dhvani* and it alone constitutes the soul of literature. Both *vastu dhvani* and *alamkāra dhvani* finally merge into *rasa dhvani*. Here it is also important to note that in *alamkāra dhvani*, a figure of speech is implied (Shrawan, 2019, p. 112).

that sound, and the suggested meaning of *dhvanyartha* is the suggested meaning which is experienced from a word or sentence which provides the highest amount of *rasa*.

Ānandavardhana's exploration of *dhvani* positions him as a transformative figure in the landscape of literary theory, articulating a vision of poetry that prizes suggestiveness and emotional depth. “This theory asserts that the true essence of poetry lies not in its explicit meaning but in its suggestive power, which evokes deeper emotional and intellectual responses in the reader” (Renjith, 2020, p. 13363). His emphasis on what is implied rather than what is stated cultivates an understanding of literature as a dynamic interplay between text and reader, broadening the scope of literary appreciation. Through *dhvani*, Ānandavardhana not only redefined the function of language in poetry but also enriched the cultural fabric of aesthetic experience in Sanskrit literature. His discourse continues to resonate in contemporary literary studies, reminding us of the profound power of suggestion in textual interpretation and the intricate dance between language and emotion. By embracing *dhvani*, poets and readers alike can explore the deeper undercurrents of human experience that poetry uniquely encapsulates.

Ānandavardhana defines the *dhvani* and distinguishes among the concepts and paths of achieving the *dhvanyartha* meaning as follows: *Dhvanati iti dhvaniḥ* (suggests both word and meaning is *dhvani*), *Dhvanyate iti dhvaniḥ* (suggested is *dhvani*). *Dhvananam dhvaniḥ* (suggestion is *dhvani*). *Dhvani samudāyaḥ dhvaniḥ* the entire literature is *dhvani*.⁴⁸ That kind of poetry, wherein the literal or conventional meaning renders itself secondary, or the literal or conventional word renders its meaning secondary and suggests the intended or implied meaning, or the suggested meaning is superior, is designated by the learned as *dhvani* or suggested poetry,

⁴⁸ ध्वनति इति ध्वनि (that which suggests both word and meaning is *dhvani*); ध्वन्यते इति ध्वनि (suggested is *dhvani*); ध्वननं ध्वनि (suggestion is *dhvani*); ध्वनि समुदायः ध्वनि (entire literature is *dhvani*); (Saroj, 2025, p. 260).

and the meaning is *dhvanyartha*. *Kāvyaśāstravinod*⁴⁹ is an exemplary discourse done to arrive at *dhvanyartha*. If the central meaning of *dhvani* is arrived at through the primary meaning of words, that is, the *vāchyārtha*, then it is known as *abhidhāmul dhvani*. There are two ways given by Ānandavardhana through which the primary sense leads to the suggested understanding. Firstly, the primary meaning gives rise to the suggested meaning; then, the suggestion process is known as *abhidhāmul dhvani*. “*Sarvaḥ śleṣaviṣayaḥ | yatra tu śabdaśaktyā sāmāthyākṣiptaṁ vācyavyatiriktaṁ vyaṅgacāṁ-mevalaṁkārantaraṁ prakāśate sa dhvanerviṣayaḥ*” (DL: II.21v).⁵⁰ In the second path, the words have secondary meanings, the *lakṣyārtha*, which is also essential, and this *lakṣyārtha* helps reach the *dhvani* meaning. In such cases, the primary meaning, the *vāchyārtha*, first leads to the secondary meaning, or *lakṣyārtha*. Then, this, in turn, leads to the suggestive meaning or *dhvanyartha*. Since the primary means to arrive at the suggestion here is the *lakṣyārtha*, the process is called *lakṣaṇamula dhvani*.

Arthaśaktyudbhavastvanyo yatrārthaḥ saṁprakāśate |

Yastātparyeṇa. vastvan yad vyanaktyukti vinā svataḥ || (DL: II.22)

Yatrārthaḥ svasāmāthyādarthāntaramabhivyanakti śabdavyāpāraṁ vinaiva

So'rtha-śaktyudbhavo nāmānusvānopamavyaṅgayo dhvaniḥ | (DL: II.22v)⁵¹

Therefore, in the superior *kāvya* or the *dhvani kāvya*, although the essence or soul of the poetry is the suggestive meaning “*kāvyaśāstrātmā sa evārthastathā cādikaveḥ purā, krauñś ca dvandva*

⁴⁹ Joyous activity of discussing poetry and literature including vakrokti (Saroj, 2025, p.259).

⁵⁰ सर्वः श्लेषविषयः । यत्र तु शब्दशक्त्या सामर्थ्याक्षिप्तं वाच्यव्यतिरिक्तं व्यङ्ग्यं- मेवालङ्कारान्तरं प्रकाशते स ध्वनेर्विषयः । (But such instances where a new figure is conveyed by the suggestive power of the word only, a figure which appears thus to be quite different from an expressed one, will come under the scope of suggestion based upon the power of the word) -DL: II.21v.

⁵¹ अर्थशक्त्युद्भवस्त्वन्यो यत्रार्थः संप्रकाशते । यस्तात्पर्येण. वस्त्वन्यद्व्यनक्त्युक्ति विना स्वतः ॥ २२ ॥ (The other variety of suggestion is based upon the power of sense and it is instanced in places where the second meaning is conveyed only by way of implication by the first meaning and not by the expressed words at all) -DL: II.22.

यत्रार्थः स्वसामर्थ्यादर्थान्तरमभिव्यनक्ति शब्दव्यापारं विनैव सोऽर्थ-शक्त्युद्भवो नामानुस्वानोपमव्यङ्ग्यो ध्वनिः । (That instance where one meaning gives rise to another through its own power of implication and not through the denotative power of words becomes an example of suggestion based upon the power of meaning and similar to resonance. -DL: II.22v.

viyogotthaḥ śokaḥ ślokatvamāgataḥ” (DL: I.5).⁵² The literal meaning *vāchyārtha* and the secondary *lakṣyārtha* also have a place as the means to reach the *dhvanyārtha*. As a result, it is also believed that many scholars and Indian Linguists suggested that the meaning cannot be reached except through the primary *vāchyārtha* itself or the primary *vāchyārtha* and secondary *lakṣyārtha* meanings.

In his text 'Locana', Abhinavagupta compares Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* to the sun itself, and one cannot stare at or observe the sun and gain knowledge from it with naked eyes. One has to observe the sun through a reflection or through glasses to gain anything from it. Similarly, he says that the *Dhvanyāloka* is like the sun, and to understand it and to gain knowledge from it, one needs 'Locana', the glasses, binoculars or reflection of it. “*bhadundurāj acaraṇ ānavja kṛtādhi vāsahrd yaśruto 'bhinava gupta padā bhidho' ham yatkidapyanuraṇansphuṭayāmi kāvyālokaṃ svalocananiyojanayā janasya*” (Locana: I.1).⁵³ *Dhvani* brings out the full potential of every bit of ordinary language to create an entirely new understanding and meaning, using *rasa*, sentiments and aesthetic pleasure as tools. “The notion of *dhvani* gives one a feel for the sensory qualities of language as if words were living, pulsating things” (Das, 2015, p. 247). According to Ānandavardhana, the brilliance of a statement does not lie in its academic jargon nor linguistic gymnastics but in making everyday language echo beauty through the use of *dhvani* or suggestion.

When using *dhvani*, the poet uses words of the material order to convey something of a mystery, something of the deeper meaning of life. Through *dhvani*, using the simple words of poetry, the

⁵² काव्यस्यात्मा स एवार्थस्तथा चादिकवेः पुरा । क्रौञ्चश्चद्वन्द्ववियोगोत्थः शोकः श्लोकत्वमागतः ॥ ५ ॥ (That meaning alone is the soul of poetry; and so it was that, of yore, the sorrow of the First Poet (i. e. Vālmiki) at the separation of the curlew couple took the form of a distich) -DL: I.5.

⁵³ भदुन्दुराजचरणानव्जकृताधिवासहृद्यश्रुतोऽभिनवगुप्तपदाभिधोऽहम् । यत्किंचिदप्यनुरणन्स्फुटयामि काव्यालोकं स्वलोचननियोजनया जनस्य ॥ (Remaining at the lotus feet of Induraja and internalising the scriptures, whatever I (Abhinavagupta) state through the application of my intellect, I am going to be the eyes to elucidate (to you) the light of suggestion in the 'Kāvyāloka' (*Dhvanyāloka*) before the connoisseurs *sahridayas*)) (Locana: I.1).

poet's soul communicates with the reader's soul. The reader feels what the poet felt. The reader is arriving at the poet's knowledge through *dhvanyartha*, not by the literal meanings of the words. *Dhvani* is the only theory which logically explains the poetic process and the satisfaction of the creative poet, which the reader experiences; therefore, it is considered the essence of poetry. In his original text, Ānandavardhana gives several examples⁵⁴ from various poets and famous and accomplished writers as described by Krishnamoorthy below:

Ānandavardhana gives a large number of illuminating examples in Sanskrit literature. He helps the reader understand and appreciate poetry better and offers valuable guidance to the poet by laying down the basic principles of poetic creation for the first time (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. xxvii).

According to Ānandavardhana, *dhvani* is an exclusively poetic feature concerned with exploiting the beauty of every element in the medium of language. Therefore, the interventions of new thinkers on the same topic are necessary, which brings us to the very significant perspective of Mr Patrick Colm Hogan in his scholarly article 'Toward a Cognitive Science of Poetics: Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, and the Theory of Literature'. He argues that *dhvani* theory and *Rasadhvani* are essential cognitive methods of understanding. Hogan also further explores modalities of realising the various layers of meaning in the *dhvani* theory. He questions whether understanding *dhvani* is only possible when someone is reading or watching something. He also questions whether realising the *dhvani* meaning is only possible when one has experienced an emotion before reading, the same emotion the author tries to show in the text. According to

⁵⁴ सुवर्णपुष्पां पृथिवीं चिन्वन्ति पुरुषास्त्रयः । शूरश्च कृतविद्यश्च यश्च जानाति सेवितुम् ॥ (*suvarṇapuspāṃ pṛthivīm cinvanti puruṣāstrayaḥ, śūraśca kṛtavidyaśca yaśca jānāti sevītum*) (Three persons will gather, flowers of gold from the earth: the bold, the learned, and he who knows how to serve) -DL: I.13v.
शिखरिण व नु नाम कियच्चिरं किमभिधानमसावकरोत्तपः । तरुणि येन तवाधरपाटलं दशति बिम्बफलं शुकशावकः ॥ (*shikharīṇi kva nu nāma kiyacciraṃ kimabhidhānamasāvakaro-ttapaḥ, taruṇi yena tavādharapātalaṃ daśati bimbaphalaṃ śukaśāvakaḥ*) (On which mountain and for how long, did this one perform penance? And what might be its name? For, the young parrot pecks, the fruit so red as your lips) -DL: I.13v.

Hogan, it is necessary to have previous feelings or experiences of the emotion expressed by the author to understand *dhvani*. He further states that experiments using the *dhvani* in contemporary times are necessary. According to him, experiments using the *dhvani* can lead to empirical research programs in the field of cognitive science, and its results could be astonishing.

According to another contemporary author, Krishna Rayan, the suggestive meaning does lie in the ordinary language. According to Krishna Rayan,

The distinction between the language of literature and the language of non-literature has been formulated in various ways, but by far the most efficient description of the difference is the one which ascribes two functions to language in general: the first being statement and the second suggestion, the latter, which has relation to depth, emotion, non-discursiveness and interiority, is the differentia of literary language” (Rayan, 1985, p. 124).

Dhvani, or suggestion, was initially regarded as specific to poetry but should now be recognised as equally characteristic of the everyday language and prose genres and, indeed, as a universal aesthetic component because it is valid for all periods, all forms of literature, all languages, and all dialects. Suggestive meaning has also become a pivotal part of imaginative writing in the modern or the brave new world. According to Higgins, the Indian tradition analyses the psychology of aesthetic breakthroughs and situates them in the broader context of human aspirations. “Indian Investigation of breakthroughs within and beyond aesthetics challenges Western philosophy to further investigate art’s connections with the ethical and spiritual dimensions of life” (Higgins, 2007, p. 43). Another brilliant scholar, Roshni Rustomji, in her scholarly article, ‘Rasa and Dhvani in Indian and Western Poetics and Poetry,’ compares the use of the *dhvani* in both the East and the West. According to the writer, even without theorising the

dhvani or any other similar theory, the *dhvani* has been used in the Western world of poetry and literature. She tries to persuade certain Sanskritists that *rasa* and *dhvani* do not belong solely to the heavenly domain of Sanskrit poetics. Her scholarly text attempts to demystify the concepts of *rasa* and *dhvani* and to show their presence and use in Indian and Western *kāvya*, that is, poetry (Rustomji, 1981, p. 76).

Professor V. K. Chari tries to outline the central premises of the theory of poetic suggestion developed by the Sanskrit critics in his article on the *dhvani* theory known as ‘The Indian Theory of Suggestion’. Chari further concludes in his article that “*rasa* is the starting point and the culmination of poetic semantics” (Chari, 1977, p. 398). This conclusion by Professor V. K. Chari is further questioned by another prominent scholar, Dale Riepe. He states that “the aesthetic object (here, the poem) is the starting point, then follows aesthetic enjoyment (*rasa*), a state of mind sonorous with the senses” (Riepe, 1977, p. 401). He also further questions the sources of *dhvani*, whether it is an inference or intuition. V. K. Chari finds it valid and tries to clarify the doubt or question presented by Dale Riepe in his article. Thus, both scholars present critical arguments concerning the *dhvani* theory. Similar to this argument, another prominent scholar, P. K. Narayan Pillai, presents a ‘condition’ to be recognised as a *dhvani vākya* or *dhvani kāvya*. He says, “*dhvani* must necessarily satisfy the condition that its sound and expressed sense should subordinate themselves to the suggested sense and serve to bring that sense to light as the most predominant factor” (Pillai, 1957, p. 36). He also questions the originality of the *dhvani* theory and tries to prove its pre-existence, but he only limits himself to the field of poetry and does not go beyond it. According to Pillai, Ānandavardhana, the author of *Dhvanyāloka*, claims complete originality in propounding the theory of *dhvani* poetry, but that cannot be considered valid as Ānandavardhana himself gives different examples of poetry containing *dhvani* in the

Dhvanyāloka, starting with *Mahākavi* Vālmiki, then *Maharṣi* Ved Vyāsa, and many more, that came before he ever theorised the concept of *dhvani*. According to Dr Joshi, Ānandavardhana is the creator of the *dhvani* theory, which means echo, sound or resonance concerning the “soul of poetry”. However, she does not address the pre-use of the *dhvani* theory in the realm of poetry or philosophical texts. Dr Joshi also states that one should be on the same wavelength as the writer to understand the *dhvanyartha*, as, according to her, when the poet writes, he creates a resonant field of emotions. If the reader is not on the same wavelength, it would be challenging to understand the poetry. Therefore, *dhvani* requires sensitivity from both the writer and the reader (Joshi, 2018, p. 498). Ānandavardhana systematically defines the *dhvani* theory and distinguishes among the concepts and paths of achieving the *dhvanyartha* through any sentence. The two primary categories of *dhvani* are *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya* and *avivakṣita-vācya*. The former, also known as *lakṣaṇāmtūla*, is based on *lakṣaṇā*; the literal meaning is not meant in this type. This includes the motive component in all intentional metaphor scenarios. The *avivakṣita-vācya* kind of *dhvani* is further divided into two categories, which correspond to the two forms of *lakṣaṇā*, namely *jahallakṣaṇā* and *ajahallakṣaṇā*: *arthantarasamkramita-vācya*, where the literal meaning is altered, and *atyantatiraskṛta-vācya*, where the literal sense is entirely abandoned (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 269). Cases where a word is employed in a lessened or increased sense are included in this second sub-variety. The 'focus' of classical Western rhetoricians is what Edgerton relates this to, but the perspective is actually a little different. This variant of *dhvani* includes what Empson refers to as the pregnant usage of words such as 'A is A'. The ancient *Mīmāṃsakas* acknowledged the usage of *lakṣaṇā* to praise objects, citing examples such as ‘dirty clothing is not clothes’⁵⁵. This pregnant use of words is also evident in denial, which can be partial. Thus, in the preceding example, the phrase *avasās*, that

⁵⁵ यान् मलिनम् अवसास् तत् (yān malinam avasās tat)

is, without garments, simply means ‘not clothes in the fullest sense of the term’. Similarly, Shelley's remark to the skylark, ‘bird, thou never wert’, does not imply that it does not belong to the Aves class. An emotional aura surrounds and penetrates the logical meaning of each word. The Pregnant usage of the word can either bring all of its associated feeling tones along with the logical sense, or it can deprive the word of all sense. And such use in which the typical sense, whether enhanced or lessened, can imply praise or criticism. Ānandavardhana provides an example of this form of *dhvani* as follows: ‘Only when favoured by the beams of the sun are lotuses lotuses’. In this context, lotuses means ‘lotuses in the full sense of the word; lotuses with all the qualities of beauty that make them worthy of the name lotuses, “*tadā jāyante guṇā yadā te sahr̥dayaigr̥hyante, ravikiraṇānugr̥hītāni bhavanti kamalāni kamalāni*” (DL: II.1v).⁵⁶ The second component of *dhvani*, *vivaksitanyaparavācya*, is also known as *abhidhāmula* since it is built on *abhidhā*, which is the word's basic meaning. The inferred sense is subservient to the literal sense, which is actually meant in this kind. Also, this is separated into two subtypes, including *asamlaksyakrama-uyangya*, in which the phases in the realisation of the recommended sense are imperceptible, and *samlaksyakrama-vyangya*, in which the processes of realising the proposed sense from the articulated sense may be clearly recognised. The latter is more significant and focuses on poetic emotional suggestion. Together with the comprehension of the expressed sense, the readers' latent permanent moods, that is *sthayibhāva*, are awakened through the *vibhāva* that is the cause of emotion, *anubhava* that is the effect of emotion, and *vyabhicāribhāva*, the transient mood; these are the transitional stages between comprehending the expressed sense and realising *rasa* through *dhvanyartha*. In this example, the *rasa* or *bhāva* is suggested by the explicit enumeration of the *vibhāvas*, etc., and it takes the centre stage in the

⁵⁶ तदा जायन्ते गुणा यदा ते सहृदयैर्गृह्यन्ते ।रविकिरणानुगृहीतानि भवन्ति कमलानि कमलानि ॥ (Merits become merits indeed, When critics of culture hold them so. Lotuses will be lotuses Only when sunshine shelters them) -DL: II.1v.

poem. If the suggested feeling is subservient to the conveyed sense, it falls under the *guṇībhūta-vyangya* category of poetry. And if the *vibhāvas*, etc., are not specifically addressed, they must be gleaned from the context, and so the steps in the realisation of the emotions will be visible. The form of *dhvani* known as *samlakṣyakrama-vyangya* is further separated into *vastu-dhvani*, which suggests a reality, and *alamkara-dhvani*, which suggests a figure of speech. There are two types of suggestions: those based on words, known as *sabdaśaktimūla* and those based on meanings, known as *arthaśaktimūla*. “*krameṇa pratibhātyātmā yo'syānusvānasannibhaḥ, śabdārthaśaktimūlatvātso'pi dveṣā vyavasthitaḥ*” (DL: II.20).⁵⁷ In the former, the actual words used are crucial to the suggestion and cannot be substituted by synonyms. In the latter, contextual factors and social and cultural background play an important role in bringing out the suggestion. Alternatively, it might be based on both simultaneously, which is known as *ubhayaśaktimūla*. The proposed facts and figures of speech should finally lead to the realisation of *rasa*. He claims that the true role of figures of speech in poetry is to aid in the creation of *rasa*. According to Abhinavagupta, the spirit of poetry is the suggestion of *rasa* or *rasa-dhvani*, whereas the development of ideas and figures of speech is *vastu-dhvani* and *alamkara-dhvani* only if it leads to *rasa*.⁵⁸ *Sabdaśaktimūla-dhvani* expresses emotions through words. According to Sapir, scientific research on emotional tones is challenging. Although there are socially recognised feeling tones or ranges for many words, they are often unpredictable and difficult to define.

⁵⁷ क्रमेण प्रतिभात्यात्मा योऽस्यानुस्वानसन्निभः । शब्दार्थशक्तिमूलत्वात्सोऽपि द्वेषा व्यवस्थितः ॥ २० ॥ (The other element of this suggestion manifests itself in the same way as resonance and the temporal sequentially of the two meanings will be discernible. It is also two-fold: that which is based on the power of the word' and 'that which is based on the power of sense. -DL: II.20.

⁵⁸ *Dhvani* has the capacity to produce various meanings. *Rasadhvani* is inexpressible and can be merely experienced. This experience is *alaukika* and not an ordinary, everyday experience. *Rasa dhvani* becomes the truest *dhvani* (Shrawan, 2019, p. 110).

The frequency of use in emotional circumstances mostly determines its significance. Mammaṭācāryacārya and Visvanātha believe that when a homonymous word or statement has many primary meanings and contextual constraints limit one of them, the power of suggestion conveys the remaining sense. They provide an example of *dhvani* based on words. Jagannatha Pandita has correctly rejected this viewpoint, arguing that in such instances, all senses are basic and are brought to the listener's consciousness by the force of *abhidhā* itself. Contextual variables can only limit their applicability, not strip it of its core senses. So there is no need to bring in *vyañjana* here. According to Jagannatha Pandita, *yogarūdhā* terms such as *paṅkaja* (lotus, mud-born) have etymological meanings but are confined in their use according to popular usage. The power of *abhidhā* communicates the popular meaning. The etymological sense is sometimes given by the power of suggestion, or by subtle supplementation. Sometimes we catch a glimpse of a hidden meaning behind a word, which leads to the emergence of additional meanings that complement the original meaning, like bells. Hence, the deep and resounding ring in words, which is lost in artificial and contrived languages, as well as the diversity, indefiniteness, weird suggestiveness, and evasiveness of most poetry. According to Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Eastern poetry has a unique ability to immerse readers in the essence of language, for this mysteriousness is the deepest ingredient in both Eastern language and poetry, in the sense that everything in it is metaphorical, with origins traceable back to ancient times (Hamburger, 1972, p.109). The word's origins are sensual, primal, succinct, and forceful. However, it evolves through subtle transitions to new connected meanings.

Despite being only indirectly connected, there is still an echo of the original word's sound and a darkly reflected picture of the first sensual sensation. A minor supplement can bring the ancient etymological meaning of a word to life. Examples may be found in every good poem. In

Kāvyaaprakāśa, Mammaṭācāryacārya alludes to the way in which Kālidāsa uses the word *kapalin* in the verse of *Kumārasambhava*: “*dvayam gatam samprati śocanīyatām, samāgamaprārthanayā kapālinak, kalā ca sā kāntimatī kalāvatas, tvam asya lokasya ca netrakaumudī*”.⁵⁹ By seeking association with *Kapālin*-Siva, the begging bowl, two things have become pitiable: the brilliant digit of the moon and thyself (Pārvati), moonlight to the eyes of the world. In this context, the name *kapālin* refers directly to Siva, yet its etymology indicates that he is impoverished and unworthy since it means the holder of the begging bowl. The fundamental sense of *abhidhā* is used to determine the meanings of homonymous expressions *śleṣa* when both meanings are appropriate in the context; However, if one is contextual and the other is not, the force of *abhidhā* may evoke both meanings, but contextual considerations will limit it to just one. Because the proposal is based on the actual words used and the words cannot be replaced by their substitutes, *sabdaśakti-mula-dhvani* is used to suggest figures of speech like similes in these situations.

The foundation of *Arthasaktimūla-dhvani* is the message that is expressed. It is not necessary for the indicated sense to be a concept or a figure of speech; examples of this sort are presented, wherein environmental variables convey emotions and fleeting experiences without specifically mentioning *vibhāvas*, *anubhavas*, etc. These are described as falling under the purview of *vastu-dhvani*. The peculiarity of the speaker or the person addressed, the sentence, the presence of another person, the expressed meaning, the occasion, the place, the time, the intonation, or the gestures can all imply different ideas even though a word's primary sense is clear and fixed. The proposed concept or figure of speech may be original to the poet, that is, *kavipraudhoktinispanna*

⁵⁹ द्वयम् गतम् सम्प्रति शोचनीयताम् समागमप्रार्थनया कपालिन | कला च सा कान्तिमती कलावतस् त्वम् अस्य लोकस्य च नेत्रकौमुदी | (5/71) *Kumārasambhava* “Now two things are reduced to a state of being pitied on account of the desire of union with *Pinakin* viz. that(celebrated) beautiful digit of the moon (lit. possessor of digits) as well as you, moonlight to the eyes of the world” (Devadhar, 1996, p. 124).

or viable in and of itself, *svataḥ-sambhavi*. According to the *vyanjaka*-s or the indications of suggestion, the many types of *samlakṣyakrama-vyangya* might be separated into *Vākya-prakāśya*, or disclosed by the entire phrase, and *pada-prakāśya*, or revealed by a single word. *Asamlakṣyakrama-vyangya*, the second form, is also categorised as originating from individual sounds, words, or portions of phrases or sentences. The entire poem or its stylistic structure is known as *sanghatanā* (Ānandavardhana, 1891, 179). Ānandavardhana understands how crucial it is to read the entire stanza or perhaps the entire poem in order that the implied sense's overtones are completely understood. Prasad makes it clear below

Ānandavardhana puts *dhvani* in three broad categories: *vastu-dhvani*, *alaṃkāra-dhvani* and *rasa-dhvani*. In real poetry, it is *rasa-dhvani* which is dominant. In poetry, *rasa* is always *vyangya*” (Prasad, 1994, p. 36).

2.5.1 Prathama Udyota of Dhvanyāloka

Ānandavardhana lays out his philosophy that *dhvani*, suggestion, is the essence of poetry in the first *udyota*. “kāvyasyātmā dhvaniriti budhairyaḥ samāmnātapūrva -stasyābhāvaṃ jagadurapare bhāktamā hustamanye, kecidvācāṃ sthitamaviṣaye tattvamūcustadīyaṃ tena brūmaḥ sahrdayamanahprītaye tatsvarūpaṃ” (DL: I.1).⁶⁰ He cites the opinions of three groups of people who oppose the *dhvani* doctrine: *dhvanyābhavavādins*, who claim that *dhvani* does not exist; “*anye brūyuh, nāstyeva dhvaniḥ, prasiddha prasthāna vyatirekiṇaḥ kāvya prakārasya kāvyatva hāneḥ, sahrdaya hrdayā hvādiśabdārtha mayatva meva kāvyalakṣaṇam*” (DL: I.1v).⁶¹

⁶⁰ काव्यस्यात्मा ध्वनिरिति बुधैर्यः समाम्नातपूर्व -स्तस्याभावं जगदुरपरे भाक्तमाहुस्तमन्ये । केचिद्वाचां स्थितमविषये तत्त्वमूचुस्तदीयं तेन ब्रूमः सहृदयमनःप्रीतये तत्स्वरूपम् ॥ १ ॥ (Though the learned men of yore have declared time and again that the soul of poetry is suggestion, some would aver its non-existence, some would regard it as, something (logically) implied and some others would speak of its essence as lying beyond the scope of words. We propose, therefore, to explain its nature and bring delight to the hearts of perceptive critics) -DL: I.1.

⁶¹ अन्ये ब्रूयुः । नास्त्येव ध्वनिः । प्रसिद्धप्रस्थानव्यतिरेकिणः काव्य-प्रकारस्य काव्यत्वहानेः । सहृदयहृदयाद्वादिशब्दार्थमयत्वमेव काव्यलक्षणम् । (Others assert thus : Suggestion does not exist indeed; for a species of poetry opposed to all well-known canons will

Bhaktavādins, who believe that it is part of *lakṣaṇā*; “*bhāktamāhustamanye, anye taṃ dhvanisaṃjñitaṃ kāvyātmānaṃ guṇavṛtti-rityauhuḥ*” (DL: I.1v).⁶² who claim that its essence lies outside the realm of words and is only understood by good-read men; “*śabda thaśarīraṃ tāvatkāvyam, tasya ca śabdagatā-śvāstvahetavo'nuprāsādayaḥ prasiddhā eva, artha gatāśc opamādayaḥ*” (DL: I.1v).⁶³ Poetry's lovely ideas can be classified as either inferred *pratiyamana* or stated *vācya*. Everyone is aware of the stated meaning in the form of *alaṃkāras*, or figures of speech. In addition to the beauty of the different body parts, the inferred or hinted notion is something like the unique charm in females. The implicit sense, which appears in the poetry of great poets, differs much from the literal meaning and is not limited to its components. The stanzas of explanation given by Ānandavardhana are shown below. “*vyāṅgayasya yatrāprādhānyaṃ vācyamātrānuyāyinaḥ, samāsoktyādayastatra vācyālaṅkṛtayaḥ sphuṭāḥ*” (DL: I.13v).⁶⁴ Ānandavardhana, in the above statement, clearly states that where the suggested meaning does not predominate, where the suggested meaning plays second fiddle and merely accompanies the literal sense that is *vāchyārtha*, one can have ornaments of the literal meanings, also prominently known as *alaṃkāras* in Indian linguistics, in the west famously known as figures of speech such as ‘*Samasokti*’ and the other *alaṃkāras*. He states that wherever one can find the implied or the connotative meaning as unimportant, insignificant and merely ancillary to

necessarily cease to be poetry. Poetry can only be defined as that which is made up of such words and meanings as will delight the mind of the critic) -DL: I.1v.

⁶² भाक्तमाहुस्तमन्ये । अन्ये तं ध्वनिसंज्ञितं काव्यात्मानं गुणवृत्ति-रित्यौहुः । (Some others mention it as something (logically) implied. (To put it differently,) others declare that the soul of poetry, designated by the term Suggestion, is the same as a secondary usage of words) -DL: I.1v.

⁶³ शब्द थशरीरं तावत्काव्यम् । तस्य च शब्दगता-श्वास्त्वहेतवोऽनुप्रासादयः प्रसिद्धा एव । अर्थगताश्चोपमादयः । (Poetry is but that whose body is constituted by sound (or word) and meaning. Sources of charm through sound such as alliteration are wellknown ; and so are the sources of charm through meaning such as .' simile') -DL: I.1v.

⁶⁴ “व्यङ्ग्यस्य यत्राप्राधान्यं वाच्यमात्रानुयायिनः । समासोक्त्यादयस्तत्र वाच्यालङ्कृतयः स्फुटाः ॥” (Wherever we find the implied meaning unimportant and merely ancillary to the expressed, we should clearly conclude that such instances contain only figures like the Condensed Metaphor) -DL: I.13v. Where the suggested meaning does not predominate but merely accompanies the literal sense, there we clearly have ornaments of the literal [i.e., figures of speech] such as *samāsokti* and the rest Ā., 1990, p. 164).

the expressed literal meaning, one should undoubtedly conclude that such instances contain only figures like the Condensed Metaphor; it has no cases of *dhvani* meaning. Here, the highest meaning does not rely on suggestion or *rasa*; the highest meaning relies on facts or factual information provided by the literal meaning; therefore, it should not be considered consisting of *dhvani* or *dhvanyartha*, even if the statement somehow suggests something different but insignificant. The experience of *rasa* does not achieve the highest meaning here but is only realised through the factual knowledge provided by the *vāchyārtha*. While explaining what should be considered a *dhvanyartha* or a suggestive meaning statement, Ānandavardhana also states what should not be considered a suggestion. He states it clearly in the stanza below. “*vyāṅgacatyā pratibhāmātre vācyārthānugame'pi vā, na dhvaniryatra vā tasya prādhānyaṃ na pratīyate*” (DL: I.13v).⁶⁵ Ānandavardhana states that in places where one has nothing but just a glimmer of the implied or connotative meaning, or where this meaning is just a handmaid to the expressed, it has no significant value, or where its primary importance of different meanings is not easily discernible. There is no suggestive meaning of *dhvanyartha* at all. Ānandavardhana completes the task of defining *dhvani* very judiciously and honestly. He states the following: “*tatparāveva śabdārtho yatra vyaṅgacaṃ prati sthitau, dhvaneḥ sa eva viśayo mantavyaḥ saṅkarōjjhitah*” (DL: I.13v).⁶⁶ According to him, only those instances wherein one finds both the word and the meaning solely directed towards the implied or the connoted meaning should be regarded as the actual instances of Suggestive meaning, admitting no confusion whatsoever. In the statements, only where word and sense of meaning are subordinate and are directed toward

⁶⁵ व्यङ्गचत्य प्रतिभामात्रे वाच्यार्थानुगमेऽपि वा । न ध्वनिर्यत्र वा तस्य प्राधान्यं न प्रतीयते ॥ (In places where we have just a glimmer of the implied, or where the implied is just a handmaid to the expressed, or where its primary importance is not clearly discernible, there is no Suggestive Poetry) DL: I.13v.

⁶⁶ तत्परावेव शब्दार्थो यत्र व्यङ्गचं प्रति स्थितौ । ध्वनेः स एव विषयो मन्तव्यः सङ्करोज्झितः ॥ (Only those instances wherein we find both the word and the meaning solely directed towards the implied meaning should be regarded as real instances of Suggestive Poetry admitting of no confusion whatever) -DL: I.13v.

the suggestion, and where there is no confusion or scepticism, only and only then is one in the area of experiencing the *dhvani*. To summarise, where the suggested meaning does not predominate but merely accompanies the literal meaning, that is, ornaments of the literal sense or figures of speech, it is not *dhvani*, where the suggested meaning appears only faintly, or merely follows along with the literal, or is not felt to be the more critical: in such places, there is no *Dhvani*. That suggestive meaning is the most dominant and significant, more vital than *lakṣyārtha* and *vāchyārtha*. Even in the clear and undoubted existence of *dhvanyārtha*, both *vāchyārtha* and *lakṣyārtha* can exist in the same statement, but both are insignificant or less significant than the *dhvanyārtha*. Even when the *dhvanyārtha* is achieved through *vāchyārtha* or *lakṣyārtha*, it is recognised as *Abhidhāmul dhvani* and *lakṣanāmul dhvani*, but still, the *dhvanyārtha* is predominant or more dominant; therefore, it can be undoubtedly known as *dhvanyārtha*.

2.5.2 Dvitiya Udyota of Dhvanyāloka

In the second chapter, Ānandavardhana discusses and provides examples of the subvarieties of *avivakṣita vācya*, including *arthāntara sankramita* and *atyantā tiraskrita*. *Asmlakshya kramavyangya* and *samlakshyakramavyangya* are the two divisions he makes of *vivakṣitānyapar vāhya*. Ānandavardhana distinctly signifies the priority of realisation of the highest meaning through the experience of the highest *rasa* and the highest priority given to the meaning; only then can one indeed conclude that it is *dhvanyārtha*. “*Rasa bhāva tadā bhāsatet praśāntyā dirakramah, dhvaner ātmāṅgi bhāvena bhāsamāno vyavasthitaḥ*” (DL: II.3).⁶⁷ Along with discussing the differences between *gunas* and *alamkāras*, the subdivisions of *samlakshya*

⁶⁷ रसभावतदाभासतेत्प्रशान्त्यादिरक्रमः । ध्वनेरात्माङ्गिभावेन भासमानो व्यवस्थितः ॥ ३ ॥ (Sentiment, emotion, the semblance of sentiment or mood and their (rise and) cessation etc., are all of 'undiscerned sequentiality. It is decided that when we have the prominent presence of this variety, we are having the very soul of suggestion) -DL: II.3.

kramavyangya into *sabdaśakti moola* and *asthaśakti moola*, the subdivision of *arthaśaktimoola* into *vāstu* and *alaṃkāra*, and other topics, the *asmlakshya kramavyangya*, which can be regarded as *rasadhvani*, is composed of *rasa*, *bhāva*, *rasabhāsa*, *bhāvābhāsa*, *bhāvāprashana*, and others, which are subordinate (Ānandavardhana, 1891, p. 199). The *dvitiya udyota* of *Dhvanyāloka* is a pivotal segment in Ānandavardhana's exploration of poetic meaning and aesthetics in classical Sanskrit literature. This chapter delves into the nuances of *avivakshita vācya*, a term that translates to meaning that is not explicitly stated, and unfolds its subvarieties, distinguishing how implicit suggestions operate within poetic language. Ānandavardhana also contrasts *gunās* (qualities) with *alaṃkāras*, that is, figures of speech, a crucial distinction in understanding how differing devices impact poetic language. *Gunās* are considered inherent qualities of poetry that evoke beauty, while *alaṃkāras* exist as ornamental devices that enhance the quality of expression. The merging of *gunās* with respective *alaṃkāras* generates more profound dimensions of meaning, further affixing significance to the poetic experience. In examining *dvitiya udyota*, Ānandavardhana illuminates the multifaceted ways in which poetry communicates meanings that are often veiled beneath the surface. His exploration of *avivakṣita vācya* serves as a critical lens through which literature can be unravelled, providing a framework for understanding the depth and richness of Sanskrit poetry. “*arthāntare saṅkamatamatyantam vā tiraskṛtam | avivakṣitavācyaṣya dhvanervācyaṃ dvidhā matam*” (DL: II.1).⁶⁸ By categorising and dissecting the various subtypes and divisions, Ānandavardhana endows readers and poets alike with tools to grasp subtler nuances, thereby enhancing the entire aesthetic experience of the poetic form. This comprehensive analysis not only lays the groundwork for future literary criticism but also celebrates the beauty of suggestion as an intrinsic element of poetic artistry.

⁶⁸ अर्थान्तरे सङ्कमितमत्यन्तं वा तिरस्कृतम् । अविवक्षितवाच्यस्य ध्वनेर्वाच्यं द्विधा मतम् ॥ १ ॥ (Merged in the other meaning and completely lost, these are the two kinds of the expressed in 'Suggestion with intended literal import) -DL: II.1.

2.5.3 Tṛtīya Udyota of Dhvanyāloka

The third *udyota* discusses the divisions of *dhvani* accordingly; *sanghatana*, *vyanjaka*, *padaprakāsha*, and *vākya prakāsha*, as well as how it relies on its appropriations of speaker, sense, plot, and *rasa*. “*avivakṣitavācyaśya padavākyaṣṭakāśatā, tadanya syān uraṇa narūpa vyaṅga nyasya ca dhvaneḥ, yastvalakṣyakramavyaṅganyo dhvanirvarṇapadādiṣu, vākya saṅghaṭanāyāṃ ca sa prabandhe’pi dīpyate*” (DL: III.1-2).⁶⁹ How *rasa* is manifested, maintained, and how *alaṃkāras* are appropriate for evoking it; what opposes *rasa*; the significance of the five stages *mukha*, *pratimukha*, *garbha*, *avāmarsha*, and *nirbhāna* to lead *rasa* manifestation; the way *shānta* the *rasa* was established; and the types of *kāvya*s like *guṇībhūta*, *chitra*, and *dhvani* because of the poet's *pratibhā* (Ānandavardhana, 1891, p. 241). In this chapter, Ānandavardhana categorises the divisions. *Vyanjaka* pertains to the evocative power of language, where the meaning extends beyond the explicit to capture deeper emotional resonances. It emphasises the suggestive quality of words and their capacity to evoke feelings and images in the reader. Ānandavardhana posits that the strength of *vyanjaka* depends on the poet's ability to manipulate language effectively, allowing for layers of interpretation that enliven the poem. *Padaprakāsha* refers to the illumination of meaning within specific words. It is a more direct approach compared to *Vyanjaka*, revolving around the explicit meanings discerned from the individual vocabulary used. “*asamāsā samāseṇa madhyamena ca bhūṣitā, tathā dīrghasamāseti tridhā saṅghaṭanoditā, guṇānāśritya tiṣṭhantī mādhyādīnvyanakti sā*” (DL: III. 5 & 5v).⁷⁰ Despite being straightforward, Ānandavardhana argues that this aspect still plays a

⁶⁹ अविवक्षितवाच्यस्य पदवाक्यप्रकाशता । तदन्यस्यानुरणनरूपव्यङ्ग्यस्य च ध्वनेः ॥ १ ॥ यस्त्वलक्ष्यक्रमव्यङ्ग्यो ध्वनिर्वर्णपदादिषु ।

वाक्ये सङ्घटनायां च स प्रबन्धेऽपि दीप्यते ॥ २ ॥ (Both the varieties of suggestion with unintended literal import and resonance like suggestion are suggested by individual words and by whole sentences, Suggestion with undiscerned sequentially will flash forth in letter, word etc., sentence/composition, and finally the work as a whole) -DL: III.1-2.

⁷⁰ असमासा समासेन मध्यमेन च भूषिता । तथा दीर्घसमासेति त्रिधा सङ्घटनोदिता ॥ ५ ॥ गुणानाश्रित्य तिष्ठन्ती माधुर्यादीन्वनक्ति सा । (It has been mentioned that 'suggestion with undiscerned sequentially' can relate to 'texture' or composition also. The nature of texture 'itself is explained below Texture 'is said to be of three kinds:(1) without compounds (2) with medium-sized compounds and (3) with long compounds. By others 'is to be understood in the text. It is only quoted

crucial role in the construction of meaning, setting the stage for deeper emotional engagement through the creation of evocative imagery and sensory details. *Vākya prakāsha*, or sentence illumination, encompasses the overall meaning emerging from the combination of words and phrases within a structured sentence. This division underscores the importance of syntactic and grammatical arrangements in shaping how meaning is perceived. The coherence and unity of the sentence facilitate a comprehensive understanding, blending both explicit meanings and implicit suggestions to elicit emotional responses from the reader.

Disruptions in flow, contradictions in emotional expression, or overly complex language can obscure *rasa*, detracting from the reader's emotive engagement. Ānandavardhana discusses the intriguing notion of *śāntarasa*, which is the neutral or peaceful emotion, and how it has been established within the poetic tradition. This *rasa* embodies tranquillity and contentment, emphasising that even a serene expression can carry significant depth, representing a culmination of various emotional states (Ānandavardhana, 1891, p. 239). The chapter also touches on different types of *kāvya*s, that is, poetic forms such as *injunction*, the focused nuances in literature, *chitra*, that is, picturesque literature, and *dhvani*, the suggestive literature. “Ānandavardhana, the three specimens of poetry are: poetry of suggestion (*dhvani-kāvya*), poetry of subordinate suggestion (*gunībhūta-vyāngya*) and portrait poetry (*citra-kāvya*)” (Prasad, 1994, p. 177). Each type carries its unique attributes based on the poet’s *pratibha*, that is, creative intuition or ability to resonate, and the manner in which they harness the components of *dhvani*. *Pratibhā* may be equated with what English critics mean by the word imagination; the *pratibhā* is contagious and transports the reader all at once, as stated by Abhinavagupta,

here and will be commented upon in what follows; Composition or texture is grounded in qualities like sweetness and suggests sentiments) -DL: III.5 & 5v.

“*nāyakasya kaveḥ śrotuḥ samāno'nubhavastataḥ*”⁷¹ (Abhinavagupta, 1988, p. 316). By categorising *dhvani* through distinct types of *sanghatana* and elucidating the roles of speaker, sense, plot, and *rasa*, Ānandavardhana creates a comprehensive framework for understanding poetic artistry. His insights into the stages of *rasa* manifestation, the establishment of *śāntarasa*, and the classifications of *kāvya*s underscore the intricate dance between language and emotion that characterises Sanskrit poetry. Thus, this chapter not only solidifies the conceptual cornerstone of *dhvani* but also enriches the interpretative landscape for poets and readers alike.

2.5.4 Chaturtha Udyota of Dhvanyāloka

The fourth *udyota* explains the new elements in the field of *dhvani* by focusing on *śāntarasa* and on the primacy of *rasas*. The primary *rasas*, *karuṇarasa* in the *Rāmāyana* and *śāntarasa* in the *śāstrakāvya Mahābhārata*, can be evidenced in the following lines:

*kasminniveti cet - yathā rāmāyaṇe yathā rvā mahābhārate | rāmāyaṇe hi karuṇo rasaḥ
svayamādikavināsūtritaḥ 'śokaḥ ślokatvamāgataḥ' ityevaṃvādinā | niryūḍhaśca sa eva
sītātyantavīyogaparyanta-meva svapratrandhamuparacayatā | mahābhārate'pi
śāstrarūpe kāvyacchāyānvayini vṛṣṇipāṇḍavavirasāvasānavaimanasyadāyiniṃ
samāptimupanitraghnatā mahāmuniṇā vairāgyajananatātparyam prādhānyena
svaprabandhasya darśayatā mokṣalakṣaṇaḥ puruṣārthaḥ śānto rasaśca mukhyatayā
vivakṣāviṣayatvena sūcitaḥ (DL: IV.5v).⁷²*

⁷¹ नायकस्य कवेः श्रोतुः समानोऽनुभवस्ततः । (The hero, poet and consumer (of the play) experience the same (sentiments).

⁷² कस्मिन्निवेति चेत् - यथा रामायणे यथा र्वा महाभारते । रामायणे हि करुणो रसः स्वयमादिकविनासूत्रितः 'शोकः श्लोकत्वमागतः' इत्येवंवादिना । निर्यूढश्च स एव सीतात्यन्तवियोगपर्यन्त-मेव स्वप्रबन्धमुपरचयत । महाभारतेऽपि शास्त्ररूपे काव्यच्छायान्वयिनि वृष्णिपाण्डवविरसावसानवैमनस्यदायिनी समाप्तिमुपनिर्गन्तुमाह महामुनिना वैराग्यजननतात्पर्यं प्राधान्येन स्वप्रबन्धस्य दर्शयता मोक्षलक्षणः पुरुषार्थः शान्तो रसश्च मुख्यतया विवक्षाविषयत्वेन सूचितः । (The *Rāmāyana* is itself one example and that the *Mahābhārata* is another. Into the *Rāmāyana* indeed, the First Poet himself has incorporated the sentiment of pathos as is clear by his own declaration "Sorrow has taken the turn of a stanza". It has in fact been kept up as predominant till the very end of the work in view of his concluding the work at the point of the eternal loss of Sītā by Rāma. In the *Mahābhārata* too, which combines both the elements of instruction and poetry in one, it will be seen that its conclusion in a note of despair consequent on the miserable deaths of *Vrsnis* as well as *Pāndavas*, as constructed by the great sage, reveals his primary intention of preaching the moral of renunciation through his work and throws light upon the fact

New elements in the field of *dhvani* and *guṇībhūta*, showing how the same concept can seem novel to poets' imaginations. “In *vācyā alaṃkāra*+*vyāṅgya vastu*, it will be regarded as *alaṃkāra* only if the beauty of the *vyāṅgya vastu* is subsidiary to the beauty of the *vācyā*. This is known as the principle of *guṇībhūta-vyāṅgya*, which adequately explains all the *alaṃkāras* without denying the suggested element in them. On this principle, indeed *vyāṅgya rasa* too is regarded as *rasavādalakṣaṇa*” (Krishnamoorthy, 1969, p. xxxv). This establishes that the realm of poetry is limitless despite the fact that hundreds of poets are consistently producing hundreds of works; “*ato dhvaner uktaprabheda madhyā danyatamenāpi prakāreṇa vibhūṣitā satī, vāṇī purāṇakavinibaddhārthasamsparsāvatyapi navatvamāyāti*” (DL: IV.1v).⁷³ For the poet's mind, there is no shortage of high-quality poetry; the same idea or notion may be expressed in a variety of ways using endearing terms. The discourse delves into the critical analysis of primary *rasas* within the epic traditions of *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*, focusing specifically on *karuṇarasa*, the emotion of compassion and *śāntarasa*, the emotion of tranquillity or peace. Ānandavardhana elucidates how these emotions manifest in the realm of *dhvani*, thereby shedding light on the creativity and boundless nature of poetic expression. The chapter emphasises that despite the plethora of poets and their artistic outputs, the field of poetry remains inexhaustible, offering an opportunity for constant renewal and innovation in expression. Ānandavardhana highlights the masterful use of *dhvani* in these expressions of *karuṇa*, as poets skillfully employ suggestive language to evoke profound emotional responses, allowing readers to engage deeply with the depicted struggles (Ānandavardhana, 1891, p. 281).

that he intended final emancipation as the foremost of human values and peace as the most predominant sentiment in the whole work) -DL: IV.5v.

⁷³ अतो ध्वनेरुक्तप्रभेदमध्यादन्यतमेनापि प्रकारेण विभूषिता सती वाणी पुरातनकविनिबद्धार्थसंस्पर्शवत्यपि नवत्वमायाति । (Endlessness of creative imagination in poets will be another outcome of this theory of principal and subordinated suggestion laid down already) -DL: IV.iv.

Śāntarasa is embodied in the *Mahābhārata*, which, while rich in drama and conflict, also encompasses themes of peace, resolution, and philosophical inquiry. Ānandavardhana articulates that the tranquil emotion represented by *Śāntarasa* offers a different yet equally profound experience for the reader. The *Mahābhārata*'s resolution of conflicts, moments of introspection, and the spiritual teachings embedded in the text create an atmosphere of calm and peace, reflecting the complexities of life and existence. This *rasa* is pivotal in conveying the essence of *dharma*, that is, righteousness and the transformative realisation found in the face of conflict and turmoil. By observing the interplay between established *rasas* and innovative *dhvani*, poets can establish a dynamic poetic landscape that resonates deeply with readers, making the experience both familiar and fresh. The *chaturtha udyota* of the *Dhvanyāloka* serves as a crucial reflection on the boundless creativity and resilience of poetic expression, particularly focusing on the primary *rasas* of *karuṇa* and *śānta* (Ānandavardhana, 1891, p. 311). Ānandavardhana's insights highlight the seamless blend of emotion and language that characterises high-quality poetry, affirming the richness of tradition while simultaneously endorsing the continual potential for innovation.

Provides a historical/chronological discussion of Ānandavardhana's dating and courtly context in Kashmir, using *Rajatarangiṇī* and cross-checking with Abhinavagupta's known dates. It clarifies the difficulty and caution needed when reconstructing Ānandavardhana's biography from later traditions. (Kumar De, 1920, p. 2).

As poets navigate the channels of established themes and evoke them through newly imaginative language, they affirm that the realm of poetry is indeed limitless, inviting endless exploration and refined artistry in each expression.

2.6 *Dhvanyartha*: A Scholarly Debate

Dhvani, emerging as a cornerstone of Sanskrit poetics, has elicited diverse responses, both in terms of its conception and application. “*Dhvani* is the crown and capital of poetry” (Prasad, 1994, p. 309). At the heart of this theory lies the idea that poetry's essence lies not in its explicit statements but in the suggestive meanings and resonances it evokes. The attempt here is to address the criticisms it has encountered and offer a robust defence of its relevance and vitality in understanding poetic expression. Critics argue that the theory can sometimes lead to ambiguity, rendering it overly simplistic in its treatment of complex texts. They contend that an emphasis on suggestion may overlook the richness of explicit meaning present in poetic works. Some critics posit that the *dhvani* theory neglects the importance of authorial intent, suggesting that a focus on suggestive meanings could undermine the poet’s original message or purpose, leading to misinterpretations. The inherent subjectivity in interpreting suggestive meanings can lead to a range of interpretations that may not align with the poet’s artistic vision. This aspect raises questions about the reliability of reader response as a valid basis for literary criticism. While criticisms surrounding ambiguity and subjectivity are valid considerations, they do not diminish the essential contributions of *dhvani* to the field of literary criticism. However, proponents of the *dhvani* theory argue that subjectivity is an inherent part of literary interpretation and that the power of suggestion and implication in literary works allows for multiple layers of meaning and interpretation (Choudhary & Singh, 2025, p. 250). They argue that the reader's subjective response gives a literary work its emotional and aesthetic impact and that this impact makes literature valuable. “Today, the *rasa-dhvani* theory is regarded as the ultimate word so far as Indian aesthetics is concerned” (Toshakhānī & Warikoo, 2009, p. 16). Excessive emphasis on suggestion and implication: But the proponents of the *dhvani* theory argue that it does not ignore

these elements but instead places them in a broader context of literary meaning. They argue that the power of suggestion and implication gives these elements their emotional and aesthetic impact and that the theory allows for a more nuanced and complex understanding of literary works. “The theory of *dhvani* was further developed by Ānandavardhana's commentator Abhinavagupta and was brought to perfection by *āchārya* Mammaṭācārya of this very land” (Toshakhānī & Warikoo, 2009, p. 100). In response to these criticisms, proponents of the *dhvani* theory have offered several arguments. First, they argue that the theory is not intended to be prescriptive but rather descriptive of how literary works are experienced and interpreted. They argue that the theory allows for a more nuanced and complex understanding of literary works and does not reduce literature to a mere vehicle for suggestion and implication. Second, they argue that the theory does not ignore other aspects of literary works but instead places them in a broader context of literary meaning. They argue that the power of suggestion gives these elements their emotional and aesthetic impact and that the theory allows for a more holistic understanding of literary works. Thirdly, the interpretation does not abandon rationality. Interpretations are arrived at through experiential reasoning; when a valid chain or cycle of thought establishes a new interpretation, understanding, or meaning, the charge of excess subjectivity can be negated, as it goes hand in hand with reasoning and is bound within rationality. Its effect is the emotional *rasas* or sentimental fulfilment.

Finally, they argue that the subjectivity of interpretation is an inherent part of literary interpretation and that the power of suggestion and implication in literary works allows for multiple layers of meaning and interpretation (Choudhary & Singh, 2025, p. 251). They argue that the reader's subjective response gives a literary work its emotional and aesthetic impact and that this impact makes literature valuable. The supporters of the theory argue that it allows for a

more nuanced and complex understanding of literary works and does not reduce literature to a mere vehicle for suggestive ideas, “it was only its brilliant exposition by Abhinavagupta in his commentary on it, the *Abhinavabhāratī* that made it a theory integral to all Indian aesthetic thinking together with the revolutionary concept of *dhvani* or poetic suggestion propounded by Ānandavardhana” (Toshakhānī & Warikoo, 2009, p. 16). They argue that the subjectivity of interpretation is an inherent, essential and necessary part of literary interpretation and that the power of suggestion in literary works allows for multiple layers of meaning and interpretation.

2.6.1 *Anumāna* and *Dhvanyārtha*

“*Anumane 'ntarbhāvam sarvasyāpi dhvaneḥ prakāśayitum, vyaktivivekam tanute pranamya mahimā parām vācam*”⁷⁴ (Rajendran, 1991, p. 48). The *Naiyayikas* reject the suggestive power of words. In his *Vyaktiviveka*, which was written specifically to demonstrate that *dhvani* is a part of *anumāna*, or inference, Mahimabhatta asserts that there is no need to accept a new potency for words because the implied sense in literature is always communicated by the expressed sense through the inference process itself. This anti-*dhvani* notion was not discovered by Mahimabhatta since Ānandavardhana foresees and addresses this criticism in the third chapter of the *Dhvanyāloka* “*vyāñjakatvam śabdānām gamakatvam, tac ca lingatvam ataś ca vyangyapratītir lingipratītir eveti lingalingibhāva eva teṣām vyangyavyāñjakabhāvo nāparaḥ kaścit*” (DL: III.33v)⁷⁵. Ānandavardhana's primary objection to the inference theory of poetic charm is that inference is dependent on the understanding of *vyāpti*, or the constant

⁷⁴ अनुमने ऽन्तर्भावम् सर्वस्यापि ध्वनेः प्रकाशयितुम्। व्यक्तिविवेकम् तनुते प्रनम्य महिमा पराम् वाचम्॥ *Vyaktiviveka* 1.1॥ (Having offered salutations to the supreme speech, Mahima (Mahimabhatta) composes this treatise titled *Vyaktiviveka* to clearly demonstrate the subsumption of the entire concept of *dhvani* (suggestion) under *anumāna* (inference) (Rajendran, 1991, p. 48).

⁷⁵ व्यञ्जकत्वम् शब्दानाम् गमकत्वम्, तच्च च लिंगत्वम् अतश्च व्यन्यप्रतीतिर् लिंगिप्रतीतिर् एवेति लिंगलिङ्गिभाव एव तेषाम् व्यन्यव्यञ्जकभावो नापरः कश्चित्। (The apprehension of the suggested idea is thus identical with the inferential knowledge of the probandum. In other words the relation of suggester - suggested is none other than the relation of probans - probandum) -DL:III.33v.

correspondence between a proposition's major and intermediate terms. “*pradīpālokādaṅgalingibhāva-śūnye 'pi hi vyangyavyañjakabhāvo 'sti*” (Jhā, 1978, p. 323).⁷⁶ The proposed sense cannot be deduced from the main sense in literature, as there is no such constant relationship between the two. The error of undistributed middle *anaikāntikatva* precludes the validity of inference. Ānandavardhana uses an analogy to demonstrate his idea. According to him, the relationship between the suggested and expressed senses is comparable to that of a light and a pot; although there isn't a constant relationship between the two, the light shows the pot. Once more, via inference, the minor term's relationship to the intermediate term establishes a relationship with the large term. Therefore, a certain level of mediacy is a necessary component of the inferential process, but in suggestion, one believes that the degree of mediacy that is a necessary component of inference is lacking. The *Nyayamañjarī* quotes Jayantabhatta as follows, “*yam anyah panditammanyah prapade kamcana dhvanim.. athavā nedṛṣi carcā kavibhiḥ saha śobhate*”⁷⁷ (Jayantabhaṭṭa, 1969, p. 45). He is saying that the *dhvani* doctrine was embraced by a wiseacre and condemns it as not being of academic serious study. The suggested sense of a word, or *vyangyārtha*, is really inferred from its main and secondary meanings and is not distinct from them, according to the later *Naiyāyika*-s. The main goals of logic are correctness and precision, and it should always require that words be used in their most basic, straightforward, and clear sense. Since the main meaning may be used to determine the secondary meaning rather accurately, it is also acceptable. However, the proposed meaning is too nebulous, transient, and subjective to be included in the category of logical meanings. The complex and subjective

⁷⁶ प्रदीपालोकादौ लिङ्गलिङ्गिभाव-शून्ये ऽपि हि व्यङ्ग्यव्यञ्जकभावो ऽस्ति | | (He now applies to this area the analogy of the lamp and the pot in order to establish the power of which he approves, namely the power of revelation or suggestion (Ingalls, 1990, p. 559).

⁷⁷ यम् अन्यह् पण्डितम्मन्यह् प्रपेदे कमचन ध्वनिम्.. अथवा नेदृशि चर्चा कविभिः सह शोभते (The other, self-styled (self-appointed) scholars (pandit), attained something called suggestion. Otherwise such a discussion does not adorn with (true) scholarly poets (Jayantabhaṭṭa, 1969, p. 45).

suggestions conveyed in language are not topics of logical discussion; logic, which relies only on reason, views correctness and precision as essential and acknowledges only that portion of the proposed sense that can be fairly deduced from the declared sense. Wittgenstein established in the *Tractatus* that “anything that can be said, can be said clearly” (Wittgenstein, 2001, p. 27).

On the edge of such quiet, great poetry is composed with the intention of using suggestion to express the inexpressible. The literary critic must pay particular attention to it since the indicated meaning is crucial in poetry, where the appeal is more to passion and feeling than to reason. Logicians may reject it completely as unreal, or they may use a portion of it in inference and reject the remainder. There is no cultural value to a philosophy of language that would declare entire segments of human conversation to be worthless and incomprehensible. Philosophical truth can only be communicated through language's ability to imply ideas that cannot be directly articulated. Bergson asserts in *Introduction to Metaphysics* that language is unable to comprehend and convey reality. However, language can also be used to guide the hearer to a place where he or she can transcend language and reach an untranslatable understanding, rather than to depict. Once we reach the top of this dialectical ladder, we might be booted off. In this regard, Menezes argues that,

...merely an informative function of language does not always meet the purpose of the text and reckons that language requires to make use of its other functions, namely, performative, demonstrative, emotive, etc., if it has to convey effectively what the author intends to communicate (Menezes, 2020, p. 3).

Although words cannot adequately convey this understanding and intuition, they may be conveyed through the power of suggestion.

2.6.2 *Arthāpatti* and *Dhvanyartha*

Since *arthāpatti* is a type of instantaneous inference based on the universal relationship between the lack of the major and the absence of the middle words, the opinion that *dhvani* should be included in *arthāpatti* is similar to the one that was previously expressed. According to Jespersen, “suggestion is the result of suppressing an impression” (Biswas, 2005, p. 16). Three distinctions should be made in every verbal activity: impression, suppression, and expression. What the speaker delivers is called expression; what he does not give, even if he may have provided it, and what the hearer gets is called impression. It's vital to note that repressed speech frequently creates an impression in addition to explicitly stated speech. “Impression by suppression is suggestion” (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 294). According to Prof. Kupusvami Sastri, this type of suggestion must be accepted by all schools of thought. In the case of regular sentences, the words only express their isolated meanings; the *samsarga*, or the relationship between the words, must be expressed through suggestion or suppression. While the Bhatta Mīmāṃsakas believe it to be founded on *lakṣaṇā*, the *Naiyāyikas* refer to it as *samsargamaryādā*. The *samsarga* is recognised through an *arthāpatti*-type inference process because there appears to be a contradiction between the words' juxtaposition in a phrase and their lack of relationship to fulfil a purpose. It should be noted that even with *lakṣaṇā*, the transferred sensation is achieved by *arthāpatti*. Mukulabhatta even uses the famous example of the overweight child who skips meals during the day as a type of *lakṣaṇā*.⁷⁸ When explaining elliptical statements, the Bhatta Mīmāṃsaka-s accept *śrutārthāpatti*. The articulated sense itself is not full in this case, hence it must be differentiated from *dhvani*. Since *arthāpatti* is a

⁷⁸ He says that the statement fatness (in the stock of example *pino devādatto divā na bhunkte*) does not arise without taking food at night is equal to the statement that if there is eating food at night there arises the quality fatness, that is, wherever there is fatness, in the absence of eating food at daytime, there will be the eating of food at night, which is no doubt (Narayanan, 1992, p. 108).

legitimate source of knowledge, it indicates that the meaning realised through it is accurate and precise. However, in poetic suggestion, the inferred sense is quite ambiguous and can only be completely comprehended by men of literary taste who are able to perceive the situation's context.

2.6.3 *Lakṣaṇā* and *Dhvanyartha*

“*Dhvani*, presented by connoisseurs as something new, is really part of the secondary meaning *lakṣaṇā*. The learned should examine this with penetrating intelligence. They should not scorn it without reflection. Enough has been said” (Bronkhorst, 2019, p. xiii). A few *alamkārikas*, such as Mukulabhatta, attempted to include *vyañjana*, or the power of suggestion, into the concept of *lakṣaṇā*. They acknowledge that phrases can express concepts that are not literal, yet all of these examples can be included in *lakṣaṇā*. Mukulabhatta claims that the Mimamsaka scholar Bhartṛmītra discussed a type of *lakṣaṇā* in which the literal sense is given in a way that subtly leads to another notion called *abhidheyena sambandha*. *Lakṣaṇā* will include even *arthāpatti* cases. Mukulabhatta defines *lakṣaṇā* as “*arthāvaseyasya punar lakṣyamānatvam ucyate*”⁷⁹ (Mukulabhatta, 1977, p. 3) such that it encompasses all situations in which the conveyed meaning suggests alternative concepts. Mukulabhatta also asserts that *dhvani*, which some literary critics have proposed as a new philosophy, truly belongs within the purview of *lakṣaṇā*, arguing further, “*lakṣaṇā mārgā vagāhitvam tu dhvaneḥ sahrdayair nūtanā tayopavaranaḥ itasya vidyate*”⁸⁰ (Mukulabhatta, 1977, p. 21). In reference to this anti-*dhvani*

⁷⁹ अर्थवसेयस्य पुनर् लक्ष्यमानत्वम् उच्यते - Knowledge of meaning that is understood through *vāchya* (direct), *lakṣya* (implication) or through *lakṣya-vyangyā*. Power of implication is there where a word, apart from its main meaning, reveals some other meaning (implication) associated with it, it is called '*Lakṣaṇā*'. is being described: In this context, the same implication or suggestion is being proved (Mukulabhatta, 1977, p. 3)

⁸⁰ “लक्षणामार्गावगाहित्वम् तु ध्वनेर् सहृदयैर् नूतनतयोपवरनइतस्य विद्यते” “*dhvani*, is essentially *Lakṣaṇā* which some literary critics (calling themselves) *shridaya* have proposed as a new meaning, which truly belongs within the purview of *lakṣaṇā*. (Mukulabhatta, 1977, p. 21).

argument, Ānandavardhana asserts that the nature and subject matter of *dhvani* and *lakṣaṇā* are different. *Lakṣaṇā* functions when the primary sense is inconsistent in some way; it cancels the primary sense and then signals the secondary meta-phorical sense; nevertheless, the primary sense does not have to be abandoned in the suggestion. “*vyañjakatvamārge tu yadārtho 'rthāntaram dyotayati, tadā svarūpam prakāśayann evāsāv anyasya prakāśakaḥ pratiyate pradipavat*”⁸¹ (Ānandavardhana, 1891, p. 192). The premise of this argument is that *lakṣaṇā* refers to the impossibility of the literal sense rather than only the literal sense's conflict with the speaker's aim. We are aware that the literal sense is not entirely disregarded in instances of *ajahatsvārthā lakṣaṇā*. Based on a word's main sense, *lakṣaṇā* is an extension of that sense “*vācakatvāśrayenaiva gunavṛttir vyavasthitā*”⁸² (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 55); it is a part of the primary sense itself, and some have referred to it as the primary sense's tail, known as *abhidhāpuccha*. On the other hand, *dhvani* relies on suggestion, which can happen even when there isn't any sensation at all, such as when an emotion is implied by music or dancing. “*gitadhvanīnām api vyañjakatvam asti rasādiviśayam, na ca teṣām vācakatvam lakṣaṇā vā kathamcil lakṣyate*” (DL: III.33v).⁸³ Neither the expressive nor the metaphorical meanings of words can adequately describe the emotive component of language. In the case of *dhvani*, both meanings may occur at the same time, but in *lakṣaṇā*, the inferred sense is always given indirectly through the primary sense of the word. While *lakṣaṇā* and *abhidhā* are autonomous, the indicated connotation is dictated by contextual elements, intonation, facial expressions,

⁸¹ व्यञ्जकत्वमार्गे तु यदार्थो ऽर्थान्तरम् द्योतयति, तदा स्वरूपम् प्रकाशयन् एवासाव् अन्यस्य प्रकाशकः प्रतीयते प्रदिपवत्। (On the path of suggestion either the *vāchyārtha* nor the *lakṣyārthā* of words can adequately describe the emotive component of language. In the case of *dhvani*, both meanings may occur at the same time, but in *lakṣaṇā*, the inferred sense is always given indirectly through the primary sense of the word. (Ānandavardhana, 1891, p. 192).

⁸² “वाचकत्वाश्रयेनैव गुणवृत्तिर व्यवस्थिता” (*vāchyārtha* sense itself, and some have referred to it as the *vāchyārtha* sense's qualities or tail) (Ānandavardhana, 1891, p. 54).

⁸³ गितध्वनीनाम् अपि व्यञ्जकत्वम् अस्ति रसादिविषयम्, न च तेषाम् वाचकत्वम् लक्षणा वा कथम्विल लक्ष्यते (Thus the sounds of music do possess suggestiveness in respect of sentiments, etc., and they are never seen to possess either denotation or indication. -DL: III.33v.

gestures, etc. Even the topics of *dhvani* and *lakṣaṇā* are distinct. Though indicated sense might be a concept, a form of speech, or an emotion, *lakṣaṇā* always conveys an idea.

Despite the differences between *dhvani* and *lakṣaṇā*, all instances of purposeful and intentional metaphors contain some suggestion. “*mukhyāṃ vṛttiṃ parityajya guṇavṛttyārthadarśanam, yaduddiśya phalaṃ tatra śabda naiva skhaladgatiḥ*” (DL: I.17).⁸⁴ The motivation component that underlies the intentional usage of metaphors is suggested. According to Ānandavardhana, *lakṣaṇā* only functions when the main sense is inconsistent, and when this inconsistency is resolved by using the secondary meaning, which is connected to the first sense, its purpose is completed. *Lakṣaṇā* itself is unable to describe the motivating aspect that led to the metaphor's adoption. The basic meaning of the word *gangā* in the example *gangāyām ghoṣah*, the house is on the Ganges, and Ganges is the Ganges River; nevertheless, this cannot be used in the phrase because the settlement cannot be on the stream itself. The secondary interpretation of the meaning also has this flaw at its core. It is assumed and believed that the name *gangā* refers to the Ganges' bank, but when this parity is eliminated, the *lakṣaṇā*'s power is likewise depleted. The statement's suggested notions of holiness, sanctity and purity cannot be inferred from *lakṣaṇā* alone because the word's overtone is determined by the ethereal emotional atmosphere surrounding it rather than the three requirements of *lakṣaṇā*, the inconsistency of the primary sense, direct relation of the suggested sense to the primary sense, and a clear purpose or the sanction of popular usage behind the transfer. The term *gangā* can imply the attributes of sanctity and purity even when *lakṣaṇā* is not present. *Lakṣaṇā* does not convey the implied meaning, but it does indicate the depth of the concepts connected to the word. The *lakṣaṇā* emphasises what

⁸⁴ मुख्यां वृत्तिं परित्यज्य गुणवृत्त्यर्थदर्शनम् । यदुद्दिश्य फलं तत्र शब्दो नैव स्वलङ्घति ॥ १७ ॥ (If one gives up the primary denotative power of a word and understands a sense (secondarily conveyed by it) through its indicative power, it is because of a purpose. In conveying this purpose, the word does not move falteringly at all - as it moves falteringly when indicating a meaning secondarily). -DL: I.17.

could go unnoticed in everyday situations because the meaning's inconsistency or the odd word collocation creates a pause in the flow and forces the audience to consider its intent. Thus, the path to the country of suggestion is led by *lakṣaṇā*.

2.6.4 *Abhidhā* and *Dhvanyartha*

Since they believe that a word's meaning is determined by what it conveys, the Mimāṃsaka of the Prabhākara school, who adhere to the *anvitābhidhāna* theory of verbal comprehension, view *dhvani* as a part of the main function of *abhidhā* itself. There are no limitations on the range of a word's significant power. A word in a phrase expresses both its meaning on its own and its relationship to the other words in the sentence. The primary meaning itself also encompasses the *samsarga*, or the reciprocal relationship between the word meanings implied by their juxtaposition in a phrase. A word may convey additional meanings beyond its typical meaning in specific situations, although all of those fall under the category of *abhidhā*. A word's meaning may be stretched to any length, just like an arrow's range can increase with increasing effort used to shoot it. This viewpoint is attacked by Ānandavardhana and his adherents from the perspective of the *abhihitānvaya* hypothesis. *Abhidhā*'s power can only express the defined conventional connotation, which is immediately tied to the word, and it cannot convey the suggested sense. The completion of this duty depletes the word's principal function's strength “*padāni hi svam svam artham abhidhāya nivṛttavyāpārāni*” (Śabara, 1952, p. 125).⁸⁵ Even the Kāvya prakāśa of Maṃmatācāryacārya states “*viśeṣayam nābhidhā gacchet kṣaṇīnaśaktir viśeṣaane*” (Maṃmatācāryacārya, 2002, p. 2.10).⁸⁶ Words cannot convey even the meaning of a phrase using the primary function alone. Suggested meanings must be explained by another function. While

⁸⁵ पदानि हि स्वम् स्वम् अर्थम् अभिधाय निवृत्तव्यापारानि (Words fulfil their duties after revealing their *vachārtha*) (Śabarasūtra 1.1. 25).

⁸⁶ विशेषयम् नाभिधा गच्छेत् क्षणशक्तिर् विशेषने (Words cannot convey even the meaning of a phrase using the primary function alone) (Maṃmatācāryacārya, 2002, p. 2.10).

the suggested sense is sometimes only known indirectly through the stated sense, the primary sense is immediately tied to the term. Furthermore, suggestion does not necessarily require words, gestures, music, and other sounds, which may all convey meaning, as *DL* says,

vācya hy arthaḥ sāṅgāc chabdasya sam-bandhi taditaras to abhidheyasamarthyākṣiptah sambandhisambandhi; avācakasyāpi gītaśabdāde rasādīlakṣaanaārthāvagamadarśanāt, aśabdasyāpi ceṣatāder arthaviśeṣaprakāśanaprasiddheh” (DL: III.33v).⁸⁷

While the suggested sense varies in accordance with changes in surrounding conditions, the fundamental sense remains set and unchanging. Anyone may objectively acquire a word's fundamental meaning from a lexicon, but only men of taste are able to properly grasp the indicated sense in poetry as stated in the *Dhvanyāloka* “śabdārthaśāsanajñānamātreṇaiva na vedyate, bedyate sa tu kāvyārthatattvajñaireva kevalam” (*DL*: I.7).⁸⁸

2.6.5 Tātparyavrtti and Dhvanyartha

Dhvani is included under *tātparyavrtti*, a sentence function that is supposed to describe the verbal comprehension that results from sentences, in certain of the *alamkārikas*, such as *Dhanika* and *Dhanamjaya*. The word's direct relationship is to its isolated meaning; when the individual words' isolated meanings are conveyed in a phrase, the word's fundamental purpose is fulfilled.

The words themselves do not explicitly communicate the *samsarga*, or the mutual connection of

⁸⁷ वाच्यो ह्यर्थः साक्षाच्छब्दस्य सम्बन्धि तदितरस् तो अभिधेयसमर्थ्याक्षिप्तह् सम्बन्धिसम्बन्धि; अवाचकस्यापि गितशब्दादे रसादिलक्षनार्थावगमदर्शनात्, अशब्दस्यापि चेषतादेर् अर्थविशेषप्रकाशनप्रसिद्धेह् (While the expressed sense is directly related to the word, the implied sense is related to that which in its turn is related to the word since it is implied by the power of expressed sense. If the implied sense too were directly related to the word, then there would be no need at all for referring to it as another sense. Thus the difference in scope between the two functions is clear. In the same way, their difference in nature too is obvious. The function of denotation itself cannot be the same - as the function of implication since we find suggestiveness of sentiments etc. even in words of music. It is well known too that gestures, etc. which are not even sounds, possess the function of suggesting specific ideas) -*DL*: III.33v.

⁸⁸ शब्दार्थशासनज्ञानमात्रेणैव न वेद्यते । वेद्यते स तु काव्यार्थतत्त्वज्ञैरेव केवलम् ॥ ७ ॥ (It is not understood by a mere learning in grammar and in dictionary. It is understood only by those who have an insight Into the true significance of poetry) -*DL*: I.7.

the separate word-meanings. It is simply hinted; it is not articulated. According to them, the *tātparyavrtti* does this. Is it possible to incorporate poetic suggestions in this as well? “*padārthānām samanvaye tatparyārtho viśeṣavapur apadārtho 'pi vākyārthaḥ samull asatity abhihitānvayavādinām matam*” (Mammaṭācāryacārya, 2002, p. 26).⁸⁹ This *tātparyavrtti* is the same as the *samsargamaryādā* of the *Naiyāyika*-s. It is assumed that *tātparyavrtti* explains a sentence's literal meaning, whereas *vyāñjanā* follows. By demonstrating the logical relationship between the word meanings, the former's power is depleted, and it is unable to make any more recommendations. According to Abhinavagupta, we cannot consider two different meanings to be transmitted by the same force when an expression both implies and conveys its own literal meaning. Whereas the latter stems from this literal sense, the former follows straight from the words. While *dhvani* pertains to non-expressive elements such as music and gesture, *tātparya* concerns the expressed meaning. The *dhvani* hypothesis is opposed by Dhananjaya and Dhanika, who classify it under *tātparya*. “*etāvaty eva viśrāntis tātparyasyeti kimkṛtam? yāvatkāryaprasāritvāt tātparyam na tulādhṛtam*” (Dhananjaya & Dhanika, 1973, p. 157).⁹⁰ They contend that *tātparya*'s ability is not limited to providing the logical link of word meanings, but rather may be extended to unlimited length. Thus they argue for inclusion of *dhvani* in their structure of understanding meaning through *tātparya*. Making *tātparya* and *dhvani* indifferent from one and other, which is an argument agreed upon by the later *śāstrīs* of the *ālamkārika* tradition. *Tātparya* has been considered by some later *ālamkārikas* to be nearly synonymous with suggestion.

⁸⁹ पदार्थानाम् समन्वये तत्पर्यार्थो विशेषवपुर् अपदार्थो ऽपि वाक्यार्थः समुल्लसतित्य् अभिहितान्वयवादिनाम् मतम् (The *tātparyavrtti* specialises in revealing the meaning through unification of words, that is why (*dhvani*) it should be included in it(*tātparyavrtti*), this is the opinion of *abhihitānvayavādins*) (*Kāvyaaprakāśh* 2.6).

⁹⁰ एतावत्य् एव विश्रान्तिस् तात्पर्यस्येति किम्कृतम्? यावत्कार्यप्रसारित्वात् तात्पर्यम् न तुलाधृतम् (content with *tātparya*'s ability, is there any need for anything else? Till the work is in progress with *tātparya*, no need for anything else) (Dhananjaya & Dhanika, 1973, p. 157).

2.6.6 *Vakrokti* and *Dhvanyartha*

Kuntaka the founder and the propounder of *vakrokti* similar to *tātparyavadins* tries to reduce *dhvani* to *vakrokti*. “*Vakroktir eva vaidagdhyabhangibhanitir ucyate*” (Kuntaka & Ghosha, 1977, p. 10).⁹¹ Kuntaka rejected the autonomous existence of *dhvani* in the *Vakroktijīva*, instead classifying it as a striking mode of speech, or *vakrokti*. He has an all-pervading *vakrokti* that is nearly identical to *dhvani*. *Vakrokti* literally means crooked speech or oblique expression (P, 2026). Kuntaka argues that poetic beauty arises from the distinctive mode of expression employed by the poet. Poetry becomes aesthetically delightful because ordinary language is transformed through creative deviation, stylistic twist, and imaginative expression. *Vakrokti*, therefore, concerns the uniqueness of poetic utterance rather than hidden meaning alone.

For Ānandavardhana, poetry becomes truly poetic only when it suggests meanings beyond literal communication. The literal meaning functions merely as a vehicle for deeper emotional and aesthetic significance. Thus, *dhvani* is fundamentally concerned with the transcendence of language. The highest poetry is that in which suggested meaning overshadows literal meaning. Kuntaka, however, shifts attention from meaning to expression. He argues that poetic beauty lies in the peculiar and aesthetically charged manner of articulation. Even ordinary ideas can become poetic when expressed with stylistic originality. Thus, *vakrokti* concerns the transformation of language through artistic creativity. *Dhvani* asks, ‘What deeper meaning is suggested?’ whereas *Vakrokti* asks, ‘How uniquely is the idea expressed?’ *Vakrokti* belongs to a more stylistic and rhetorical realm (Kuntaka, 1977, p. 147). Kuntaka analyses poetic deviation at multiple linguistic levels and explains how artistic beauty arises from deviation from ordinary speech. *Vakrokti* values the freshness of expression. Kuntaka completely rejected *dhvani*, and he argued that the

⁹¹ “वक्रोक्तिर् एव वैदग्ध्यभन्निभनितिर् उच्यते” (Vakrokti is the artistic expression, which is infused with charm due to the cleverness and skill of the poet) (Kuntaka & Ghosha, 1977, p. 1.10).

suggestion itself is an oblique expression. According to him, *dhvani* operates within *Vakrokti* because suggestion depends upon stylistic deviation. Ānandavardhana, however, maintained that stylistic devices, figures, and obliqueness are secondary unless they culminate in suggestive meaning and *rasa*. Hence, for Ānandavardhana, *vakrokti* is subordinate to *dhvani*. *Dhvani* theory is deeply phenomenological and experiential, where the emphasis is on emotional realisation and aesthetic consciousness. *Dhvani*, therefore, moves toward *rasa*-centred experience and transcendence. *Vakrokti* is more linguistic and artistic. It analyses how poetic language differs structurally from ordinary communication. The focus is on creativity, innovation, and aesthetic deviation in expression. It anticipates modern stylistics and literary linguistics (Kuntaka & Ghosha, 1977, p. 132).

2.7 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter explores the major intellectual and aesthetic transformation in Indian poetics from grammatical and semantic interpretations of language toward a sophisticated aesthetic theory centred on *dhvani*. The chapter demonstrates how this transition culminates in the work of Ānandavardhana, whose theory of *dhvani* revolutionised Sanskrit literary criticism. The chapter begins by explaining that earlier Indian thinkers, particularly grammarians and *Nyāyayikas*, focused mainly on linguistic correctness, semantics, logic, and cognition. While these traditions developed profound theories concerning language and meaning, they could not adequately explain the unique realisation of emotional and aesthetic experience produced by poetry. Ānandavardhana's intervention, therefore, marks an "aesthetic turn" in intellectual tradition because he shifted attention from mere semantic communication to aesthetic revelation, emotional resonance, and *rasa*-experience. A substantial section of this chapter is devoted to Ānandavardhana as a visionary aesthete. The chapter further explains that Ānandavardhana

integrated the theory of *dhvani* with Bharata's *rasa* theory and argued that the highest form of poetry is *rasa-dhvani*, where aesthetic emotion is suggested rather than directly stated. Poetry thus becomes an experiential and emotional phenomenon rather than merely an intellectual exercise. Ānandavardhana also emphasised the importance of the *sahṛdaya*, the sensitive and aesthetically refined reader, who alone can fully grasp the suggested meaning of poetry. This establishes poetry as an interactive process between poet, text, and reader.

The chapter then examines the discourse on *dhvanyārtha* among grammarians. Beginning with Pāṇini, Kātyāyana, and Patañjali, the grammatical tradition investigated how language conveys meaning. Patañjali distinguished between *sphoṭa* and *dhvani*, identifying *dhvani* as the audible sound aspect of language and *sphoṭa* as the invariant meaning-bearing unit. Bhartṛhari further developed this theory through the concept of sentence cognition *vākyasphoṭa*, arguing that meaning is grasped holistically rather than through isolated sounds. Although grammarians did not formulate a theory of poetic suggestion, their understanding of holistic cognition laid the conceptual groundwork for Ānandavardhana's later theory of *dhvani*. The discussion then shifts to the Nyāya school and its contribution to the understanding of meaning. *Nyāyayikas* treated language as a valid means of knowledge, *śabda-pramāṇa* and emphasised inference, context, and cognition in semantic interpretation. Their theory of inference, *anumāna*, provided a framework for understanding how meaning can extend beyond literal expression. Although Nyāya philosophers were primarily concerned with epistemology rather than aesthetics, their analysis of contextual meaning and inferential cognition indirectly contributed to later discussions on suggestion and poetic implication.

The chapter then presents Ānandavardhana's systematic theory of *dhvani* as articulated in the *Dhvanyāloka*. It traces the philosophical background of *dhvani* through Vedic literature, *rasa*

theory, *alamkāra* traditions, and earlier poetic theories. Ānandavardhana synthesised these traditions into a comprehensive aesthetic framework. The chapter emphasises that according to Ānandavardhana, *dhvani* is the soul of poetry, while figures of speech, style, and ornamentation are merely its body. The chapter explains various forms and classifications of *dhvani*. The chapter also analyses the structure of the *Dhvanyāloka* through its four *udyotas*. The first *udyota* establishes *dhvani* as the essence of poetry and refutes critics who denied its independent existence. The second *udyota* classifies the various forms of suggestion and distinguishes between explicit and implicit meaning. The third *udyota* discusses *rasa*, poetic structure, and the conditions necessary for aesthetic experience. The fourth *udyota* further elaborates poetic communication and the role of emotional suggestion in literary art. The chapter additionally examines later scholarly debates concerning *dhvani*. Critics questioned whether the suggested meaning could be reduced to inference, indication, presumption, or the speaker's intention. Comparisons were also drawn between *dhvani* and *Vakrokti*. Ānandavardhana defended *dhvani* as an autonomous and irreducible mode of aesthetic cognition distinct from logical inference or rhetorical ornamentation.

Finally, the chapter concludes that the theory of *dhvani* represents not merely a literary innovation but a profound philosophical reorientation in Indian thought. Through Ānandavardhana, Sanskrit poetics evolved into a sophisticated inquiry into language, emotion, and aesthetic experience. *Dhvani* transformed literature from a vehicle of information into a medium of emotional revelation and artistic transcendence. The chapter, therefore, establishes *dhvani* a significant contribution of aesthetics and a foundational concept for understanding poetic meaning and human experience.

Chapter 3

Samvādaśakti: The Power of Suggestive Meaning

*“Na tejastejasvī prasṛtamapareṣāṃ viśahate, sa tasya svo bhāvaḥ
prakṛtikṛtakatvādakṛtakaḥ|
mayūkhairāśrāntā tapati yadi devo dinakaraḥ, kimāgneyo grāvā nikṛta iva tejāṃsi vamati
||6.14 ||” (Bhavabhūti, 2011, p. 180).⁹²*

3.1 Introduction

The ingenious sage and virtuoso poet Bhavabhūti says while describing the radiance of Luv and Kush, the children of Rāma, in his luminous text '*Ūttararāmacaritam*', which focuses on the later life of Rāma, Sitā and their offspring, that an exemplary personality cannot tolerate the spreading of another such personality because it does not allow the other to rise in the same space, similar to the position of the Sun and the *Suryakant Jewel*⁹³ both keep on burning even in the presence of the other. There are plenty of other similar examples also in literature, no matter the language, which support identical thoughts like “*eka myāna meṃ do talavāra*”⁹⁴ (Jain, 1989, p.

⁹² नतेजस्तेजस्वीप्रसृतमपरेषांविषहते सतस्यस्वोभावःप्रकृतिकृतकत्वादकृतकः। मयूखैरश्रान्ततपतियदिदेवोदिनकरः किमाग्नेयोग्रावानिकृतइवतेजांसिवमति। (One brilliant and glorious man cannot tolerate the brilliance of another man. This nature is given by nature and is naturally perfected by birth. If the sun-god always shines by scattering his rays, why does a single fire-related stone (the sun-loving gem) flow fire? This is also the reason for that. A brilliant man does not tolerate the brilliance of another This is a natural tendency) (Bhavabhūti, 2011, p. 180).

⁹³ A fictional and mythical jewel in Indian literature, which always keeps burning, is self-luminescent. It is a jewel found in mythological texts, it is a jewel that never stops spreading light.

⁹⁴ एक म्यान में दो तलवार (Two swords in one scabbard) (Jain, 1989, p. 141).

141), which means two swords in one scabbard, but the *lakṣyārtha* is that two swords cannot fit in one scabbard. The suggestive meaning is that two individuals with equal and similar virtues, the same tenacity and leadership, cannot be in the same position together at once. It is the same as two lions not sharing the same pride or even the cave. In any given circumstance, how do the meanings change? How can there be multiple meanings in the same statement or word? If there are various meanings, who finds them? Which one is the greatest among the multiple meanings? Can two equally significant meanings be part of the same statement? That means even if numerous meanings are arriving through a statement, it is necessary that one meaning be more significant than the other. What constitutes the aptness of one meaning over the other? Where does the meaning lie, with the words or the sentence, in the context, or the entire conversation? Such questions have been the cornerstone of Indian linguistic philosophy.

This research seeks to explore the significance of *dhvanyārtha*, the suggestive meaning achieved as a significant result of an epistemic conquest of the ancient Indian theory of experiencing and realising meaning, known as the *dhvani*, which lay within the linguistic philosophy and aesthetics of Bhāratīya traditions. The chapter focuses on elucidating and tracing the roots and origins of the *dhvanyārtha* and the authentic meaning achieved through the highest *rasa*. The research further explores the philosophical foundations of *dhvanyārtha* and the processes for achieving it, systematically laid down by Ānandavardhana. It also examines the application of this ancient theory, resulting in it being known as *śabdaśakti*, and investigates the potency of the theory to become *bhaśaśakti*, and further argues for its origins and strongest iteration as *Samvādaśakti* due to the *dhvanyārtha* achieved through communicative experience. The attempt here highlights the distinctive approach to knowledge and meaning-making that the *dhvani* offers through the suggestive meaning, the *dhvanyārtha*. The theoretical foundation is grounded in the

text of Ānandavardhana, a philosopher who first theorised the *dhvani* theory in *Dhvanyāloka*. Indian aesthetics used this text and theory the most, particularly the concepts of '*dhvani*', the theory of Suggestion, and the '*dhvanyartha*', the Suggestive meaning achieved through it. A detailed analysis of the theory could validate the hypothesis that the *dhvani* theory is not just *śabdaśakti*, that is, a strength behind the words, but also *bhaśaśakti*, a strength behind language and *Samvādaśakti*, a strength behind communication or conversation. “The discussions on the problem of meaning by the great Indian thinkers like Bhartṛhari, Kumārilabhatta and Ānandavardhana, show extraordinary linguistic and philosophic acumen and are full of valuable observations which can be of considerable help in clarifying complicated issues in modern discussions on the subject” (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 5). In Indian linguistic philosophy, one can find two main traditional approaches to studying the problem of meaning: the *khaṇḍapakṣa* and the *Akhaṇḍapakṣa*.

From the perspective of the *khaṇḍapakṣa* theory or the analytical method, a word is believed to be considered as an autonomous unit consisting of meaning or thought and sense. All language studies are based on words, and the sentence is taken to be an interconnected web of words.

In the early stages of linguistic studies in India, as elsewhere, attention is found focused on individual words and their isolated meanings; the idea that an individual word possesses an individual word-meaning is generally current in all schools of Indian philosophy in ancient times, and in the case of nouns the word is taken as the 'name' of the 'thing' (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 06).

That is why most of the schools of Indian philosophy associate meaning with only words and not the entirety of a sentence, context, dialogue or conversation, even though the entire orthodox Indian schools of philosophy develop solely on discussions in the *Upaniśads*. “Thus, the regular

philosophic term for a 'thing', namely *padārtha*, is the meaning of a word, that which a word means” (Brough, 1953, p. 163). Even the *Nyāyasūtras* discuss the nature of meaning regarding the individual words only. Associating meaning with sentences and discussing the characteristics necessary for understanding a sentence are found only in later Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy.

As seen in the previous chapter the Indian schools of philosophy that discusses meaning the most and focuses on understanding meaning and its unit of source is the Mīmāṃsā school of philosophy. The *Mīmāṃsākās* started a detailed study for understanding the meaning of sentences and developed elaborate doctrines of interpretation. Still, even this study was mainly based on words and their meanings. Consequently, the relationship between word, meaning, and sentence, between word-meaning and sentence-meaning, remained a central problem without considering the entire language as a whole unit or the dialogue or communications as a unit. “Bhatta school of *Mīmāṃsakas* hold the *abhihitānvaya* theory, according to which first we remember the isolated word-meanings and then a simultaneous collective memory gives us the same as mutually connected” (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 8). Kumāṛila and his students believe that each independent word is full of meaning; only after understanding the meaning of each word can one understand the meaning of an entire sentence. On the opposite side, the students of Prabhākara believe that the meaning resides in the sentence as a whole unit. The *Mīmāṃsakās* of the Prabhākara school accept the *anvitābhidhāna* theory, which focuses on the sentence as a unit for understanding meaning.

The individual words do not convey any meaning except in the context of a sentence, and a word must always be associated syntactically with an injunctive verb (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 08).

The sentence here, therefore, becomes the unit instead of individual words. This problem of meaning has not only haunted Indian linguistic philosophy but also the West.

3.2 *Dhvanyartha* and Analytics of the West

The meaning of 'Meaning' has attracted the attention of philosophers throughout the ages; reflections on the epistemological problem as to what the relation subsisting between thoughts, words or sentences, and that which they refer to or mean have occupied the human mind in the East as well as in the West (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 03).

Even the *khaṇḍapakṣa* and the *akhaṇḍapakṣa* can be compared to theories in the West known as the theory of Association⁹⁵ and the theory of Gestalt⁹⁶ in psychology. Similarly, exploring meaning in Western linguistic philosophy has undergone significant transformations, particularly within the Western analytic tradition. Aristotle, John Locke, and others conceptualised the word as a unit of meaning. The foundations of Western linguistic philosophy can be traced back to Aristotle, who introduced the concept of language as a means to convey thought and words as representatives of meaning. In his work "*On Interpretation*," Aristotle posits that words are symbols of the mental impressions experienced and are directly correlated to the objects they represent⁹⁷. There can be little doubt that, according to Aristotle, a word has a meaning by itself, in isolation from the context of a proposition (Chakrabarti, 2017, p. 77). He argued that words

⁹⁵ The Doctrine of Associationism. The next function of memory to be discussed is so-called associative learning in its various aspects. Associationism has in the course of history meant a number of different things, but since the end of the last century it has become a very definite and essentially simple doctrine which tries to explain every acquisition by experience in terms of newly formed associations, i.e., connections between independent units by virtue of which one of them is capable of reproducing the other (Koffka, 2013, 556).

⁹⁶ The basic thesis of gestalt theory might be formulated thus: there are contexts in which what is happening in the whole cannot be deduced from the characteristics of the separate pieces, but conversely; what happens to a part of the whole is, in clear-cut cases, determined by the laws of the inner structure of its whole (Wertheimer, 1945 (2021), 84). A system whose parts are dynamically connected in such a way that a change of one part results in a change of all other parts (Lewin, 1936 (2013), 218)

⁹⁷ Humphreys, J. (2025, 06 09). Aristotle. *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. ISSN 2161-0002

signify thoughts and can communicate information about reality and facts; “Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words” (Aristotle, 1937, p. 14); thus, they serve as building blocks of meaning in communication. John Locke also contributed to the notion of words as units of meaning in his seminal work *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. He believed that “Words are sensible signs, necessary for communication of ideas” (Locke, 1960, p. 389). Locke emphasised the representational function of language, positing that words are symbols for ideas in the mind and words their immediate signification⁹⁸. He distinguished between two ideas for understanding meaning: the nominal essence⁹⁹ and the real essence¹⁰⁰. For Locke, words acquire meaning through the ideas they evoke, bridging the gap between the speaker's thoughts and external reality. A comparison can be drawn between these perspectives of the West, focusing on word as the unit of meaning and Kumāṛila's *abhihitānvayavāda*. A significant shift occurred when philosophers like Russell, logical positivists, early Wittgenstein and others moved the focus from isolated words to sentences or as they called it, ‘propositions’, as the primary units of meaning. This shift is exemplified and analysed by the logical positivist movement, which sought to systematically analyse language's structure and meaning through a scientific lens. “A central argument of Russell's for semantic foundationalism was. . . that the meaning of words cannot, without circularity, be endlessly explained in terms of other words” (Hanna & Harrison, 2004, p. 38). Russell's work emphasised clarity in language and the importance of understanding the propositional content rather than merely looking at words in isolation. It finds identity in

⁹⁸ Words, in their immediate signification, are the sensible signs of his ideas who uses them (Locke, 1960, 390).

⁹⁹ Nominal essences: The learning and disputes of the schools having been much busied about genus and species, the word essence has almost lost its primary signification: and, instead of the real constitution of things, has been almost wholly applied to the artificial constitution of genus and species (Locke, 1960, 403).

¹⁰⁰ Real essences: Essence may be taken for the very being of anything, whereby it is what it is. And thus the real internal, but generally (in substances) unknown constitution of things, whereon their discoverable qualities depend, may be called their essence (Locke, 1960, 402). And in this sense it is still used, when we speak of the essence of particular things, without giving them any name (Locke, 1960, 403).

Prabhākara's perspective of *anvitābhīdhānavāda*. Similarly, in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Ludwig Wittgenstein furthered this view of considering propositions as the unit of meaning by asserting that the structure of language mirrors the structure of reality.

He says, "Propositions cannot represent logical form; they are mirrored. What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent. What expresses itself in language, we cannot express using language. Propositions show the logical form of reality. They display it" 4.121/TLP (Wittgenstein, 2001, 31).

In *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein proposed that propositions can only represent facts, as they share a logical form with the world they depict¹⁰¹. In this context, meaning became increasingly associated with the formal properties of statements, sentences or propositions, leading philosophers to investigate the essences of these propositions within logical frameworks. The logical positivists, in particular, emphasised verifiability and the meaningfulness of statements based on empirical experience, marking a crucial development in the philosophy of language. Later, Wittgenstein contradicts his work of 'TLP' in '*Philosophical Investigations*'¹⁰² and introduces the concept of 'language games'¹⁰³, which considers language as a whole as a unit of meaning in a broader perspective. Wittgenstein argued that the meaning of words is deeply

¹⁰¹ As prepositions only represent facts because they share logical form and logic itself is the mirror image of the world, as Wittgenstein says "Logic is not a body of doctrine, but a mirror-image of the world. Logic is transcendental" 6.13/TLP (Wittgenstein, 2001, 78).

¹⁰² *Philosophical Investigations* is a work by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, published posthumously in 1953. If Wittgenstein had published his work himself, he would have suppressed a good deal of what is in the last thirty pages or so of Part I and worked what is in Part II, with further material, into its place (Wittgenstein, 1953, vi).

¹⁰³ We can also think of the whole process of using words in (2) as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games "language-games" and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a language-game. And the processes of naming the stones and of repeating words after someone might also be called language-games. Think of much of the use of words in games like ring-a-ring-a-roses. I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the "language-game" (Wittgenstein, 1953, 08).

embedded in specific ‘forms of life’¹⁰⁴ and socio-linguistic contexts; thus, understanding language requires examining the diverse practices through which language is part of our lived experiences. Another philosopher, W.V.O. Quine, believed that “judgments concerning meaning must be capable of being grounded in experience” (Hanna & Harrison, 2004, p. 38). Quine tremendously contributed to this holistic perspective. “The strategy of Quine's argument in 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism... is to show that neither term can be defined, except either in terms of the other or in terms of third terms such as 'necessarily,' which covertly presuppose the original two” (Hanna & Harrison, 2004, p. 38). Quine developed his theory of ‘Epistemological Holism’¹⁰⁵, which has a broader perspective on acquiring knowledge. Quine argued against analytical truths and analyticity, positing that even individual beliefs can be interdependent and that meaning is deeply entangled with the overall system of knowledge and epistemology. This Epistemological Holism of Quine proposes that no statement can be understood in isolation, as others influence each belief in a myriad fabric of beliefs shaped by language. J.L. Austin’s Speech Act Theory further substantiated this holistic view, emphasising the performative function of language. According to Austin, “It was for too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a 'statement' can only be to 'describe' some state of affairs, or to 'state some fact', which it must do either truly or falsely” (Austin, 1975, p. 01). Austin believed that

¹⁰⁴ It is no doubt true that you could not calculate with certain sorts of paper and ink, if, that is, they were subject to certain queer changes— but still the fact that they changed could in turn only be got from memory and comparison with other means of calculation. And how are these tested in their turn? What has to be accepted, the given, is—so one could say—forms of life (Wittgenstein, 1953, 226).

¹⁰⁵ The concept of epistemological holism (also widely known as confirmatory holism) depends on two premises: (α) The truth or falsity of a theory cannot be defined through a single test; (β) the test of a hypothesis is dependent on test results of other hypotheses (Estrela, 2018, 258). Confirmation holism holds that: (i) all of our beliefs must face together the so called "court of experience"; (ii) there are no crucial experiments to define which of the theories under discussion is correct or incorrect; (iii) and, finally, a single path is not necessary to resolve the imbalances between theory and experience – what is called in the philosophy of science the “underdetermination of scientific theories by empirical evidence (Estrela, 2018, 260).

It has come to be commonly held that many utterances which look like statements are either not intended at all, or only intended in part, to record or impart straightforward information about the facts: for example, 'ethical propositions' are perhaps intended, solely or partly, to evince emotion or to prescribe conduct or to influence it in special ways" (Austin, 1975, p. 03).

Therefore, his analysis of propositions resulted in distinguishing statements into constative¹⁰⁶ and performative utterances¹⁰⁷, where the former describes states of affairs, while the latter actively brings about change in the world through active speech. Within Speech Act Theory, speech can be broken down into locutionary¹⁰⁸, illocutionary¹⁰⁹, and perlocutionary¹¹⁰ acts. This analysis underscores the dynamic nature of language as a complex interplay of intention, context, and response. This is something that Ānandavardhana foresees in his work, even before the arrival of the Western theories. The *dhvani* theory of Ānandavardhana, if explored with its true potential,

¹⁰⁶ Not all true or false statements are descriptions, and for this reason I prefer to use the word 'Constative' (Austin, 1975, 03). We might say: in ordinary cases, for example running, it is the fact that he is running which makes the statement that he is running true; or again, that the truth of the constative utterance 'he is running' depends on his being running (Austin, 1975, 47).

¹⁰⁷ I propose to call it a performative sentence or a performative utterance, or, for short, 'a performative'. The term 'performative' will be used in a variety of cognate ways and constructions, much as the term 'imperative' is (Austin, 1975, 03). Performative utterance as not, or not merely, saying something but doing something, as not a true or false report of something (Austin, 1975, 25). Whereas in our case it is the happiness of the performative 'I apologize' which makes it the fact that I am apologizing: and my success in apologizing depends on the happiness of the performative utterance 'I apologize' (Austin, 1975, 47). We said that the idea of a performative utterance was that it was to be the performance of an action (Austin, 1975, 60).

¹⁰⁸ The act of 'saying something' in this full normal sense I call, i.e. dub, the performance of a locutionary act, and the study of utterances thus far and in these respects the study of locutions, or of the full units of speech (Austin, 1975, 94).

¹⁰⁹ To perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and eo ipso to perform an illocutionary act, as I propose to call it (Austin, 1975, 98). I explained the performance of an act in this new and second sense as the performance of an 'illocutionary' act, i.e. performance of an act in saying something as opposed to performance of an act of saying something; and I shall refer to the doctrine of the different types of function of language here in question as the doctrine of 'illocutionary forces' (Austin, 1975, 99).

¹¹⁰ Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them; and we may then say, thinking of this, that the speaker has performed an act in the nomenclature of which reference is made either, only obliquely, or even, not at all, to the performance of the locutionary or illocutionary act. We shall call the performance of an act of this kind the performance of a perlocutionary act or perlocution (Austin, 1975, 101).

reveals *bhāṣaśaktias* ultimately encompassing the entire language as a holistic system of meaning. Through the lens of *Samvādaśakti*, considering the entire structure of speech activity or process of communication or dialogue as the frame within which meaning emerges, includes context, manners, gestures, signs and expressions. As noted by Kunjunni Raja,

The theory of literal and metaphorical meaning, developed by the *Mimāṃsakās* and the *Naiyāyikās* in ancient India, was further extended by Ānandavardhana in the latter half of the ninth century to include emotive and other associative meanings also under linguistic meaning (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 277).

Not only does Ānandavardhana walk the path of Indian philosophers, but he also walks on a similar path to that of the Western philosophers, even before them. Ānandavardhana embraces the direction taken by Bhartṛhari and develops his theory of *dhvani* or suggestion. According to Raja,

...under the term *artha* or meaning, he included not only the cognitive, logical meaning, but also the emotive elements and the 'social-cultural' significance of utterances which are suggested with the help of contextual factors (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 10).

Ānandavardhana does not attack the usual division of speech utterances into sentences and words, nor does he reject the distinction between the primary, known as *abhidhā*, and the intended or metaphorical sense of words known as *lakṣaṇā*. Rather, he accepts both and adds on to it a perspective which considers the entire speech act or whole process of language as having significance for meaning. Moreover, Ānandavardhana goes one step further as “. . . he postulates a third potency of language which he calls the capacity to suggest a meaning other than its literal meaning” (Brough, 1953, p. 173). Ānandavardhana gives a broader understanding and scope to

be covered under the term *artha* or meaning, as he gives the entire structure of communication or the process of dialogue or speech act and language as the unit of meaning, even though he is only discussing literature, his definitions and arguments go beyond the usual limitations. “. . . under the term 'meaning' includes not only the information conveyed, but also the emotion induced; this naturally necessitates the assumption of suggestive power for language” (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 281). Taking the inspiration from Bhartṛhari, Ānandavardhana developed the *dhvani* theory, on this, Raja says,

Ānandavardhana took the cue from Bhartṛhari and developed the theory of language on the lines suggested by him; but since he was concerned only with the question of literary appreciation, he did not proceed with the full discussion of all the intricate problems connected with speech activity (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 278).

The attempt here is to take Ānandavardhana’s work beyond the world of literary appreciation and explore the foresight of Ānandavardhana in seeing suggestion or *dhvani* in speech activity or the process of communication.

Furthermore, a detailed analysis of the theory could validate the hypothesis that the *dhvani* theory is not just *śabdaśakti*, that is, a strength of power behind the words, but also *bhaśaśakti*, a strength or power behind language and *Samvādaśakti*, a strength or power behind communication or conversation. The preliminary analysis of *dhvanyartha* indicates that the principles of *dhvani* theory are relevant in contemporary times and applicable to achieve the deeper meaning. This research aspires to position *dhvanyartha* as a unique mechanism of experiencing meaning and a significant aspect of understanding achieved through the *dhvani* theory, which can bridge ancient wisdom with contemporary thought.

3.3 *Dhvanyartha* of Aestheticians

The concept of *śabdaśakti* is that there is strength or power in words; this strength or power is considered of three types, with *dhvani* being the primary one among them. The other two types of strengths are *abhidhā*, the literal meaning and *lakṣaṇa*, the intended meaning. Both are considered strengths or powers of the ordinary kind or the ordinary realm, whereas the *dhvani śakti* is considered something truly special. This notion that there is strength or power behind words is agreed upon by various classical Indian seers, thinkers, philosophers, and linguists alike; therefore, they agree that the *dhvani* theory, in its essence, is *śabdaśakti*, which is the strength behind words. Even according to Ānandavardhana, *śabdaśakti* refers to words' inherent and intrinsic power and potency and has been an accepted notion by literary scholars and philosophers alike in the Bhartiya tradition. According to the scholars of the Indian tradition of knowledge, words possess a transformative quality that can evoke emotions, create imagery, and convey deeper layers of meaning, resulting in *dhvanyartha*, the highest meaning behind words. The words one chooses, the order in which they are placed, and the rhythm they follow make an author the one she/he becomes. Like poetry, the choice and arrangement of words can paint vivid imagery, create sensory experiences, or elicit emotional responses. Words with *dhvani* make the synopsis of their proper significance resonate with the reader, resulting in an authentic experience that's deeper and not achieved via the shallower meanings resulting from *abhidhā* or *lakṣaṇa*.

Dhvanyartha is the result of such *śabdaśakti*. All scholars consider the *dhvani* theory a *śabdaśakti* as it presents the *dhvanyartha*. The phrases and their order, the pulse and the pitch of the words all contribute towards the *śabdaśakti*. Whether through verbal imagery, alliteration,

rhyme, or rhythm, poets and orators can captivate their audience and share with them deep meaning through their skilful use of sound. The *dhvani* theory is *śabdaśakti*, where words are considered potent themselves. From this viewpoint, words are imbued with a transformative power that exceeds their literal definitions. The philosophy of poetry, as elucidated by Ānandavardhana in his treatise *Dhvanyāloka*, illustrates how words can engage emotions, construct imagery and express nuances. This theory accepts that words can reach beyond their immediate context of denotation and reach the reader or listener at an emotional or aesthetic level.

Dhvani adds a secondary layer of suggestion or connotation to the word. This intricate theory of "suggestion" underscores the potency of words to convey emotions, ideas, and experiences that lie beyond the explicit semantics of sounds. Linguistic scholars such as Abhinavagupta, Maṃmaṭācāryachārya, Bhartṛhari, and Bharatamuni recognised and amplified the value of the *dhvani* theory, interweaving it into the broader discourse of meaning and the philosophy of language. *Dhvani* operates on the premise that words have the power to denote, describe, and evoke sensations, emotions, and complex meanings. Ānandavardhana's assertion that "the supreme purpose of poetry lies in its suggestive power" (Ānandavardhana, 1891, p. 11) challenges traditional canons that prioritise literal text interpretations, making poetry a site of deeper inquiry into how language reflects and constructs human experience.

The role of *dhvani* as *śabdaśakti*, or the 'power of words', is fundamental to understanding *dhvanyartha*. As Abhinavagupta elaborates in his arguments, the resounding words in the mind lead to an engagement of emotions, creating an experience and providing new knowledge. In this regard Cuneo notes,

In the *Abhinavabhāratī*, the commentary to Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra Abhinavagupta expounds an 'emotivistic' aesthetics, according to which aesthetic apperception consists in the emotional response of the spectator, purified from spatio-temporal elements and deprived of personal characterisation (Cuneo, 2007, p. 21)

This results in an emotional and intellectual awakening. In this regard, poetry does not simply communicate ideas but performs an aesthetic act, leading the audience towards a profound appreciation of the suggested meaning experienced. The power of words in achieving *dhvanyartha* necessitates a masterful poet who can convey something beyond the words and comprehend and manipulate the words to achieve the highest meaning through the *śabdaśakti*, prominently known as *dhvani*. Many gifted poets can do that, as suggested below. “*upamā kālidāsasya bhāraverarthagauravam daṇḍinaḥ padalālityaṃ māghe santi trayo guṇāḥ*”¹¹¹ (Apte, 2007, p. 790). The focus of poets is usually on all the parts, but the most crucial part is conveying the highest possible meaning through delivering *rasa*, which can be achieved through texts by binding them with *dhvani*. As stated above, there are a few very extraordinary poets like Kālidāsa, Bhārvi, Magha, Dandin, Bhāsa, and other literary figures who have exemplified this art through their literary works, crafting verses and creating experiences in the audience that transcended the literal and direct sense of meanings of the words. The *dhvanyartha* achieved through their works is living proof of the richness of meanings in Indian linguistic philosophy and the tradition of Sanskrit literature, which has been encouraging scholars, philosophers and poets alike to explore the boundless potentiality of pronounced words or sounds, the literal meaning of the word *dhvani*. By putting on the glasses of suggestive knowledge of meaning,

¹¹¹ “उपमा कालिदासस्य भारवेरर्थगौरवम् । दण्डिनः पदलालित्यं माघे सन्ति त्रयो गुणाः ॥” (Apte, 2007, p. 790)

The speciality and excellence of Kalidasa lie in similes, whereas Bharvi focuses primarily on the glorification of the meaning, and Dandin's premiership lies in the beauty of the language and use of excellent words, and Magha is the one who does this all.

made by Ānandavardhana, words convert from static tools to convey information and produce a vibrant tapestry of emotional expression and meaning, merging the speaker's emotions with the listener's interpretative experiences. “Two aestheticians from medieval Kashmir, Ānandavardhana, and commentator Abhinavagupta, propose a cause of poetic beauty and aesthetic effect that is still grounded in meaning: *dhvani*. They delineate how, in certain poetic conditions, *dhvani* leads to *rasa*, aesthetic enjoyment, an experience at once mental and visceral” (Koul, 2022, p. 292).

3.4 *Dhvanyartha* of Linguists

Bhaśaśakti, as a form of the *dhvani* theory, refers to its broader strength and power behind any language. Many scholars like Roshni Rushtomji (1981)¹¹² and others¹¹³ have argued that although the theory was not formally theorised and recognised in the West, it has also been used in Western languages. This shows that *dhvani* is not only word specific or limited to just Sanskrit language but a tool of emotive expression which can be used in language, around the world. This belonging to language or languages is an evolving role of *dhvani*. That makes the *dhvani* theory a strength behind language itself and not just behind words. Therefore, the evolving role of the *dhvani* theory can be seen from *śabdaśakti* to *bhaśaśakti*. As *bhaśaśakti*, it encompasses not just the individual words but also grammar, rhetoric, syntax, and structure that shape language. The *dhvani* theory visualises language's hidden meaning because of the inherent expressive power beyond the sum of its words. Language allows for the creation of complex narratives, the

¹¹² Rustomji, R. (1981). “‘Rasa’ And ‘Dhvani’ In Indian And Western Poetics And Poetry.” *Journal of South Asian Literature* (Asian Studies Centre), Michigan State University, 16(1), 75–91. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40873623>

¹¹³ Shastri, P. V. Kane, R. N. Rai, M. S. Pandey, A. Singh, K. Ryan, M. Ryan, C. D. Narasimhaiah, B. Indraguru, V. Parashar, D. S. Kulkarni, V. K. Chari, D. Riepe and other artists.

expression of abstract ideas, and the conveyance of cultural and social nuances. It acts as a set of rules and guidelines to communicate and exchange meaning coherently.

Bhāṣaśakti helps us understand the connection between language, knowledge creation, and the sense of attention within. *Bhāṣaśakti* is not just about individual sounds but about language's power. Language is a means of communication, a way of expression, and a form of artistic creation. The *dhvani* theory emphasises that language is not limited to its formally understood literal meaning but possesses layers of implied meanings, emotive suggested meanings, and aesthetic experiential suggested meanings. Using language tools such as metaphors, similes, and other rhetorical devices, poets and writers can harness the *bhāṣaśakti* through the *dhvani* theory to convey complex ideas, evoke deep emotions, deliver the highest *rasa* and arrive at the most authentic meaning. The *dhvani* theory, as *bhāṣaśakti*, focuses on the power of language itself because of the recognition that language is a tool for communication and also a medium through which ideas, emotions, and cultural nuances are expressed. *Bhāṣaśakti* emphasises the role of language in shaping our understanding of the world and influencing our perceptions and meanings. The concept of *dhvani* as *bhāṣaśakti* can be observed in playwrights like Kālidāsa and Shakespeare, where the writer suggests more than what the sentence means. In his play *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, Kālidāsa masterfully employs linguistic tools to convey complex emotions, social hierarchies, and the subtleties of human relationships;¹¹⁴ similarly, Shakespeare

¹¹⁴ अस्मान् साधु विचिन्त्य संयमधनानुच्चैः कुलं चात्मन-स्त्वय्यस्याः कथमप्यबान्धवकृतां स्नेहप्रवृत्तिं च ताम्। सामान्यप्रतिपत्तिपूर्वकमियं दारेषु दृश्या त्वया भाग्यायत्तमतः परं न खलु तद् वाच्यं वधूबन्धुभिः ॥ (*asmān sādhu vicintya saṁyamadhanānucchaiḥ kulam cātmanas, tvayyasyāḥ kathamapyabāndhavakṛtām snehapravṛttiṁ ca tām, sāmānyapratipattipūrvakamiyaṁ dāreṣu drśyā tvayā, bhāgyāyattamataḥparam na khalu tadvācyaṁ vadhūbandhubhiḥ*) (Considering us well, with self-restraint and high-born values, how does affection arise in you due to actions done by kin? This affection, which you see in wives, is based on common expectations; hence it should not be disregarded by those related to the bride) -*Abhijñānaśākuntalam*: IV.17. (Kalidasa, 2016, p. 4.17). This śloka underscores the importance of understanding the nature of society and responsibility of the individual, reminding king Duśyanta of his duty and obligations to his kingdom and his love, and that one should not be sacrificed for another. This śloka somewhat foresees the possible pains of Śakuntalā and warns the king to live up to his promise. The śloka in a way is a reminder of familial duty, and marital relationships as well as a threat of a father if any harm finds her daughter. It also encourages introspection

also does the same in his play *Julius Caesar*; where it can be seen that both writers want to portray their hero in a good light;¹¹⁵ therefore, their flaws are justified in some manner of suggested brilliance. Through the skilful use of *dhvani* as *bhaśaśakti*, Kālidāsa's and Shakespeare's plays surpass linguistic barriers and resonate with audiences and readers across time, space and cultures. *Dhvani*, as *bhaśaśakti*, moves beyond individual words and extends its influence to the broader realm of language and linguistic brilliance. Language, as a communication system, has been used as a tool, but the tools of language, which encompass both words and grammar and the overall structure of expression, are used by these scholars to make suggestions or *dhvani* a part of language as *bhāśaśakti*. *Dhvani* manifests through the arrangement and combination of words, creating a harmonious and resonant effect. The *dhvani* theory presents a profound picture of language's intrinsic power in the reader's or listener's mind; this strength, therefore, is labelled as *bhāśaśakti*. This theory emphasises how suggestive meaning, or *dhvanyartha*, underlies languages across diverse states or spaces, reaching far beyond poetic or literary expressions in the confines of the Sanskrit language. By delving into *dhvani* in the form of *bhāśaśakti* as being the strength in the fundamental nature of language, one can unveil a systematic framework of Ānandavardhana which, when applied to all of the languages, through the power of suggestion, language becomes a dynamic and evocative medium for expressing meaning, sentiments, emotions and experiential understanding.

regarding how societal norms influence personal emotions and reminds couples to value their bond while recognising the role of family affiliations. The essence lies in discerning the purity of affection amid external influences, teaching that relationships require effort and clarity beyond mere societal obligations. It highlights that love should be celebrated for its own merit, unclouded by familial dynamics, thus urging individuals to prioritise the emotional connection over social expectations.

¹¹⁵ This was the most unkindest cut of all; (Julius Caesar, Act 3, Scene 2) (Shakespeare, 1890, p. 52). This simple phrase highlights the emotional and political impact of Brutus' betrayal of Caesar, not only turning a dictator into the hero but also portraying Caesar the true protagonist; while making Brutus, who actually does the right thing for the people, into a villain. It emphasises the depth of Caesar's hurt and is pivotal in turning public opinion against the conspirators making all feel the betrayal, disloyalty, and manipulation. The emotional weight of Brutus' betrayal is depicted as more damaging than the physical wounds themselves, highlighting themes of loyalty, friendship, and the devastating consequences of political ambition.

At the core of the heart of the language lies the strength of the *dhvaniśakti*; this notion presents that the true strength of language is its capacity to invoke deep meanings through suggestion rather than direct expression. According to Krishnamoorthy “We often refer to the poet's inspiration, the divine afflatus that is like a sudden surge of primordial poetic energy. But inspiration has to be turned into the currency of language before it can become poetry” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 52). This job of converting inspirations, emotions and meanings into poetry is done through *dhvani*, so that it resonates in the reader's or listener's consciousness. This according to Ānandavardhana, can be the strength of language elucidating the suggested along with conveying the explicit meanings, which is the inherent work of language. *Dhvani* possesses the language with a latent ability to express suggestive nuances. This mechanism connects with the audience emotionally and intellectually, similar to the distinction done by Richards “between emotive language and referential language” (Richards, 2001, p. 279). One is the general function of the language while the other is due to the existence of the *dhvaniśakti* in language, which one can call or recognise by the term *bhāśaśakti*. It is the power of language to create, shape, and suggest complex experiential meanings. *Bhāśaśakti* ultimately results in the transference of the experiential knowledge of the meaning and allows for a richer engagement with the meaning.

While the *dhvani* theory was prominently theorised and articulated in the context of Sanskrit literature and poetry, its rules and principles give a clear, distinctive idea that *dhvanyartha*, the suggestive meaning, can extend seamlessly across all languages. The strength of *dhvani* as *bhāśaśakti* can manifest universally, regardless of language or the linguistic context. According to Krishnamoorthy, Ānandavardhana anticipates in his work the modern variations and concepts in languages. Krishnamoorthy says,

The modern ideas of ambiguity, implication, calculated complexity, irony, language of paradox have their counterpoints in the different variations of *dhvani*. Ezra Pound defines poetry as simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree. Hulme wants the poets to bend language to express the poet's unconventional vision, to break the stiff general patterns of language in which words tend to be used like dead counters. T. S. Eliot and others talk of the objective correlative of the poet's vision in adequate metaphorical language. To the readers of the *Dhvanyāloka* the germs of such ideas appear to be already anticipated by Ānandavardhana in his own way (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. xxiv).

This perspective enriches our engagements with texts, regional languages, and cultural narratives, inviting one to experience the profoundness of human expression through the lived experience of the meaning understood through the text with the help of the *dhvani* theory. The *dhvaniśakti* reinforces that language is an intricate, living entity evolving with time, similar to the *dhvani* theory, with immense strength and power to evoke, suggest, and convey the vastness of human emotions and experiences, affirming its existence as a fundamental aspect of all linguistic practices.

3.5 *Samvādaśakti*: the Means of *Dhvanyartha*

Samvādaśakti refers to the power or strength behind communication, conversation or dialogue.

This *samvādaśakti* is the power of dialogue and discussion behind every communication.

“Ānandavardhana, therefore, emphasised the importance of taking the whole utterance as a significant unitary linguistic symbol. He had also shown that the meaning of an utterance depends on contextual factors, and that the logical interpretation of the

sentence-meaning on the basis of the individual word-meanings is defective in many cases” (Kapoor, 2005, p. 158).

The *dhvani* theory recognises that communication is not a one-way process but a wholesome dynamic exchange between the speaker and the listener. According to this argument, this strength of suggestion exists in every sound or gesture and has existed since the first attempt at communication. Using this *saṃvādaśakti*, humans realised the meaning and gave specific meanings to certain sounds and gestures, creating formal language. But even before the birth of linguistic excellence through *dhvani*, the power of suggestion existed in sound, gesture and communication. This strength embodies the suggested meaning of *dhvanyartha*, as a strength behind communications known as *saṃvādaśakti*. Communication creates dialogue, providing insight into different ways of achieving understanding through the deliberation of meaning and the construction of common knowledge. Using dialogue in everyday life, literature, and written form, one builds characters, develops a plot, delivers emotional messages, communicates information and explores themes. Conflicts can be resolved, ideas can be debated, and relationships can be forged through dialogue. Man becomes a social animal because of his ability to communicate and understand what the other is feeling. Understanding the other is a collaborative exercise, and dialogue can transform one's emotions into another's understanding because of the *saṃvādaśakti* inherent in it. While the *śabdaśakti*, as a form of *dhvani* theory, primarily focuses on the power of words, *bhāṣaśakti*, the power of language, *saṃvādaśakti* goes beyond that and focuses on the origins of meaning-making and becomes the strength of communication itself. This makes *saṃvādaśakti* a strength not only in dialogue or conversations but also behind gestures, expressions, signs, and sign language, and it also recognises the significance of silence in communication. Silence, therefore, can become as powerful as words in

conveying meaning and evoking emotions when employed purposefully with the strength of *dhvani* as *saṃvādaśakti* behind it. Just as sound, gestures, and language have the potential to create an impact, silence can also have a profound effect through its presence because, without the use of silence, even sounds can be understood just as noise. Silence, just as gestures and communications, can be pregnant with meaning, hinting at unspoken thoughts, emotions, or intentions, which can be realised because of the existence of *saṃvādaśakti* in it. *Samvādaśakti* can build suspense, emphasise a point, transfer emotions, or evoke a sense of tranquillity; therefore, silence is part of communication because of *dhvaniśakti*. The *dhvani* theory, as *saṃvādaśakti*, gives meaningful strength and power to communications, fostering insightful dialogues and understanding between individual agents and communities. It recognises that effective communication involves more than merely exchanging words; it requires understanding the context, subtext, culture, situation, expressions, tone, undertone and the underlying emotions.

The *dhvani* theory recognises the essence of effective communication in facilitating understanding and dialogue through *saṃvādaśakti*, the strength behind the interaction. Since the first dawn of human interaction and communication, adequate understanding has necessitated a reliance on suggestive meaning, thus making the *saṃvādaśakti* a pivotal framework for comprehending and analysing communication precisely.

At its core, suggestive meaning represents the innate human ability to interpret intentions and feelings based on non-literal cues. K. Raja says,

Ānandavardhana did not confine himself to the words and sentences as indicators of meaning; he included all the contextual factors, the intonation, stress, gestures and even the pure sounds used in the utterance, as well as the literal sense, as indicators of the full

meaning of an utterance. Not only the expressive symbols, the *vācakaās*, but the indicative signs, the *bodhakās*, like gestures, also form part of language (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 282).

Communication has relied heavily on understanding context and nuance from the earliest forms of human interaction, such as hand gestures, facial expressions, and simple sounds. The question arose: What is being suggested through this gesture or vocalisation? A statement such as ‘It is cold in here’ can be an indirect request to close a window, illustrating the interpretive dynamics at play; it can also have meaning which has no relation to cold at all, but the relationship of animosity between the individual agents in the room. Every utterance of communication can evoke an individual with a more profound understanding of emotional meaning, shaped by a shared sense of regional and cultural context, reinforcing that communication operates within a framework of the suggested meaning. Communication is enriched further through symbols and signs, which extend the capacity for suggestive meanings. The *dhvani* theory helps us grasp how these symbols carry weighty implications shaped by cultural beliefs and collective experiences.

By emphasising the suggestive nature of meaning in communication, *saṃvādaśakti* reaffirms its essential role in delivering an understanding among individuals and communities, which underscores the inherent ability of humans to engage in dialogue, negotiate meanings, and construct shared understanding through verbal and non-verbal modalities of conversation, while also focusing on interpersonal relationships. The *dhvanyartha* facilitates more profound connections. This interplay between emotions and information is balanced because human understanding enhances empathy and emotive response, emphasising *saṃvādaśakti* as the key to establishing relational dynamics between the reader, writer and the meaning. The *dhvanyartha*, as applied in the context of *saṃvādaśakti*, also pertains to cultural communication. The evolution

of communication itself can be viewed through the lens of *saṃvādaśakti*. As humans developed increasingly complex societies, communication became more nuanced.

The whole goal or purpose of *dhvani* as *saṃvādaśakti* is to share, create or transfer one's own experience to the other. Using *saṃvādaśakti* in conversation, one can awaken this experience in others, which is why the whole argument is that the suggestive meaning predates both the roles of *dhvani* as *śabdaśakti* and *bhaśaśakti*, because the suggestive sense of *saṃvādaśakti* was first used to give sounds or gestures meanings and understanding. Using the *saṃvādaśakti*, different sounds were given different specific meanings, and various gestures were given different meanings. Therefore, the argument is that suggestions in communication arrived first, using formal language, and words with particular meanings arrived later. As the theory of suggestion evolved in time, it was used to bring more beauty and brilliance to words and language, and it was relegated to the realm of aesthetics. Due to this cycle of time and the world and the evolving role of *dhvani*, the transition from *saṃvādaśakti* to *śabdaśakti* and *bhāśaśakti* kept on happening, but it should be understood that it was *saṃvādaśakti* first, although all three roles of *dhvani* have active participation in literature, language and communication. To feel the experience of others and to learn from their experiences, words and language were created and used as tools with the help of suggestion. However, due to the readily available formal meanings and attempted reduction of the multiplicity of meanings, the role of suggestion changed from giving multiple meanings to enhancing the beauty, brilliance and emotive experience of words and language. The use of suggestion in drama, literature, and poetry increased to improve its quality and emotional experiential component in the sense of meaning.

As the *dhvani* theory illustrates the strength of communication in the form of *saṃvādaśakti*, it simultaneously highlights how generalisations arise from carefully interpreting suggestive

meanings; as a result, over time, societies develop frameworks and systems of language that distil these meanings into recognisable patterns, which give formal understanding and meanings to specific words, gestures and expressions. The *dhvani* theory encapsulates in the truest sense the highest essential meaning of communication because of the strength in communications known as the *saṃvādaśakti*, an inherent power behind the diverse modes of human interaction. Whether through verbal exchanges, gestures, symbolic representations, non-verbal cues, speech activity and pauses, the power of suggestive communication originates from the human ability to have multidimensional aspects and perspectives, which help one interpret and transmit meanings that transcend the surface level of understanding and explore the experiential.

3.6 The Evolution of *Dhvani*

This research traces the evolving role of *dhvani* as *saṃvādaśakti*, *śabdaśakti*, and *bhaśaśakti*, highlighting its philosophical significance in words, literature, language, dialogue, conversation, and communication, which enables one's ability to experience emotive meanings and have a complete understanding of the text. The attempt made here in *saṃvādaśakti* is to broaden the term *artha* or meaning to include all that is conveyed by communication, dialogue and speech activity as a whole unit. “The sentence is the unit of speech, though the word, which is the product of analysis from the sentences, can be considered the unit of language” (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 8). This is why the suggested sense of meaning can be understood through all of language. The language is seen as one whole unit, hence *dhvani* as *bhaśaśakti*. But limiting *dhvani* only to *śabdaśakti* would be a grave injustice to knowledge itself, as it would limit the outpouring of knowledge only to *śabda*. *Dhvani*, chained to the limitation of words and only seen as *śabdaśakti*, is a grave shot to the feet of the theory, which stands on the foundational basis of *saṃvādaśakti*. “This defeatist attitude is, perhaps, based on a wrong approach to the

problem of meaning, assuming that every word in language must have a definite and precise meaning and that we cannot talk sensibly about meaning until we can define everything that is meant by words” (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, p. 04). *śabdaśakti* is a recognised and accepted concept that emphasises the inherent power of words to evoke emotions and convey more profound meanings.

In contrast, *bhāśaśakti* recognises the broader power of languages in shaping meanings and facilitating shared understanding. Ultimately, *saṃvādaśakti* can be seen as the oldest and an essential concept that underscores the interactive and transformative nature of all forms of communications, regardless of language, dialogues or sounds. Therefore, this research points out that understanding these three dimensions of the *dhvaniśakti* allows one to appreciate thoroughly the intricate and complex interplay between words, languages, and communications, which is backed by the strength of suggestive meaning, the *dhvanyartha*, which has long been revered for its power to elevate ordinary art and literature beyond the mundane. The *dhvaniśakti* unlocks a realm of aesthetic rapture, allowing us to experience the transcendental bliss of *ānandā* through the realisation of meaning. Thus, it provides a glimpse into the timeless and universally appealing essence of a blissful experience, like the various schools of classical Indian philosophy. *Dhvani*, in these three forms of *śabdaśakti*, *bhāśaśakti* and *saṃvādaśakti*, masterfully weaves together the threads of *dhvanyartha*, suggestion, crafting an experiential tapestry that resonates deeply by moving beyond the literal; *dhvani* invites us to partake in a world of nuanced emotions, subtle intuitions, and profound connections to experience the *satcitānandā* first through the realisation of partial bliss or transcendental bliss of aesthetic experience and later through the application of *dhvani* to philosophy. This is the secret to creating works of art that stand the test of time. The *dhvani* theory suggests the true blissful meaning that echoes within

our very being, evoking feelings and sensations that transcend the boundaries of being and becoming. The ultimate aim of both literature and philosophy is *ānandā*. “For the *rasa* theorists, the final goal of *rasa* is aesthetic bliss, similar to religious bliss” (Rustomji, 1981, p. 83). Similar to how in Indian philosophy the ultimate goal is to achieve permanence of bliss, *rasa* theorists compare the bliss of aesthetics to the bliss of ‘*satchitānandā*’; the only difference is that the former is momentary and the latter is permanent. As Abhinavagupta says,

The ultimate aim of *rasa dhvani* is to transcend the ordinary and to provide a glimpse into the extraordinary. It is about moving beyond the literal and the mundane to reach a state of aesthetic rapture. This makes a work of art timeless and universally appealing; it speaks a language that resonates deeply with all humanity (Abhinavagupta, 2025, p. 6).

Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta were the pioneers to systematically write about the rules and regulations of the *dhvani* theory because of their ability to philosophise. Even grammarians such as Patañjali and Pāṇini, to whom Ānandavardhana attributes the creation of *dhvani*, are also philosophers. The same transformative power of *dhvani* through the three forms, *saṃvādaśakti*, *śabdaśakti*, and *bhāśaśakti* can be applied to philosophical texts, unlocking a deeper level of understanding and connection with the text to ultimately achieve *Satcitānandā* by embracing the suggestive meaning, that is, *dhvanyartha*. One can experience the thrill of discovery as complex concepts and abstract ideas reveal their hidden depths of joy and nuanced bliss. In this journey of reaching transcendental bliss, where the pursuit of knowledge becomes but one step of self-discovery and another of spiritual growth, it is the application of *dhvani* to philosophy that offers a unique experiential meaning known as the *dhvanyartha* which gives an easier and less travelled pathway in first achieving the partial bliss or the momentary experience, which makes one strive for more and ultimately leads to achieving the *Satcitānandā*. This is *Dhvani's* strength;

it can provide a joyous path to *Sachitānandā*, one that winds through the lush landscapes of *rasa*, or aesthetic experience.

However, when one applies the *dhvani* theory to philosophical texts, one has to take every step carefully because the multiplicity of meanings that the suggestive meaning enables can lead to various misinterpretations. As said in the *Lakṣminārayana Samhita*, one has to analyse it before taking the next step. The shloka is as stated, *calatyekena pādena tiṣṭhatyekena dhīmatī, na parīkṣya param sthānam pūrvamāyatanam tyajet* || 3.42.37 || (*Lakṣminārayana Samhita*) (Kumar, 2013, 117).¹¹⁶ *Maharṣi* Veda Vyāsa here distinctly says that an intelligent being walks only on one foot at a time and stays steady on the other, or anything unpredictable. One only lifts their back foot once the front foot is firmly planted, and there is certainty that the ground below will not crumble and fall. Therefore, one should not leave one's first position without adequately understanding the second position. Such an understanding of emotions and meanings should always be seen in a philosopher and a *sahṛdaya*. One should be careful with the steps taken ahead. Ānandavardhana also understood that this is why he gave different ways to identify *dhvani*, even when multiple meanings are suggested. That is how one can limit misinterpretations by figuring out the highest meaning of the text. The highest meaning is one that, according to Ānandavardhana, provides the highest *rasa* or bliss. The same applies even when applying the *dhvani* theory to philosophy. When it is used in philosophical texts, what path the meaning teaches and what path one has to follow when realising the *dhvanyartha* is entirely up to the individual who sees that meaning. The path to be chosen is up to one who truly understands the highest meaning through the suggestions of the text and can process the meaning

¹¹⁶ चलत्येकेन पादेन तिष्ठत्येकेन धीमती । न परीक्ष्य परं स्थानं पूर्वमायतनं त्यजेत् ॥ ३.४२.३७ ॥ *Lakshminarayana Samhita*” (A scholar will only walk with one feet in the air, till he analyses the next step and (its consequences) he does not leave the step before) (Kumar, 2013, 117)

to achieve the ultimate bliss. However, one thing is clear: one achieves the meaning through *dhvani* and *rasa*; independent of the meaning, this experiment focuses on how one can get there. Through aesthetics, *rasa dhvani* takes one closer to that ultimate bliss. This path can be seen as the easier path to the same ultimate goal of *satcitānandā*, but only with different tools of suggestion using aesthetics, experience, and ethical values to understand the meanings better.

3.7 Summary of the Chapter

The experiment of applying *dhvani* to philosophy is crucial, for it holds the potential to unlock new dimensions of human understanding and experience. The ultimate aim of *dhvani*, which is in alignment with orthodox schools, is to transcend the ordinary and provide a glimpse into the extraordinary, to not only know the meaning of being one with *Brahman* but to experience it, to realise it. The *dhvaniśakti*, through its evolving role, helps in experiencing the ultimate aim of *aham brahmāsmi*¹¹⁷ (Shastri, 1998, p. 269). With the help of the *dhvanyartha*, the realisation of the transcendental bliss of *ānandā* can be achieved. The experiment of applying *dhvani* to philosophy is vital, for it holds the key to unlocking the transformative power of aesthetic experience and revealing the ultimate reality that lies at the heart of human existence.

*Śiṣyāḥ sahasrāśca guravo śatāśca, nityaṁ hi jñānārjananāṭayantaḥ, anubhavo ekapramāṇamatra, kaniṣṭhikāviddha na duḥkhī manye.*¹¹⁸ Thousands of students and hundreds of teachers are actively striving to attain knowledge and gain and store more and more knowledge. Experience, though, is the only evident tool for realising knowledge, as no amount of informative knowledge can make one realise the pain one endures when one bangs the smallest

¹¹⁷ अहं ब्रह्मास्मि (1.4.10) *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣada*

¹¹⁸ शिष्याः सहस्राश्च गुरवो शताश्च नित्यं हि ज्ञानार्जननाटयन्तः । अनुभवो एकप्रमाणमत्र कनिष्ठिकाविद्ध न दुःखी मन्ये ॥ (Thousands of students and hundreds of teachers, everyday play the game of earning and sharing knowledge, (but) experience is the only (the greatest teacher) as evidenced with the instances of hurting the smallest finger of one's toe)

toe or the pinky toe. Therefore, experiential knowledge is considered the highest form of knowledge, even when it is to be learned through pain, pleasure or mistakes. Eminent Indian linguistics scholar from the West, Prof. M.B. Emeneau, says, “Certainly in one other slowly awakening department of linguistics, that concerned with meaning, the West still has something to learn from India” (Emeneau, 1967, p. 197). This is very much true regarding the theory of *dhvani* and scholars discussing the theory specifically, Ānandavardhana.

Ever since the discovery of the Sanskrit language by European scholars at the end of the eighteenth century, which inaugurated the science of linguistics, ancient Indian thought has continuously been exerting a stimulating and benign influence on modern linguistic studies (Kunjunni Raja, 1969, xi).

It is time now for the West and the East again to explore and experiment with the theory of *dhvani*, going beyond the limitations and truly embracing its strength and achieving the potential the theory of suggestion truly possesses. With a more rigorous attitude and academic influence, the dialogue between multiple perspectives of suggestion or *dhvani* should continue. From East to West and vice versa, the suggestive method of realising meaning can achieve great heights. From Aristotle's foundational insights to the later works of Wittgenstein, Quine, and Austin, the exploration of meaning in language has expanded our understanding of communication and has profound implications in disciplines including linguistics, cognitive science, and philosophy. The dialogue continues, as each philosophical contribution builds on those before it, challenging us to rethink the relationship between language, meaning, and the world. *Dhvani* theory encompasses various dimensions of language and communication, highlighting the power of words, the expressive potential of language, and the transformative nature of dialogue. *Śabdaśakti* emphasises the inherent power of words to evoke emotions and convey deeper meanings.

Bhāṣaśakti recognises the broader power of language in shaping communication and facilitating shared understanding. *Samvādaśakti* underscores the interactive and transformative nature of dialogue. Understanding these dimensions of the *dhvani* theory allows us to appreciate the intricate interplay between language, communication, and the evocative potential of words. *Dhvani* theory, a significant concept in Indian aesthetics and literary criticism, has evolved over centuries to encompass various dimensions of language, communication, and the power of words. This chapter explores the evolving role of *dhvani* theory as *śabdaśakti*, the strength behind words, *bhāṣaśakti*, the strength behind language, and *samvādaśakti*, the strength behind communication. By delving into the historical development and contemporary relevance of *dhvani* theory, we can gain a deeper understanding of its multifaceted nature and its impact on literary and communicative practices.

Chapter 4

Dhvanyartha: Oneness of Language, Meaning and Experience

*“Piṇḍe piṇḍe matirbhinnā kuṇḍe kuṇḍe navaṃ payah, jātau jātau navacārāḥ
navāvāṇī mukhe mukhe”* (Shastri, 2021, p. 69).¹¹⁹

4.1 Introduction

The thoughts in every mind and the way of thinking differ in every being, and water quality varies from pond to pond. Likewise, the lifestyle or the way of living differs among different bodies, and the language or dialect keeps changing in people's mouths from one nation to another. Exploring philosophy often transcends geographical, historical, linguistic or any other kind of boundaries, drawing connections between seemingly disparate concepts, ideas, and ways of thought and fostering a deeper understanding of human experience and existence. Among such fertile fields of thought grows the fruit of intellectual inquiry, which, when properly cooked, results in a perfect dish belonging to the realm of interpretation, where the various tastes and traditions of interpretations intersect.

Admittedly, the very act of thinking and interpreting was and is pertinent to the world of intellect. That is why it made perfect sense when the great Western philosopher, Ludwig

¹¹⁹ पिण्डे पिण्डे मतिर्भिन्ना कुण्डे कुण्डे नवं पयः | जातौ जातौ नवचाराः नवावाणी मुखे मुखे ||Raambhāśuk Saṃvād (Every head has a different thoughts then the other, every pond has different water then the other, every being has different culture, and every mouth has a different language) (Shastri, 2021, p. 69).

Wittgenstein, claimed to solve all the problems of philosophy by reducing them to language issues. “Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language” (Wittgenstein, 1922, 4.003). This Wittgensteinian thought formulation brought forward the importance of the *dhvani* theory in linguistic philosophy and philosophy, which led to a deeper study of the proposed project on analysing the *dhvani* theory. With the proper understanding of the *dhvani* theory, it is understood that it reaches a new account or meaning that is not the literal meaning of a sentence. Therefore, according to the *dhvani* theory, something that can be shown can also be said. It cannot be considered an easy answer to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s proposition, as much thorough research is necessary for the proposed field. Nevertheless, it opens our minds to a new perspective if Wittgensteinian thought and the *dhvani* theory are brought together. As with the *dhvani* theory and its claims, it is possible to show what cannot be said, which directly goes against what Professor Ludwig Wittgenstein says in the scholarly text of *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, that is, “what can be shown, cannot be said” (Wittgenstein, 1922, 4.1212). This chapter briefly explores the intricate relationship of identity and the difference between *dhvani* and other literary theories of the West. Hermeneutics is one such rational tradition that intersects with the rich tradition of interpretative meanings of Indian linguistic philosophy, specifically, it can be theoretically embodied with the *dhvani* theory in Ānandavardhana’s *Dhvanyāloka*. It also focuses on the concept of *sahṛdaya*, which truly makes *dhvanyartha* unique. Articulated in Ānandavardhana’s *Dhvanyāloka*, *sahṛdaya* is an experiential state where the meaning and the being become one, which truly distinguishes the *dhvanyartha* from any other forms of meaning. This chapter undertakes a philosophically rigorous, comparably structured analysis of the *dhvani* theory as formulated by Ānandavardhana in the *Dhvanyāloka*, placing it in critical dialogue with major Western literary theories, including

New Criticism, Structuralism, and Reader-Response Theory. Through an exploratory methodology, the study demonstrates that *dhvani*, that is, suggestion, is grounded in the primacy of *dhvanyartha*, the suggestive meaning. The *dhvanyartha* offers a more comprehensive ontological understanding of literary meaning by integrating in *dhvani* the linguistic structure, aesthetic experience, *rasa*, and epistemological realisation, *anubhava*. While modern theories isolate aspects of meaning, textual, structural, or interpretive hermeneutics, *dhvani* synthesises them into an experiential whole. *Dhvani* constitutes to “soul of literature”¹²⁰ which remains philosophically essential because it can generate experiential knowledge. Through detailed textual analysis and comparative interpretation, it can be seen that *dhvani* transcends the limitations of Western theories, which tend to isolate meaning within textual, structural, or interpretive domains. Ānandavardhana’s intervention represents a decisive shift from form to meaning. By introducing *dhvani* as a distinct experiential function, he expands the scope of literary analysis beyond conventional semantics. As noted in the *Origin and Development of the Theory of Rasa and Dhvani in Sanskrit Poetics*, this shift “marks a transition from rhetorical ornamentation to philosophical inquiry into the nature of meaning” (Nandī, 1973, p. 18).

Theory of New Criticism, associated with figures like Cleanth Brooks and T.S. Eliot, emphasizes the autonomy of the text and the importance of close reading, focusing on irony, paradox, and tension within literary structures. Although this approach recognizes multiplicity and complexity beyond literal meaning, it remains confined to textual formalism and structural coherence (Brooks, 1968, p. 188-192). *Dhvani* transcends this limitation by shifting meaning from textual ambiguity to experiential realisation through *rasa* and *ānanda*. While New Criticism interprets irony and tension as internal textual mechanisms, *dhvani* views them as suggestive vehicles that

¹²⁰ Kāvyaśya ātmā dhvani (DL: I.1) (Ānandavardhana, 1891, p. 47).

evoke aesthetic resonance in the *sahrdaya*. Thus, New Criticism seeks coherence within the text, whereas *dhvani* seeks experiential unity within consciousness. As observed in Literary Theory and Criticism, New Criticism cannot fully explain “the affective transformation of meaning into aesthetic experience” (H, 2023, p. 112-118), whereas *dhvani* situates meaning within the experiential domain of the reader (H, 2023, pp. 89-94).

Structuralism, influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure, conceptualises literature as a system of signs in which meaning arises through differential relations within linguistic structures (Saussure, 1983, p. 65; Saussure, 1983, p. 70). Although Structuralism offers a systematic analysis of language and literary organisation, it reduces meaning to structural relations and overlooks the experiential dimension central to *dhvani*. *Dhvani* challenges this linguistic determinism by arguing that the highest meaning lies beyond structural systems in aesthetic intuition and suggestive experience. While Structuralism analyses binary oppositions and signifying structures, *dhvani* interprets these as pathways toward *rasa* and unified experiential consciousness. As discussed in *The Perspective of a Pervasive Literary Theory*, *dhvani* “liberates meaning from the rigidity of linguistic structures and relocates it in aesthetic consciousness” (Singh, 2022, p. 233). Thus, Structuralism explains how meaning is constructed, whereas *dhvani* explains how meaning is experienced, thereby offering a more comprehensive philosophical framework.

Reader-Response Theory and hermeneutics further illuminate the relationship between interpretation, experience, and meaning. Reader-Response theorists such as Wolfgang Iser and Stanley Fish argue that meaning emerges through the interaction between reader and text (Iser, 1980, p. 36; Fish, 1980, p. 171), yet this often results in interpretive relativism. *Dhvani* anticipates reader participation through the concept of the *sahrdaya* but simultaneously imposes

aesthetic discipline, maintaining that not all interpretations are equally valid. Meaning arises through suggestive perception grounded in shared aesthetic sensibility rather than arbitrary subjectivity. Similarly, hermeneutics emphasises interpretation but often remains within speculative philosophy detached from lived experience. *Dhvani*, by contrast, prioritises tacit experience and experiential realisation before theoretical articulation. The *sahṛdaya* experiences *dhvanyartha* before conceptualising it, just as philosophical insight emerges first as tacit knowledge and later becomes formal philosophy. Through this distinction, *dhvani* bridges intellectual analysis with emotional and experiential resonance, tracing the movement from tacit experience to speculative philosophy and establishing suggestive meaning as the necessary medium through which unspoken experience becomes communicable and philosophically meaningful.

4.2 *Dhvani* and Hermeneutics

As discussed in the previous chapters, *dhvani* establishes poetry as a medium that transcends literal expression and communicates profound emotional and aesthetic experiences through *dhvanyartha*; it is only regarded as the highest form of meaning when it generates *rasa* that culminates into *ānanda*.¹²¹ *Dhvanyartha* operates beyond direct denotation, allowing literary expression to evoke emotional and intellectual responses that ordinary language cannot fully capture. Its effectiveness lies in ambiguity, multiplicity, and the reader's active participation in interpretation, making literary experience deeply personal and reflective. After *abhidhā*, the literal meaning, comes *lakṣaṇā*, the implied or inferential level associated with hermeneutics, but the highest level is *dhvani*, the latent emotional and suggestive meaning perceived only by a

¹²¹ *Dhvani* is the crown and capital of poetry. Even the familiar meaning, when touched with *rasa*, glows out with radiance in the same manner in which the plants bud forth new leaves with the advent of spring (Prasad, 1994, p. 309).

sahṛdaya through experiential sensitivity. Ānandavardhana identifies three dimensions of meaning: *vachyārtha*, the direct denotative meaning understood first in grammar and hermeneutics; *lakṣyārtha*, the secondary or contextual meaning that enables metaphor, implication, and interpretive extension; and *dhvanyārtha*, the deepest level where unstated emotional and aesthetic resonance emerges through suggestion. *Dhvanyārtha* is realised through intense engagement and experiential oneness with the meaning. Emotional experience arises through the interaction of *vibhāva* (cause of emotion), *anubhāva* (effect of emotion), and *vyabhicārī bhāva* (transitory emotions), collectively producing *rasa*. This process allows poetry to create layered emotional resonance, enabling readers to participate in the creation of meaning rather than passively receiving it. As seen in the third chapter *dhvanyārtha* extends beyond poetry into language, communication, music, drama, and visual arts, where suggestion similarly evokes profound emotional responses. *dhvanyārtha* is presented as the zenith of aesthetic meaning because it unites language, sound, emotion, and interpretation into a transformative artistic experience that transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries.

4.2.1 Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics, derived from the Greek term *hermēneuein*¹²² is presented as the art and science of interpretation concerned with understanding meaning in scriptures, literature, philosophy, and law, while also examining the conditions that make interpretation possible and reliable. Renaissance humanists such as Erasmus advocated returning *ad fontes* through study of Hebrew and Greek texts, while Reformers including Martin Luther and John Calvin stressed scriptural clarity and interpretive principles like the analogy of faith (Ferraris, 1996, p. 30). Modern

¹²² The Greek word *hermeios* referred to the priest at the Delphic oracle. This word and the more common verb *hermēneuein* and noun *hermēneia* point back to the wing-footed messenger-god Hermes, from whose name the words are apparently derived (or vice versa?). Significantly, Hermes is associated with the function of transmuting what is beyond human understanding into a form that human intelligence can grasp. The various forms of the word suggest the process (Palmer, 1969, p.13).

hermeneutics emerges with Friedrich Schleiermacher, who proposed that interpretation requires both grammatical and psychological understanding and formulated the hermeneutic circle in which parts and whole mutually illuminate one another, followed by Wilhelm Dilthey, who extended hermeneutics beyond texts to all human sciences through interpretive understanding (Verstehen) (Various, 2021, p. 37). Martin Heidegger transformed hermeneutics into an ontological inquiry by arguing that interpretation is fundamental to human existence (Dasein), where pre-understanding and prejudice are unavoidable conditions of meaning (Heidegger, 1999, p. 6), while Hans-Georg Gadamer developed philosophical hermeneutics through the “fusion of horizons,” emphasising that interpretation occurs dialogically between the interpreter and text, shaped by history, tradition, and reflective engagement with prejudice (Slattery, 2012, p.136). Paul Ricoeur attempted to reconcile Gadamer’s trust in tradition with the “hermeneutics of suspicion” associated with Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche by emphasising the dialectic between explanation and interpretation and arguing that symbols generate new meanings beyond literal expression (Wood, 2002, p. 29). Hermeneutics operates through the dynamic relation between parts and whole, the interpreter’s preconceptions, and historical, cultural, linguistic, and socio-political contexts, while debates continue between intentionalists seeking authorial meaning and anti-intentionalists who argue texts exceed authorial control. Hermeneutic principles are applied in theology, law, literary criticism, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and interpretive social research, where they guide textual analysis, legal reasoning, symbolic interpretation, and understanding of human worldviews. It also addresses critiques of subjectivity by noting Gadamer’s appeal to communal standards and conversational norms, while thinkers such as Jacques Derrida challenge the stability of meaning through *différance*, forcing hermeneutics to refine its understanding of meaning, context, and signification (Silverman &

Ihde, 1985, 208). Ultimately, hermeneutics is portrayed as an evolving discipline that demonstrates how understanding is always historically situated, linguistically mediated, and dialogically formed, making interpretation a reflective and meaningful human activity rather than a neutral process, while hermeneutic rationality is introduced as a broader philosophical and epistemological framework situated at the intersection of interpretation and rational understanding. “Hermeneutics is the study of interpretation” (Weinsheimer, 2020, p. 1). Hermeneutics initially developed as a methodology for interpreting texts, particularly sacred scriptures of ancient times, and it focused predominantly on understanding philosophical, historical, and religious texts and legal documents. In this regard Weinsheimer opines,

Hermeneutics plays a role in a number of disciplines whose subject matter demands interpretative approaches, characteristically, because the disciplinary subject matter concerns the meaning of human intentions, beliefs, and actions, or the meaning of human experience as it is preserved in the arts and literature, historical testimony, and other artefacts (Weinsheimer, 2020, p. 5).

Prominent figures behind the evolution of hermeneutics include Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Each contributed to the idea that interpretation is not merely a mechanical process but an intricate interplay between the reader's context, the author's context, the text, the time, the ideologies, the background, and broader cultural and historical factors (Silverman & Ihde, 1985, p. 75, 88, & 101). “As a disciplinary area, and in analogy with the designations of other disciplinary areas, hermeneutics might have been named the philosophy of interpretation” (Weinsheimer, 2020, p. 2). Rationality, primarily understood as being reasonable and logical while interpreting any given text, has often been associated with the scientific method to find the objective truth. “One of the hallmarks of a

hermeneutic conception of rationality is that rationality is grounded in an understanding that is historically and lingually mediated” (Portocarrero et al., 2012, p. 153). Traditional views of rationality have emphasised universality, objectivity, and a detached, one-sided understanding of phenomena. Rationality advocates for reason as the ultimate path to knowledge, favouring a structured, deductive approach to understanding reality.

Hermeneutic rationality emerges from synthesising hermeneutical insights gained through the systematic use of rational thought (Portocarrero et al., 2012, p. 62). It offers a framework for understanding human statements and expressions in a way that acknowledges the elements of interpretation which lead to the objective structures that shape valid human knowledge. Hermeneutic rationality posits that reason is not independent of context; rather, it is deeply embedded within interpretive practices; without reason, interpretation is impossible (Portocarrero et al., 2012, p. 62). In this framework, rationality is not merely about the logical coherence of arguments but also entails a logical awareness of the interpretive lens through which individuals and communities rationally view the world. This form of rationality recognises that understanding is an evolving process shaped by preconceptions, biases, and cultural narratives. Therefore, hermeneutic rationality involves a reflexive engagement with one's biases while being open to the perspectives of others to fulfil the hunger for knowledge.

4.2.2 A Comparative Study

At first glance, *dhvani* and hermeneutic rationality appear to belong to distinct traditions, one rooted in aesthetic experience, the other in philosophical dialogue, but a closer look reveals a deep affinity in how both account for meaning's fluidity, the co-presence of identity and difference, and the interpreter's creative role. The reader or listener “discovers” a latent meaning that is neither fully in the text nor wholly in the reader. Meaning arises in the shimmering tension

between what is said and what is suggested in an interstitial space. The text and its suggestive force remain rooted in shared linguistic and cultural conventions (e.g., classical imagery). Each act of suggestion opens a singular horizon of emotional nuance, shaped by the reader's horizon and the poet's artistry. The interpreter's pre-understandings meet the text's historical and cultural background. All understanding is conditioned by tradition and language; there is no "view from nowhere." Interpreters revise their own assumptions in light of their encounter with the text. Texts carry the "identity" of their moment authorial intent, genre conventions, linguistic structures. Meaning is never identical across readers or eras; each interpretive act introduces difference through new questions, contexts, and ethical commitments. In *dhvani*, suggestion invites the reader into a co-creative role; in hermeneutics, interpretation is always a dialogue, not a one-way decoding. Both reject the notion that meaning is a fixed atomic unit; meaning is dynamic, relational, and intersubjective. *Dhvani* operates within a shared poetic tradition while allowing for individual resonances. Hermeneutic rationality emphasises how texts are anchored in linguistic traditions yet open to new readings as contexts shift. Both frameworks hold that identity, the text's integrity, and tradition's norms must be honoured even as difference, the reader's situated perspective is enabled. This balance prevents two extremes: (a) authoritarian imposition of a single "correct" meaning; (b) radical relativism, where any reading is equally valid. *Dhvanyartha* in 'The silence of the veil' suggests unspoken yearning, the distance between lovers, the tension between visibility and concealment. The reader's horizon, one's own experiences of longing resonate: the poem becomes an occasion for personal reflection on desire and absence. Whereas Hermeneutic Reflection would consider questions like which cultural conventions of courtly love inform the poem? What moral or social ideals underlie its imagery? How does the poem's suggestive force shift if read today? In what ways are notions of intimacy,

gender, or even privacy reframed? “Gary Shapiro and Alan Sica's *Hermeneutics*, questions and prospects synthesises a great breadth of arguments ranging from Hermeneutics suspicion to conflicting interpretations and representation in history” (Shusterman, 1984, p. 216). By bringing *dhvani*'s insight into the practice of hermeneutic rationality, interpreters learn to attend not only to what a text says but to what it quietly suggests, the interspace where identity and difference meet. This enriched hermeneutic stance by honouring tradition and the text's own “voice” (identity). In an era of cultural pluralism and contested narratives, a *dhvani*-inflected hermeneutic rationality equips us to listen deeply, interpret responsibly, and participate creatively in the ongoing generation of meaning.

After going through the definitions above, exploration of identity and difference in hermeneutic rationality and *dhvani* theory offers a fertile ground for philosophical discussions surrounding meaning, interpretation, and the nature of human understanding. While both frameworks engage deeply with questions about how meaning is derived and communicated, they diverge significantly in their foundational premises, methods, and implications.

When discussing hermeneutics, it is important to understand that “the main purpose” of hermeneutics is “to preserve the general validity of interpretation against the inroads of romantic caprice and sceptical subjectivity, and to give a theoretical justification of such validity, upon which all the certainty of historical knowledge is founded” (Weinsheimer, 2020, p. 6).

The ultimate goal of the *dhvani* theory is to achieve the highest possible meaning through a statement with the help of *rasa*, which is bliss.

Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta take *rasa* as existing in the reader himself. Thus, they go one step ahead of their predecessors in explaining the manifestation of *rasa* and *ananda*. They make *rasa* the cherished goal of literary composition. Abhinavagupta was particularly keenly interested in giving a scientific explanation of positional blissful experience (Prasad, 1994, p. 111).

One has to understand that the fundamental difference between the two theories lies in the purpose itself, as one wishes to establish universal facts or valid knowledge and the other wishes to achieve the knowledge of experiential bliss. The differences between these theories make them part of the realm of speculative philosophy and tacit experience, respectively, but the identity among them is what makes them both engaging and interesting. The difference between the two is clearly visible, but what calls for attention is the similarities between the two theories. Like the *dhvani* theory, one should understand that hermeneutics is also an art of deciphering multiple meanings from a singular statement or expression. Like the *dhvani*, hermeneutics affirms that one must remain ever vigilant about how common wisdom and prejudices inform and can distort one's perception, judgment and values, that even the most established knowledge and valid sources of knowledge may be in need of reconsideration and re-verification, and that this false finitude of understanding is not simply a regrettable fact of the limited human condition but, more importantly, that this finitude is itself a significant opening for the pursuit and realisation of new and different meanings. This according to James Joyce relates to in its most basic, primal sense, the human need and ability to engage in "two things at a time" (Verene, 2022, p. 60). To be more accurate, both the *dhvani* theory and hermeneutic rationality refer to the practice of discerning the indirect, tacit or allusive meanings embedded in the text, which is beyond the literal meaning or sense; it is like sensing another sense beyond or beneath the

apparent or literal sense. This speciality brings both theories to the same table and brings forward an identity in difference. Even in this identity, there lies a difference when exploring the tacit meaning, going beyond the literal sense; hermeneutic rationality only focuses on a rational, logical and universal understanding of the statement (Portocarrero et al., 2012, p. 59), whereas the *dhvani* theory goes a step beyond that and embraces the experiential, sentimental, emotional and suggested meaning. Therefore, the identity of hermeneutic rationality with the *dhvani* theory can only occur at the first two levels of meaning, *vachyārtha* and *lakṣyārtha*. In the *dhvani* theory, only when there is *vachyārthabādhā* or *śabdarthabādhā* that is, when the literal meaning does not make sense, or it is not sufficient enough, then one would move to the *lakṣyārtha*, that is, the intended meaning. But even when moved to the *lakṣyārtha* it is still logical, rational and attempted universal understanding of the statement, similar to the rational method of Hermeneutics. In hermeneutics, too, this special human activity to seek meaning beyond the literal sense only occurs when the meaning makes less sense; therefore, one may, in turn, call for a method of second-order inquiry, which is reflective of common sense and gives a rational interpretation involving a process of disclosing concealed hidden messages, either by using hermeneutic suspicion and unmasking the covered-up meaning or by using hermeneutics of affirmation through which disclosing surplus meaning in the statement. That is why the similarity between the two lies in understanding that both hermeneutic rationality and the *dhvani* theory are tasked with interpreting plural meanings in response to the polysemy of language and life, but the tools used by both theories are essentially different because the *dhvani* theory engages with text on a deeper emotional, sentimental, moral, experiential, value-based and suggested level. This third level of suggested meaning is missing in Hermeneutic rationality, which makes it different from *dhvani*, but the first two levels, literal meaning and intended

meaning, *vachyārtha* and *lakṣyārtha*, respectively, can be found in Hermeneutic rationality, which is the point of identity between the two theories. “Hermeneutics, thus viewed, is an activity carried out in the name of its founding spirit, Hermes: Messenger of gods, guardian of thresholds, and carrier of cryptic codes” (Kearney, 2012, p. 177). That is why any statement that does not make literal sense needs to be decrypted logically and evaluated to find its true intended meaning. The same is the condition when it comes to *lakṣyārtha*, as there has to be a literal meaning that does not make sense, and only then can one logically arrive at the intended meaning. But for the suggestive meaning that is the *dhvanyārtha* to exist, there does not need to be senselessness in the literal meaning; suggestive meaning can exist regardless. One can further see how Hermeneutic Rationality sticks to the dual undertone of meaning with the examples of the three original disciplines of hermeneutics, formulated by the great thinker, scholar and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher in the early 19th century, which were primarily theology, law, and philology. Because each of them solicited an interpretation of a dual undertone of meanings: “a) divine and human (theology), b) prosecutorial and defensive (law), c) ancient and actual (philology)” (Kearney, 2012, 177). Each of the three disciplines called for a method of discriminating between different and often conflicting text readings and the sense of meaning. Later, another prominent philosopher would add history with a similar condition of dual interpretation, one interpretation being in the past and one in the present.

The prominent thinker is none other than Wilhelm Dilthey, who added 'history' to the list as a universal human science devoted to reading between past and present, a science which one would see as a model for a general hermeneutics of life as it interprets itself, whence the birth of philosophical hermeneutics” (Kearney, 2012, 177).

Later, through his magnum opus '*Being and Time*,' Heidegger broadened the definition further in speaking of an ontological hermeneutic committed to understanding the fundamental difference between being and beings, a task he stated was based on a pre-understanding of the everyday existence of human beings whom he called *Dasien*, as being-toward-death. He argues that

...such hermeneutical research is itself only possible because human beings are, in their very being, interpretive. For Heidegger, understanding is a mode or possibility of human existence, and, indeed, one that is projective, oriented toward the interpretive possibilities available to us in the situations in which we find ourselves (Heidegger, 1978, p. 31-32).

But even the ontological hermeneutics lacks the virtues and values to be essentially a suggestive source of meaning as employed by the *dhvani* theory. This difference is mainly because it is a part of abstract philosophy wherein the philosopher evaluates the interpretation being outside of it and without getting involved in the meaning-making process, whereas in the *dhvani* theory, the reader or philosopher is part of the meaning-making process; therefore, it becomes an experiential journey to find the unsaid or unknown. When the meaning is achieved, it is realised rather than known, it is felt rather than said; it is experienced rather than seen; the suggestion is understood rather than explained. In hermeneutics, Gadamer's approach is guided by similar insights, such that the success of understanding involves a distinctive experience of the meaning, or the phrase Gadamer uses is 'the truth'. According to him, the true meaning of the truth is to be experienced. As a result, Gadamer says, "Thus, to understand something means to understand something as true" (Weinsheimer, 2020, p. 3). But Gadamer calls his way of doing hermeneutics 'philosophical hermeneutics'. But the primary issue discussed in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is to bring clarity and validity to the experiential truth, and that such a hermeneutical experience of truth is not only valid and just in its own right, but that it is different

from, and even more original than, the sense of truth at issue in knowledge secured through the general norms and methods of so-called modern science. “Indeed, it is precisely this concern that Gadamer’s title of his *magnum opus* is meant to evoke: his philosophical hermeneutics focuses on a hermeneutical experience of truth that cannot be derived from the scientific method” (Weinsheimer, 2020, p. 4). This approach in hermeneutics by Gadamer is the most similar to that of Ānandavardhana’s *Dhvani* theory because of the experiential nature Gadamer induced into hermeneutics. This is where Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics blurs the lines of distinction between the two theories. But the concept of the truth in Gadamer is that, ‘anyone and everyone who experiences the truth experiences the same meaning or the same truth’. This is not the case when it comes to the *dhvani* theory, as the difference is significant (in the *dhvani* theory) as it explores the variability of suggestive meaning in multiple contexts. Each reader may extract a different, layered understanding from the same statement, expression, art or literature, influenced by their experiences, sentiments, ethics, cultural backgrounds, morality, and emotional states. This openness to interpretation emphasises that the same text can resonate differently across various audiences, thus revealing the richness and multiplicity inherent in suggestive meaning. Another significant distinction between Gadamer’s approach to hermeneutics and Ānandavardhana’s *dhvani* theory is that its conditions for a unique interpretative theory found in the terms, namely, *rasa* and *sahṛdaya*. Both conditions are of the highest significance when it comes to the *dhvani* theory, and these are the conditions that take the *dhvani* theory to the greatest heights. The highest meaning can be found only through the theory of *rasa*. Therefore it is said by Krishnamoorthy that “*dhvani* is the quintessence of poetry; and *rasa* is the quintessence of *dhvani*” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. xxxi). The experience of the highest *rasa* results in the highest meaning of a statement or an expression. According to Krishnamoorthy,

“the *dhvani* theory was so formulated that it could assimilate the essence of all the traditional aesthetic categories while emphasising the claims of *rasa*” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. xxviii). According to Ānandavardhana, the experience and realisation of *rasa* decide which meaning is the highest among all the multiple meanings that can be derived from a statement or an expression. “*Rasa* indeed is the corner-stone of the arch of *dhvani* and it is first and foremost an aesthetic canon” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. xxx). But who can experience this *rasa*? That is where the concept of *sahṛdaya* comes in. Only a *sahṛdaya* can experience this *rasa*. For those who wish to understand the meaning of any *dhvani*-induced expression and realise the *dhvanyartha*, they must necessarily be a *sahṛdaya* or become a *sahṛdaya*. This concept makes the *dhvani* theory unique and distinct among all interpretive methodologies and theories. In the *dhvani* theory, identity is intertwined with the inherent power of language and artistic expression to evoke emotions; therefore, the reader becomes a *sahṛdaya*, one who identifies with the meaning and becomes one with the meaning. The identity of a text is found in its ability to transcend ordinary words and convey profound experiences through suggestion, and it is the *sahṛdaya* that experiences these emotions being one with the meaning. Ānandavardhana articulates how literature’s primary meaning, or *vāchyārtha*, gains the depth of emotional intelligence through the strength of the suggestive meaning or *dhvanyartha* instilled in it by the author intentionally or accidentally, allowing the identity of the reader with the text to emerge not from explicit content but from the imaginative, sentimental, emotional and moral engagement it fosters among readers who become *sahṛdayas*.

4.3 *Sahṛdaya*: Meaning and Experience Intertwined

Dhvani, according to Ānandavardhana, needs philosophers, thinkers and scholars both for the creation of it and understanding of it. The *dhvanyārtha*, thus, according to him and other literary scholars, can be only revealed to or understood by or interpreted by a *sahṛdaya* with experience of literary analysis, the knowledge of the language and the world. In this regard one must note that the *Sahṛdaya* has more extended connotations. “In the *Rigveda* (10th Mandala)¹²³ there is a reference to *Vāk* revealing her riches to a deserving person as a beloved who reveals herself to her husband” (Rai et al., 2015, p. 31). The origins of the concept of *sahṛdaya* are older than those of Ānandavardhana himself; origins go into the *Vedas*, specifically the *Rig Veda*. Ānandavardhanan only picks up this concept and uses it in *Dhvanyāloka*, but it's necessary to know its vital origins. On this, Narasimhaiah says,

The seed of the concept lies in a participatory communion described by the word '*sakhya*'.

The Vedic seers perceived *vāk* (speech) as the instrument through which participants recognised what participation is and participants are mutually bound in friendship (Narasimhaiah, 1994, 48).

Vāk, also known as *Vāchā*, is prominently worshipped as the Goddess *Sarasvatī*. This goddess, *Sarasvatī*, is also the goddess of knowledge in Indian culture, theology, mythology and philosophy. The search and hunger for knowledge or *Vāk* essentially gave birth to the concept of *sahṛdaya*.¹²⁴ To realise that knowledge, you had to become a *sahṛdaya*, you had to feel that

¹²³ Rig Veda, Mandala 10, HYMN CXXV. VĀK., (10.125.1 to 10.125.8).

¹²⁴ It is mentioned in the *Rig Vedas* as well how the creation of *Vāk* or *Sarasvatī*, that is, knowledge, happens and how *Sarasvatī* usually chooses to stay with the learned, known as the *Rishis*. The following stanzas are from the *Rig Veda*, mentioning the same. “*saktumiva titaunā punanto yatra dhīrā manasā vācamakrata, atrā sakhāyaḥ sakhyāni jānate bhadraiṣāṃ lakṣmīrnihitādhi vāci*” (10.71.2 Rig Veda) “सक्तुमिव तितुना पुनन्तो यत्र धीरा मनसा वाचमक्रत । अत्रा सखायः सख्यानि जानते भद्रैषां लक्ष्मीर्निहिताधि वाचि ॥” (10.71.2 Rig Veda). With(performing) sacrifice, they trace *Vāk*, they followed, and found her harbouring within the *Rṣis*. They brought her, dealt her forth in many places: seven singers made her tones resound in concert (Wilson, 2021). It is said when the wise create the Speech that is *Vāk* or *Sarasvatī*, through wisdom winnowing it. Winnowing of the *Vacha* or *Vak*, can be understood as winnowing

knowledge. As a result, the knowledge had to be sung by the seven singers prominently known in Indian culture and mythology as *Sapta Rishis*¹²⁵ so everyone could understand. Because it was the *Sarasvatī* opening herself in the form of a song and sentiments to her loving children, in order to understand her and realise her knowledge they had to become *sahṛdaya*, this process of retelling the knowledge of *Sarasvatī* in their way made those *Sapta Rishi*'s *sahṛdaya* and, along with them, made everyone the ability and potency to become *sahṛdaya* and realise the ultimate knowledge by being one with the thought, becoming one with the song and knowledge made them *sahṛdaya* too.

The etymological origins of *sahṛdaya* are also essential for understanding the concept. The word '*sakhyā*' is derived from the root, which means to be attached, to be in unison with, so '*sakhyā*' means mutual attachment or binding (Narasimhaiah, 1994, 49). “*Sahṛdaya*, there is anticipatory realisation. The connecting bridge between the two is the element of suggestion that carries the art from the *kavi* to the *sahṛdaya*” (Biswas, 2005, p. 124). A question arises: why is this element of suppression in suggestion '*Sahṛdaya*' is a fascinating compound word derived from '*sa*' and '*hrdaya*'. '*Sa*' (or '*Saha*') conveys a sense of sameness, harmony, and coexistence, suggesting being together or in unison. '*Hrdaya*' refers to an inner organ distinct from the mind (*manas*),

through or of voices or noises, or can be seen as done through chanting, usually performed at *Yadnyas*, by the wise men of the Vedic era. As men winnow the barley grain with a sieve, then through *Vāk*, friends know friendship, they know good fortune and receive plural or plenty upon their word. Through tremendous efforts, they try to find this *Vāchā* and realise it is a guest of the learned scholars known as *Rishis*. It can be seen in the stanza ahead “*yajñena vācaḥ padavīyamāyana tāmānvavindannrīṣiṣupraviṣṭāma, tāmābhrtyā vayadadhuḥ purutrā tām saptarebhā abhi sam navante*”[#] (10.71.3 Rig Veda).[#] After performing *yadnyā*, a traditional sacrifice, they trace *Vāk*, *Sarasvatī* or knowledge. They followed knowledge and found her harbouring in the brethren of the learned *Rishis*. Even after finding knowledge, they are still unable to know or realise it; they brought *Vāk* with them and dealt her forth in many places, yet cannot realise her honesty. Therefore, the seven singers rise from the *Rishis* and make the tones of knowledge resound like in a concert; they sing the knowledge out loud for all to understand, feel, and realise. As seen above, the people had to come together and find *Sarasvatī*, but they could not understand her sound even after finding her.

¹²⁵ कश्यपोत्रिभरद्वाजो विश्वामित्रो गौतमः। जमदग्निर्वसिष्ठश्च सप्तैते ऋषयः स्मृताः॥ (Saptarshi Mantra, 2024)

Kashyap, Atri, Bhardwaj, Vishwamitra, Goutam, Jamadagni, and Vashishtha are the seven sages (Sapta Rishis) to remember forever.

thought (*citta*), and intent (*akuti*) (Prasad, 1994, p. 143). '*Hridaya*' comes from the root '*hri*', meaning to take away or carry away. It is important to note that *hridaya* does not refer to the physical heart, even though the heart's physical vibrations might echo some of *hridaya*'s functions (Biswas, 2005, p. 92). Instead, *hridaya* here represents a functionary of supramental activity, where various mental processes such as intellection, recollection, and contemplation are seamlessly integrated. In this holistic integration, *hridaya* becomes a symbol of emotive presence and merges encompassing the sensory, supersensory, and highest levels of emotive consciousness. This state is not merely intellectual but involves a profound unity transcending ordinary mental activities. It reflects an advanced stage of awareness where the individual experiences a profound connection with the collective consciousness, resulting in an elevated understanding and harmony. This conceptual framework illustrates how '*sahridaya*' embodies being fully attuned to the deepest levels of consciousness, synthesising sensory and beyond-sensory experiences. The word '*Sa*' (or *Samana*) comes from the root '*as*', meaning 'to be', which implies a state of existence or being. On the other hand, '*hridaya*' signifies becoming, highlighting a state of continuous transformation and evolution. When combined into '*sahridaya*', these elements being and becoming merge, relinquishing their roles to create a unified, collective meaning. A *sahridaya*, therefore, embodies both the states of existence ('is') and transformation ('become'). This concept is well illustrated in the *Sammanasayā* hymn, the Hymn to Harmony, which forms the philosophical foundation of *sahridaya*. An entire *sukta* (hymn) speaks to the idea of unity and collective consciousness, encouraging individuals to move beyond their isolated selves to achieve a harmonious existence that incorporates both the present state of being and the ongoing process of becoming. The *Rgveda* states this in the following lines:

*saṃ gacchadhvaṃ saṃ vadadhvaṃ saṃ vo manāṃsi jānatām, devā bhāgaṃ yathā pūrve
 saṃjñānānā upāsate || 10.191.02 || samāno mantraḥ samitiḥ samānī samānaṃ manah
 saha cittameṣām | samānaṃ mantramabhi mantraye vaḥ samānena vo haviṣā juhomi ||
 10.191.03 || samānī va ākūtiḥ samānā hṛdayāni vaḥ | samānamastu vo mano yathā vaḥ
 susahāsati || 10|191|04 ||¹²⁶ Rgveda.*

This hymn is a significant part of the *Rgveda*, which focuses on achieving harmony in movement, speaking in one voice and letting your minds agree, just as the ancient gods shared their sacrifice. It is a request to the ultimate power to maintain a common united prayer of these assembled worshippers, and joint be the acquisition, common be the purpose, associated be the desire. It is a repeated request for you, a common prayer, by offering for all a common oblation. The hymn also asks for all intentions and aspirations to be alike so that a common objective unifies one and all. “May you move in harmony, speak in one voice; let your minds be in agreement; just as the ancient gods shared their portion of sacrifice” (*Rgveda Samhitaa: Mandala 9 & 10*, 2014, p. 159) encapsulates a profound call for unity of consciousness. This invocation, rooted in ancient wisdom, urges individuals to synchronise their actions, thoughts, and words, much like the harmonious sharing observed among the gods during sacrificial rituals. Commonality is further emphasised with a prayer that binds the worshippers in shared purpose and desire. The prayer invokes a sense of unity where individual aspirations and intentions align. This alignment is compared to the ancient gods who distributed their offerings in orderly gatherings with mutual respect and harmony. The idea is reinforced with the hope that discourse remains in sync and judgment is made with collective resolution. This mirrors the process of a

¹²⁶ “सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् । देवा भागं यथा पूर्वे संज्ञानाना उपासते ॥ १०.१९१.०२ ॥ समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम् । समानं मन्त्रमभि मन्त्रये वः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥ १०.१९१.०३ ॥ समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः । समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥ १०.१९१.०४ ॥” (Rig Veda). May our intentions and aspirations be alike, so that a common objective unifies us all (Wilson, 2021).

thinker whose thoughts perfectly harmonise with his words, suggesting a seamless integration of intention and expression. The prayer seeks to unify the purpose of all involved, creating a singular focus that encompasses the collective aspirations of the group. Come together harmoniously to create a pleasing melody, and the prayer calls for individuals to synchronise their feelings and thoughts. It suggests that just as music agrees within its system of harmony, so should the intentions and actions of the individuals within a community. The word '*samana*' plays a crucial role in this context. As an active present participle formed from the root 'as' (to be), '*samana*' signifies a state of being for oneself that is in harmony with oneself. This dual aspect of individual existence and collective harmony is central to the prayer's message. It underscores the idea that true unity is achieved when each individual, while maintaining their unique identity, aligns their intentions and actions with the greater good. This invocation and its underlying principles highlight the importance of harmony, unity, and consciousness.

This duality is essential in understanding the holistic nature of a *sahṛdaya*, who lives in the moment and evolves continuously, striving for higher consciousness and harmony. The hymn encapsulates this ideal, advocating for a life that balances the stability of existence with the dynamism of growth and transformation. According to Narasimhaiah “such a state needs an intense yearning for one's full identification with the other. This yearning reaches its highest stage in self-naughting, of which sacrifice is one of the different forms” (Narasimhaiah, 1994, p. 49). One must enter the activity with anticipation and mental preparation to reach this state of consciousness. This readiness is what it means to be a '*sahṛdaya*'. Combining this concept of *samana* with that of *hrdaya*, one concludes that *sahṛdaya* has diffused his being into his becoming. Combining the idea of '*samana*' with '*hrdaya*' leads to the profound understanding that a '*sahṛdaya*' is an individual who has seamlessly integrated their state of being with their

process of becoming. '*Samana*', derived from the root '*as*', signifies a state of harmony with oneself and others. It encapsulates the essence of existence that is self-aware yet in sync with the collective. On the other hand, '*hrdaya*' represents the heart's capacity for transformation and growth, indicating a dynamic process of becoming. When these two concepts are merged, the resulting idea of '*sahṛdaya*' describes a person who embodies both stability and continuous evolution. A *sahṛdaya* has diffused their current state into their journey of becoming, achieving a harmonious blend of presence and progression. This fusion signifies a higher level of consciousness where one's identity is not static but fluid, constantly evolving while maintaining inner harmony. Such an individual experiences life as a unified whole, where each moment of existence contributes to their ongoing transformation. This state of being, characterised by a continuous flow between who they are and who they are becoming, defines the essence of a *sahṛdaya*, exemplifying the perfect balance of stability and growth.

Ānandavardhana presents the concept of *sahṛdaya*, as indispensable for a thinker-philosopher who studies the text and language on a deeper level. This is how the *dhvani* theory makes philosophy essential. "A *sahṛdaya* thus requires a keen recollection and an intense contemplation as a preparation for the melting process, which takes place when there is an aesthetic engagement" (Narasimhaiah, 1994, p. 51). This is how philosophy and philosophers became necessary to the *dhvani* theory. The philosophers and scholars must understand and interpret the *dhvani*, the *dhvanyartha* behind a statement or expression, and keep it in front of the world to understand. In the past, literary analysis primarily focused on studying literary texts themselves. This method analyses literary texts, text form, structure, and content, aiming to understand their meaning and significance through close reading and analysis. However, this approach has been criticised for its narrow focus on the literary text and its tendency to overlook the broader social

and cultural contexts in which it is created and consumed. The *dhvani* theory gives all the necessary conditions to understand the multiple meanings in language through the concept of *sahṛdaya*¹²⁷. To attain this *dhvanyartha* through *dhvani* is the job of a *sahṛdaya*. *Dhvani* cannot always be understood by everyone. It is the suggestive meaning that makes philosophising and philosophers a necessity; the only difference is that Ānandavardhana sees these thinkers and scholars as literary critics. In this we can witness the mirroring of the philosopher in ‘*sahṛdaya*’.

The concept of *sahṛdaya* is of immense importance, so much so that the text *Dhvanyāloka* itself was prominent as the “*Sahṛdayaloka*”. It is considered light for a *sahṛdaya* to find the path to experiential epiphany, to be one with meaning through emotional resonance. The colophons of the manuscripts refer to it usually as *Sahṛdayaloka*, “*A Light for Connoisseurs*”; sometimes as *Sahṛdayahṛdayāloka*, “*A Light for the Hearts of Connoisseurs*”; and rarely as *Kāvyaāloka*, “*A Light on Poetry*” (Ingalls, 1990, p. 12). Thus, if it is accepted that the work's full title is “*Sahṛdayaloka*”, it would naturally mean the Light on Poetry shed by the best *sahṛdaya*, viz. Ānandavardhana, or for the benefit of *sahṛdayas* in general, would thus become significant¹²⁸. “Any other way of understanding the compound would be forced and lacking in significance” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. xix). Even Abhinavagupta, in his *Locana*, gives various arguments and various names for the text. “The oldest commentator on the text whose work has survived, Abhinavagupta, refers to his commentary as the *Sahṛdayalokalocana*, an eye for (embracing) the light of *Sahṛdaya*” (Ingalls, 1990, p. 12). Even after Abhinavagupta, many scholars have argued about the name as the goal, which has always remained the same: to provide bliss to *Sahṛdaya*.

¹²⁷ *Vyangya-rasa* is by definition something that can be felt only by the few gifted ones called *sahṛdaya* or *rasikas* and outside the reach of merely learned specialists. Hence, vastu-dhvani examples only are cited to convince such hard-headed sceptics and *rasa-dhvani* illustrations are avoided (*Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana, K. Krishnamoorthy, p. xxxvii).

¹²⁸ Krishnamoorthy, K. (Ed.). (1999). *Dhvanyaloka Of Ānandavardhana* (K. Krishnamoorthy, Trans.; 2nd ed.). Motilal Banarsidass Publishers (Pvt. Limited). (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. xix)

“The name which *Ānanda* gave to his work, I believe, was *Sahṛdayaloka*. The *Sahṛdayaloka*, then, to give it that title, opens with a spirited defense of suggestion as an independent semantic power” (Ā., 1990, p. 13). According to Ānandavardhana, *vyangya-rasa* is, by definition, something that can be felt only by the few gifted ones called “*Sahṛdayas*” or “*Rasikas*”, and outside the reach of merely learned, it needs specialists with a dedication to reach the meaning. “The view of treating *dhvani* as something ineffable may be taken either in a complementary way or as a criticism” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 304). If considered in a complimentary manner, then it needs tremendous research from philosophers and scholars alike to become *sahṛdayas* and clear the doubts of various schools of objectors which accept *dhvani* as the essence of poetry and grant its existence; still, they reject its definitions and objects to the treatise because in its opinion *dhvani* theory is essentially indefinable, it is something which cannot be defined in limited words and cannot be considered to be adhering to predefined specific boundaries. The Kashmiri pandits believed that a *sahṛdaya* is a writer or a composer who masters the art of poetry. Nonetheless, some scholars (Kane & Kāṇe, 1971, p. 191-192) have wrongly supposed that the *kārikā-kāra* (someone who wrote the *kārikās* in the *Dhvanyāloka*), was different from Ānandavardhana, the *Vṛttikāra*, and that the proper name of the individual mentioned above was '*sahṛdaya*'. Many of the scholars have recognised that this misconception caused grave error and confusion. Therefore, the present passage does not permit such baseless and wild guesswork. The word *sahṛdaya* has been used earlier by other Kashmiri Pandits, namely, Vāmana and Udbhaṭa, in their *Bhāmahavivarana*. “*sahṛdayahṛdayānām rañjakaḥ ko'pi pākāḥ*” (Vāmana, 1875, p. 6).¹²⁹ Any caretaker who paints the hearts of the kind (is a *sahṛdaya*). “*Sahṛdayahṛdayā varjana lakṣaṇā sahā' prastutaprasaṃsā*” (Udbhaṭa, 1962, 39).¹³⁰ Anyone (an individual who) gives an

¹²⁹ सहृदयहृदयानां रञ्जकः कोऽपि पाकः । Any caretaker who paints the hearts of the kind is a *sahṛdaya* (Vāmana, 1875, 6).

¹³⁰ सहृदयहृदयावर्जनलक्षणासहाऽप्रस्तुतप्रशंसा । One who gives an unprecedented praise with the essential characteristics of heartfelt emotions, with complete avoidance of *vachyā*. (Udbhaṭa, 1962, 39)

unprecedented amount of praise with the essential characteristics of heartfelt emotions, with complete avoidance (of words). Thus, it is clear that the word *sahṛdaya* was long current in Kashmir literary circles and was prominent among the Kashmiri pandits as a general name for tasteful readers or writers or even the critics of poetry, drama, and literature, even before Ānandavardhana reintroduces the concept as the one who has a heart or a mind with acceptance to be in harmony with another. That means, *sahṛdaya* is the one who can be united with another, or one who can be one with another. This concept is significant in Indian aesthetics and poetics, particularly within the literary and artistic appreciation framework. A *sahṛdaya* is not merely a passive observer or consumer of art but an engaged participant who possesses the sensitivity and emotional resonance to understand and appreciate the deeper meanings and emotional undertones embedded in a work of text or art. The concept of *sahṛdaya* prominently appears in classical Indian texts on aesthetics, particularly in the tradition of *rasa* (emotion) theory. Bharata's *Natyāśāstra*, one of the earliest texts on performance arts, discusses the idea of the audience's engagement with the performance, emphasising the importance of a shared emotional language between the artist and the audience. Ānandavardhana, in his work *Dhvanyāloka*, further develops this idea, situating the *sahṛdaya* as a critical counterpart in the creation and reception of poetic meaning.

The primary condition for realising *dhvanyartha* is the concept of *sahṛdaya*. Ānandavardhana did not create the concept of *sahṛdaya*, but he used this pre-existing concept to his highest benefit while partially adding to its definition some more values and conditions. Ānandavardhana uses the concept of *sahṛdaya* to define an individual who can become one with the meaning due to the experience of critically reading various philosophical and literary texts, because of which it is an individual with better knowledge not only of grammar, rhetoric and words but also of morality,

ethics, values, sentiments and poetic meaning; he says “*śabdārthaśāsanajñānamātreṇaiva na vedyate, vedyate se tu kāvyārthatattvajñāireva kevalam*” (DL: I.22).¹³¹ The suggestive meaning is not only understood by mere learning in grammar and in the dictionary. The informative, factual and rule-based knowledge of language is necessary, but there is something more meaningful in a *sahṛdaya*: understanding and insight into the true significance of literature, poetry and philosophy. The mere knowledge of grammar and dictionaries does not mean one can understand the suggestions in poetics, literature, philosophy or language. “It is understood only by those who know the true nature of poetic meaning” (Ā., 1990, p. 122). This suggested sense of meaning is understood only by those who know the nature of poetic meaning, who know how the meaning-making process works and can be one with it. Understanding the true essence of poetry transcends mere grammatical knowledge, rational inquiry, logical interpretation and dictionary definitions. It needs a more values-based, moral, aesthetic, and ethical understanding. Grammatical rules and lexical meanings provide the structural foundation of language, similar to that in the realm of hermeneutics, but similarly, they often fall short of capturing the profound emotional and intellectual depths that poetry or texts can convey. The true significance of poetry and literature is grasped only by those who possess a deep insight into the multifaceted nature of the *dhvanyartha*, which makes it different from hermeneutic rationality and gives it an ability beyond the technical understanding of the meaning. These individuals who realise the *dhvanyartha* are often referred to as *sahṛdaya* by Ānandavardhana; they are refined critics, literary analysts, linguistic philosophers, or simply philosophers with a unique capacity to appreciate and interpret poetry and literature on a much deeper level. *Sahṛdaya*, a term rooted in Sanskrit, implies a person with a sensitive heart, attuned to the aesthetic, emotive and moral

¹³¹ शब्दार्थशासनज्ञानमात्रेणैव न वेद्यते । वेद्यते से तु काव्यार्थतत्त्वज्ञैरेव केवलम् ॥ १.७ ॥ It is not understood by a mere learning in grammar and in dictionary. It is understood only by those who have an insight into the true significance of poetry -DL: I.22.

dimensions of literary works. These refined critics, *sahṛdaya*, engage with poetry through a blend of intellectual rigour and emotional resonance, allowing them to uncover hidden layers of meaning from the casual reader. Refined critics bring a wealth of philosophical discourse to their interpretation of poetry. They draw on various intellectual traditions and theories to explore the complex interplay between language, meaning, and human experience. Philosophers, in general, approach poetry with a holistic perspective, considering its aesthetic qualities and its ethical, historical, existential, and metaphysical dimensions. They seek to understand how poetry illuminates the human condition, offers insights into the nature of reality, and engages with fundamental questions about existence, identity, and morality.

Truly understanding and appreciating poetry requires a synthesis of intellectual, sentimental, moral, emotional, ethical and philosophical engagement. It demands an openness to the rich and often ambiguous layers of meaning that texts can contain. *Sahṛdaya* and refined critics possess this rare ability, enabling them to experience and convey the profound impact of poetry in ways that mere grammatical knowledge or dictionary definitions cannot (Biswas, 2005, p. 42). The experiential knowledge attained by the *Sahṛdaya* through the realisation of *dhvanyartha* transcends the general understanding of any meaning-making process, whether it is hermeneutic rationality or any other. Their insights reveal the transformative power of poetry and its capacity to deepen one's understanding of oneself and the world around. Thus, similar to the thought, while summing up Abhinavagupta's opinion on the concept of *sahṛdaya*, it can be seen that his mind is unprejudiced by the controversies that trouble modern scholars. Abhinavagupta categorically states,

...the word *sahṛdaya* is general in its connotation and applies to perceptive critics of poetry. But in the invocatory verse of Abhinava, the expression *sahṛdayas* in the

compound *kavisahṛdayāsākhyaṃ* could also stand for the admittedly foremost of the *Sahṛdayas*, viz. Ānandavardhana himself (Abhinavagupta, 1988, p. xix).

This clearly shows that commentator Abhinavagupta does not fail to point out that Ānandavardhana is himself a *sahṛdaya*, and to further our argument, this is very beneficial as Ānandavardhana along with being a great poet, a *sahṛdaya*, was a brilliant philosopher as well. At this juncture it is important to note that Abhinavagupta and Ānandavardhana were both primarily philosophers who employed the philosophical method and effected the aesthetic turn in the realm of literature. Ānandavardhana wrote philosophical texts such as *Tattvāloka*¹³² and was honoured with the title of *Ranjaka* for his literary and philosophical works (Kulkarni, 2018, p. 320). Although most of the books were lost due to the tide of time, Ānandavardhana was mostly famous for his six major works: epic, narrative, *lakṣanā Grantha*, *Darshana Grantha*, Buddhist book and poem. To be precise, *Arjuncarita*, *Visamabanalila*, *Dhvanyāloka*, *Tattvāloka*, the Buddhist philosophical book *Dharmottarivivṛti*, and the poem *Deviśataka* are some of the significant works that are known to be credited to Ānandavardhana. Similarly, Abhinavagupta was a philosopher who wrote over thirty-five¹³³ books known about and found, but many of his works are also lost to time. But Abhinavagupta is prominently known for his philosophy of *Tantra* and *Śaivism*. Therefore, it is clear that both Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, are

¹³² Light To Reason, was a philosophical text by Ānandavardhana, based on the *Darshanas* of Indian Philosophy. His work on the Schools of Indian philosophy, and his systematic argumentation skills in *Dhvanyāloka* proves that he was a Philosopher first.

¹³³ Books Written by Abhinavagupta: Bodhapañcadaśika, Mālinīvijayabārtika, Parātriṃśikā-vṛtti, Tantrāloka (Famous Philosophical Text), Tantrasāra (Prominent Philosophical Text), Tantravaṭadhānikā, Dhvanyāloka-locana (One of the books referred to in this thesis), Abhinababhāratī (One of the books referred to in this thesis), Bhagavadgītārthasaṅgraha, Paramārthasāra, Īśvarapratyabhijñānvṛttivimarśinī, Īśvarapratyabhijñābimarśinī, Paryantapañcāśikā, Ghaṭakarparakulakavivṛti, Kramastotra, Dehasthadevatācakrastotra, Bhairabastotra, Paramārthadvādaśikā, Mahopadeśaviṃśatika, Anuttarāṣṭaka, Anubhavanivedana, Rahasyapañcadaśikā, Tantrocaya, Purūrabo-vicāra, Kramakeli, Śivadr̥ṣṭyālocana, Padārtha-praveśa-nirṇayaṭīkā, Prakīrṇa-vivarāṇa Prakaraṇa-vivarāṇa, Kāvyaakautukavivarāṇa, Kathāmukhatilaka, Laghvīprakriyā, Bhedavādaśikā, Devīstotravivarāṇa, Tattvādhvaprakāśikā, Śivaśaktyavinābhāvastotra, Vimbaprativimbavāda, Paramārthasaṅgraha, Anuttaratattvavimarśinīvṛtti and others (lost to time) (Sarathi, 2024).

both philosophers, and *Sahṛdayas*. This philosopher critic, Ānandavardhana, by Abhinava's testimony, was the doyen of not only poets but also perceptive critics, philosophers and *sahṛdayas*. This can be evidenced in the second *kārikā* of the first chapter, as seen in the śloka: “yo'rthah saḥṛdayaślāghyaḥ kāvyātmēti vyavasthitaḥ, vācya pratīyamānākhyau tasya bhedāvubhau smṛtau” (DL: I.2).¹³⁴ This *kārikā*, mentioned by Ānandavardhana, clearly states that the meaning which wins the admiration of refined critics, *sahṛdayas*, is decided to be the soul of poetry, one with *dhvanyartha*. The attempt to understand and define this refined criticism is being done here. So, what makes a sensitive critic? What are the conditions for a philosopher to be a sensitive critic? Both Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta were philosophers and were sensitive critics, so being a philosopher became a general necessity for being *sahṛdaya* or a sensitive critic; this statement, carries an implicit assumption that there is such a unique function of language as ‘suggestion’ besides the two well-known functions called denotation and indication; and to see this suggestion, a philosopher must arrive at the meaning through philosophising. The *mīmāṃsākas* and other philosophers who are supposed to be experts in this matter have nowhere spoken of this function of language, but this is an attempt to arrive at new meanings in language and communications using the *dhvani* theory, which goes hand in hand with the Vedic hermeneutics.

What is exclusive to the *dhvani* theory is a unique specialty, and which is not a goal of hermeneutic rationality. It is nothing other than *ānanda*, popularly known as relishment of *rasa* or aesthetic experience of bliss that transcends any earthly experience of joy. This *ānanda* is the ultimate goal achieved through the *dhvani* theory when one realises the *dhvanyartha*, the blissful

¹³⁴ “योऽर्थः सहृदयश्लाघ्यः काव्यात्मेति व्यवस्थितः । वाच्यप्रतीयमानाख्यौ तस्य भेदावुभौ स्मृतौ ॥ १.२ ॥ That meaning which wins the admiration of refined critics is decided to be the soul of poetry. The 'explicit' and the 'implicit' are regarded as its two aspects -DL: I.2.

experience of the reader, as ably pointed out by Ānandavardhana and strengthened by Abhinavagupta, is the ultimate goal which is to be achieved through any text, literature, poetry or philosophy. Different schools of philosophy hold the theory of secondary meaning or *lakṣyārtha* and say that it includes all meanings other than the conventional one, which consists of the suggestive meaning; yet it cannot explain or cover the fact of *rasa-dhvani*, showing its inadequacy to illustrate literature, philosophy or communications. But even Krishnamoorthy does not fall for it and argues:

Even the best advocate of *lakṣaṇā* can only plead for some varieties of *vastu-dhvani* (viz. *avivaksita-vācya*) as covered by forms of *lakṣaṇ*, but the vast bulk of literary charm lies outside that limited sphere (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, xxxvii).

While classifying all the varieties of the *dhvani* theory, Ānandavardhana gives such significant titles as to remind us of the relative status of *vāchyaartha* all the time. Ānandavardhana gives many different classifications and types of *dhvani*. He says there are hundreds of ways to extract different meanings and sentiments, but he would not state all, as a *sahṛdaya* can understand them all; therefore, there is no need for explanation. According to him, it is up to these *sahṛdayas* to understand the suggested meaning. The light of the suggested can only be received by such minds. Ānandavardhana further states:

*dingātrakathanene hi vyutpannānām sahrdayānāmekatrāpi rasabhede sahā-
hankārairaṅgāṅgibhāvaparijñānādāsāditālokā buddhiḥ sarvatraiva bhaviṣyati*
(DL:II.13).¹³⁵

¹³⁵ दिङ्गात्रकथनेने हि व्युत्पन्नानां सहृदयानामेकत्रापि रसभेदे सहा- हङ्कारैरङ्गाङ्गिभावपरिज्ञानादासादितालोका बुद्धिः सर्वत्रैव भविष्यति ।
Hence their broad indication only will be given here. But it should be enough to educate refined critics. Their minds will have received the light which would enable them to guess aright everywhere -DL:II.13

Refined critics can indeed be educated even by merely indicating the direction. Suppose their mind has been illuminated to correctly discriminate between extrinsic and intrinsic when they employ figures to beautify any sentiment. In that case, the mind will undoubtedly be able to judge correctly in every other instance (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 57). Because persons of education and taste, if by a mere indication, they recognise the correct relation of subordinate and predominant between the figures of speech and one particular *rasa*, will have a criterion for their judgement in all other cases (Ā., 1990, p. 266).

Ānandavardhana discusses the nature of refined critics, suggesting that their capacity for discernment allows them to be guided by even minimal instructions because, according to Ānandavardhana, both the *dhvani* theory and the *sahṛdaya* preexist him or his text of *Dhvanyāloka*. Ānandavardhana is only writing through *Dhvanyāloka* the conditions and requirements which are necessary for the existence of both. This guidance, described as a mere "indication of the direction," implies that refined critics can grasp and apply complex concepts with little external input, which is understood through *Dhvanyāloka*. Their minds, having been illumined, are capable of distinguishing between what is extrinsic (external or irrelevant) and what is intrinsic (essential or relevant) when interpreting meaning and employing figures of speech to enhance any particular sentiment. This inherent understanding enables them to make sound judgments consistently in various contexts. This is another way the *dhvani* theory is distinct from hermeneutic rationality. A *sahṛdaya*, along with intellect, exhibits the capacity for empathy and emotional intelligence, which enables an individual to resonate with the emotions expressed in art. It also enables one to resonate with the context. This quality is essential in fully experiencing and interpreting artistic works, as it allows deeper connections to be formed between the viewer or reader and the emotional landscape of the work. A *sahṛdaya* is usually

well-versed in the cultural and literary traditions from which the art emerges. This understanding allows them to appreciate nuanced references, stylistic devices, and layers of meaning that may be overlooked by a less informed audience. *Sahṛdayas* have the ability to discern the subtleties of aesthetic expressions. They can identify how emotions fluctuate, how narrative structures operate, and how aesthetic principles like *dhvani* and *rasa* function within a given artwork. Unlike a mere art consumer, a *sahṛdaya* actively engages with the work. Their response is not limited to an immediate emotional reaction; rather, they reflect on the implications of the work, seeking a deeper understanding of its significance.

Ānandavardhana argues that the true essence of poetry lies not just in its surface meaning but in the layers of implication and resonance that can be discovered through close reading. This perspective necessitates the engagement of a *sahṛdaya*, an adept reader with the sensitivity to discern these subtle meanings. The *sahṛdaya* are not merely passive recipients of information but embody an active, empathetic interplay with the text. The *sahṛdaya* exemplifies the hermeneutic process where understanding is co-created by being part of the meaning-making process, demonstrating how individual experiences and cultural contexts shape literature reading.

4.3.1 The Importance of Tacit Experience

Our everyday lives are permeated by a vast reservoir of “knowing” that cannot be fully captured in words or be deliberated in rules. We ride a bicycle, recognise a friend by the way he walks, tie our shoelaces, or negotiate a social interaction without consciously deliberating over each micro-movement or cue. This pre-reflective, embodied dimension of knowing commonly termed the “tacit experience” is foundational for skilled action, perception, language, and even our most reflective thought. The *sahṛdaya* is one who can experience the tacit. Michael Polanyi’s

(1891–1976) celebrated dictum “we know more than we can tell” (Polanyi, 2009, p. xii) crystallises the idea that much of our understanding is subsidiary, grounded in personal immersion rather than explicit propositional content. He distinguished focal awareness from subsidiary awareness. Edmund Husserl’s notion of pre-reflective experience¹³⁶ foreshadows the tacit dimension by showing how perception already carries structures of meaning prior to any conceptual articulation. Maurice Merleau-Ponty later emphasised the body as the primary site of knowing-how: our corporeal “I can” precedes and undergirds all conceptual thought (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 137). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger contrasts equipment as “ready-to-hand” with the object as “present-at-hand” (Heidegger, 1978, p. 98). When a tool functions smoothly within a task, we experience its tacit integration into our projects rather than its isolated properties. Tacit experience resides primarily in our bodily comportment, posture, movement patterns, sensor motor habits, rather than in abstract representations (Polanyi, 2009, p. 77). It operates beneath the level of explicit, linguistic reflection. Only when skilled performance falters does this background knowledge come to focal attention. Although inarticulate, tacit know-how is indispensable for fully competent action, perception, and reasoning. It provides the unspoken rules that underwrite coherence and coordination. Tacit experience is highly situated. It draws on particular environments, social norms, and material affordances that cannot be reduced to general formulations. Riding, swimming, typing, and playing an instrument, all rely on fine-tuned sensorimotor patterns that one can improve by practice but cannot fully convey as propositional instructions. A radiologist “sees” subtle shading that signals pathology without consciously enumerating each feature. A wine taster’s palate discerns complex notes without

¹³⁶ The ability to focus on this prereflective awareness and make it explicit is what makes a being what in the Cartesian Meditations Husserl calls a transcendental ego or, more often, simply an example of self-consciousness. Without at least this pre-reflective aware-ness, these mental states would not be experiences for us at all. Mental life as an experience involves a direct, albeit often implicit and unfocused awareness of these mental states without having to infer them from an observation of one's own behavior. (Bernet et al., 2005, p. 150)

reciting chemical formulas. Recognising tones of voice, posture cues, or implicit cultural scripts enables smooth interaction. Etiquette and tacit social norms shape what we perceive as appropriate. Even in advanced theorising, sudden flashes of insight often emerge from a tacit background of years of immersion in a domain, not from step-by-step logical derivation. According to Polanyi, we experience reality by dwelling in subsidiary particulars so as to focus on an overarching pattern or purpose. The subsidiary elements become tacit once they reliably serve focal attention. The body is not an object among objects but the very condition of access to the world. Perception is already an embodied “I can,” a tacit openness to the environment that precedes representational mediation. In our everyday dealings, entities function seamlessly within a network of significance. A hammer “hands itself over” to our coping activity; only when it breaks does it appear as an object for theoretical contemplation. Traditional interviews and questionnaires tap only explicit knowledge. Ethnography, participant observation, and think-aloud protocols (where feasible) can bring tacit dimensions to light by immersing the researcher in practice. In organisations, capturing tacit know-how, through mentoring, apprenticeships, and communities of practice, proves more effective than relying solely on written manuals or databases. Attempts to formalise tacit experience often collapse its situational richness. Awareness of the tacit highlights the boundaries of purely algorithmic or rule-based models, an insight with ramifications for artificial intelligence and automation. Once we try to spell out every step of a skilled action, we often lose the fluidity that made the action effective in the first place. The “over-explicit” teacher can hamper rather than help learning. Tacit experience is tightly woven into specific settings. What a craftsman learns in one workshop may not map neatly in another without immersion in the local routines, tools, and social norms. Emphasising guided practice, apprenticeship models, and reflective coaching helps novices

gradually absorb tacit dimensions of expertise. Recognising users' tacit expectations can lead to more intuitive interfaces and seamless interactions. While machine learning can detect patterns beyond human articulation, embedding true situational awareness and embodied understanding remains a frontier challenge. The tacit experience is the hidden bedrock upon which our explicit knowledge, skilled performance, and everyday intelligibility rest. Far from being a fringe curiosity, it is central to how we inhabit the world, solve problems, and share practices socially. By attending to its embodied, pre-reflective, and context-sensitive nature, philosophers and researchers can develop richer accounts of human knowing and devise methods, educational, organisational, technological, that honor rather than overwrite the irreducibly tacit dimension of experience. "Tacit knowledge is a form of implicit knowledge we rely on for both learning and acting. The term derives from the work of Michael Polanyi, whose critique of the positivistic philosophy of science grew into a fully developed theory of knowledge" (Delaney, 1998, p. 1). Tacit experience refers to a form of philosophical understanding that is implicit, unspoken, and experienced rather than explicitly articulated. It embodies the idea that certain knowledge, beliefs, ways of behaviour, ways of life, worship, thought, perspectives, ideologies and principles are ingrained in human experiences, practices, cultures, or social interactions, often operating beneath the surface of conscious awareness. This experience suggests that individuals can possess significant insight or wisdom that guides their actions and thoughts without the need for verbalisation or formal reasoning. Central to the concept of Tacit experience is the notion of experiential knowledge or suggested knowledge, which is the knowledge that we acquire through experience and practice rather than through formal education, abstract theories, categorical frameworks or explicit instruction.

4.3.2 *Sahṛdaya* and *Dhvanyartha*

The concept of *sahṛdaya* is literally “one who shares the heart” designates an ideal spectator, reader, or listener whose inner sensitivity, *rasa-sahabhāva*, allows full participation in the tacit experience. *Sahṛdaya*’s response to art unfolds largely beneath the surface of explicit thought, rooted in cultivated dispositions, embodied affinities, and a pre-reflective attunement to cultural norms. This essay explores how the theory of *sahṛdaya* in Sanskrit poetics parallels and enriches modern accounts of tacit experience. The *sahṛdaya*’s experience is often described as spontaneous and immersive: one does not analyse each metaphor or gesture but “dissolves” into the aesthetic mood. Commentators speak of *anubhavātmaka rasa* (*rasa* realised in direct experience of the tacit) that transcends propositional description. Tacit knowing unfolds when subsidiary details recede from focal awareness, supporting a seamless grasp of a larger pattern or mood. The *Sahṛdaya* is formed through cultural immersion, learning poetic meters, listening to recitations, participating in ritual performance. The *sahṛdaya*’s delight in *śṛṅgāra-rasa* or *karuṇa-rasa* resembles Polanyi’s example of a skilled rider who cannot enumerate every micro-adjustment of balance but simply “knows” how to stay upright. While modern aesthetics often valorise critical distance, the *sahṛdaya* ideal embodies a fusion of feeling and understanding that remains largely non-discursive. Both traditions highlight that deep understanding depends on absorptive, pre-linguistic processes. Expertise, whether in carpentry or connoisseurship, relies on embodied routines and culturally-inflected norms that resist full codification. The *sahṛdaya* participates in a shared world of sentiment, and becomes one with the experiences therefore realises the *dhvanyartha*. This oneness of *sahṛdaya* is not only with the tacit experience but also with *dhvanyartha* (suggestive meaning). One can draw these parallels between the theories which are worlds apart because of the experiential component of

dhvanyartha. And only a *sahridaya* can realise this *dhvanyartha* because of his ability to be one with the experience of the meaning. The state of *sahridaya* is such where everything becomes one, where tacit experience and *dhvanyartha* intestines and become oneness of meaning and experience. Recognising this tacit dimension of *sahridaya* suggests that innovation in art often arises from shifts in embodied habit and cultural disposition rather than from explicit theory alone. The notion of *sahridaya* in classical Indian aesthetics and the modern concept of tacit experience converge on a simple yet powerful insight of *dhvanyartha* a genuine understanding of deeper truths of life or of a poem's inner flavor or of a skilled movement is anchored and embodied, by the *sahridaya*. By bringing these two traditions into dialogue, one can gain a richer picture of how cultivation, cultural context, and non-discursive resonance shape our deepest moments of comprehension and delight.

4.4 From Experiential Understanding to Reason

The *dhvanyartha* unfolds in the *sahridaya*'s psyche as a subtle, felt resonance rather than as a proposition to be decoded. In this respect, *dhvanyartha* parallels the modern philosophical notion of tacit experience, that is one's capacity to apprehend, respond to, and enact what we cannot fully articulate. *Dhvanyartha* functions from a tacit experiential understanding of the meaning, to sharing of that experience with others through *dhvani* and the rational ability, aesthetic brilliance and emotional resonance to share the experience with others. But the suggested meaning cannot be exhaustively defined or paraphrased, it has to be experienced to be realised. It is felt in the reader's mind and body as an affective tone or mood; it needs to be reflected in the same manner when shared. Only one who possesses cultural literacy, refined sensibility, rational ability and having an inclination toward *rasa* can share that taste with others fully. *Sahridaya* is the emotional, intellectual and aesthetic embodiment of meaning. Aesthetic appreciation often eludes

step-by-step explication; it unfolds in a felt, lived encounter. Critics such as George Dickie and Carolyn Korsmeyer have noted the “ineffable” quality of certain artistic effects. Just as a skilled pianist “feels” a musical phrase without naming each interval, the reader of a poem senses *dhvanyartha* without being able to enumerate all its verbal cues. The suggestive totality emerges when subsidiary cues, phonetic echo, and allusion merge into a single affective field. While *dhvanyartha* resists full articulation, it can be gestured toward by critics using metaphors, comparative images, or pointing to parallel contexts. The attempt to “explain” *dhvanyartha* is always provisional; it stimulates further tacit re-experiencing in the audience. *Dhvanyartha* is an overtly aesthetic experience of *rasa* that arises in a shared cultural context. The tacit experiences when put into words by *sahyodaya* engaging deeply with *dhvani*, could result into a shared of experience of *dhvanyartha* with other. Critics can model how to “point toward” *dhvanyartha* without reducing it, using analogy, juxtaposition, and selective emphasis on affective cues. *Dhvanyartha* exemplifies how poetry can evoke layers of meaning that remain tacit yet powerfully present. *Dhvanyartha* then becomes a second order inquiry to share the tacit experience with others, while initially it is just an experience of the partial bliss. In classical Sanskrit poetics, suggestion is not a rhetorical device to be decoded but an experiential field to be inhabited. Thus, this journey makes *dhvani* and *dhvanyartha* tools of philosophy to deliver meaning through experiential understanding. This gives insights into tacit knowledge and genuine understanding of a poem’s mood and a craft’s technique that emerge from an embodied, culturally shaped disposition that exceeds explicit articulation. The journey of *dhvani* begins with the experience of the tacit and ends with the rational transformation of that experience for others through *dhvanyartha*. Bringing together these Eastern and Western perspectives enriches

our appreciation of how art, culture, and cognition intertwine in the tacit depths of human knowledge and takes one on a journey from experiential understanding to reason.

4.5 From Hermeneutic Rationality to Speculative Philosophy

Speculative philosophy is a metaphorical term describing a dual mode of philosophical inquiry characterised by contemplation and theoretical discussion typically conducted in a comfortable, detached, and abstract manner and another empirical method open to new experiences and interpretations. Whitehead defines speculative philosophy as,

... the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted. By this notion of 'interpretation' I mean that everything of which we are conscious, as enjoyed, perceived, willed, or thought, shall have the character of a particular instance of the general scheme. Thus, the philosophical scheme should be coherent, logical, and, in respect to its interpretation, applicable and adequate. Here 'applicable' means that some items of experience are thus interpretable, and 'ade-quate' means that there are no items incapable of such interpretation. (Whitehead, 1920, p. 3).

This practice involves engaging with philosophical concepts, ethical dilemmas, and theoretical questions without necessarily linking them to practical experiences with rational and logical understanding and empirical practice of applicable, or practical ideas or experiences. Whitehead describes this dual approach as follows:

It will also be noticed that this ideal of speculative philosophy has its rational side and its empirical side. The rational side is expressed by the terms 'coherent' and 'logical.' The empirical side is expressed by the terms 'applicable' and 'adequate.' But the two sides are

bound together by clearing away an ambiguity which remains in the previous explanation of the term adequate (Whitehead, 1920, p. 3).

The phrase evokes an image of a philosopher sitting comfortably, perhaps in a speculative, engaging in deep intellectual thought without active participation in the issues being discussed, neither physically nor emotionally. However the emphasis of the current work is to engage the same philosopher in experiencing the tacit using the *dhvani* theory as a tool. While Speculative philosophy allows for exploring ideas and developing theoretical frameworks, it also raises questions about its relevance and applicability to societal problems, emphasising the tension between intellectual exploration and real-world engagement. This dual ability to deal with the abstract and the emotionally intense could help bring the method of *dhvani* to a wider audience, experienced through the *dhvanyartha*. Speculative philosophy signifies a contemplative style of philosophising that prioritises theoretical discussions and practical applications, which can lead to both useful insights and criticisms regarding its disconnect from everyday experiential learning and the sentimental struggles of the mind. It implies a form of intellectual engagement that relies on reasoning and contemplation conducted in a comfortable or isolated setting, but in this work, a modest attempt is made to engage in speculative philosophy through emotional and sentimental involvement or direct experiential learning. This prompts us to design a method that can be achieved by improvising on Whitehead's method of speculative philosophy, which reads as,

....a texture of observed experience, as illustrating the philosophic scheme, is such that all related experience must exhibit the same texture. Thus, the philosophic scheme should be 'necessary,' in the sense of bearing in itself its own warrant of universality throughout

all experience, provided that we confine ourselves to that which communicates with immediate matter of fact (Whitehead, 1920, p. 4).

But how can one have glimpses of the realm of philosophy from the realm of poetics? One of the surest methods is to employ the *dhvani* theory, which makes *sahṛdaya* unique; the experiential oneness. The focus of Speculative philosophy must first be on the tacit experience of *dhvanyartha*. This tacit experience is that of the *sahṛdaya*, who attains oneness with the meaning through *dhvani*. That experience leads to the sharing of those deeper understandings of the thoughts and emotions of others as the knowledge is realised, not just known. This method of Speculative philosophy can bring about a change on a wider scale for the future of the *dhvani* theory and open up an entirely new dimension of philosophising using *dhvani*. Speculative philosophy can bring out *dhvani* from the realm of poetics to philosophy proper. But Speculative philosophy can help the theory of *dhvani* to make the jump to philosophy. Speculative philosophy is that which needs something the *sahṛdaya* already possesses, which is emotional resonance and speculative ability. One begins with experience, then to experience of others through hermeneutics, and then to sharing one's own experiences through *dhvani*, ultimately leading to speculative philosophy while striving for the permanence of these blissful experiences. Speculative philosophy may involve a dual examination of experiential knowledge and structured philosophical arguments to share that experiential knowledge. Speculative philosophy could firmly ground the roots of *dhvani* theory in philosophy by exploring the experience of the tacit and bringing it to the world through the collaborative methodology of *dhvani* and speculative philosophy. Focusing both on the dual method of practical experience and theoretical grounding, so that the experience of the tacit can result in speculative philosophy. The knowledge of *dhvanyartha* can be shared through both philosophical and experiential methods,

one for theorising the potential knowledge and arguing for *dhvani* as an epistemic source, and the other for the empirical evidence of tacit experience and realities.

Speculative philosophy acknowledges that interpretive acts have consequences: they can empower or marginalise, clarify or confound. The attempt here is to add on to the dry method and bring in the method of *dhvani* theory to deliver a more experiential understanding of meaning to all through *dhvanyartha*. By taking a cue from *dhvani* and making texts other than literature deliver a more profound meaning by using *dhvani*. The attempt here is to make the experiment result in *dhvanyartha* being acknowledged as one of the sources of knowledge in philosophy.

What a *Sahṛdaya* experiences in art, and the tacit experience in philosophy, is the first order of experience to which, if Speculative philosophy is applied, a theoretical grounding could happen, but to make someone realise those meanings, the use of *dhvani* would be necessary. Philosophy, by all philosophers, is as lived; first, it is their tacit experience, which is later put into words with the help of suggestion, and when reading, these experiential meanings are also unbound with the help of the *dhvanyartha*. Every interpretation of *Upaniṣads* that has arrived is experiential in nature first, and that experience later becomes *Advaita*, *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, *Dvaita*, *Śūdhādvaita* or *Dvaitādvaita* philosophy. Just as *sahṛdaya* lives the tacit experience and puts it into art, the philosopher likewise lives the tacit experience and creates new philosophy from it, enabling others to realise the same knowledge and experience. With Speculative philosophy, the attempt would be to bring both the *sahṛdaya* and the tacit experience to create new knowledge. Even Buddha's experience of *nirvāṇa* can be seen here as an example of tacit experience and his words of the four noble truths as the philosophical fruit of tacit experience for others to realise the same experience of *nirvāṇa*. The tacit experience can be seen as a counter form of the experiential

sense that can be achieved in philosophy by simply learning from the *sahṛdaya* and applying the same sense of experiential component to philosophy, resulting in the experience of oneness with tacit experience, ultimately replicating this method through Speculative philosophy. Tacit experience, therefore, is the first order of experience, and Hermeneutic rationality is a second-order inquiry. The *sahṛdaya* makes the tacit experience an essential condition of *dhvanyartha*, the suggestive meaning of which eternally makes *dhvanyartha* and *sahṛdaya* inseparable. The *sahṛdaya* and its experiential sense of understanding the meaning make the suggested meaning unique and completely different from Hermeneutic Rationality, and it is the same experiential component that makes the tacit experience in philosophy a coequal of the *sahṛdaya* of the art. The counterpart of *sahṛdaya* in philosophy is tacit experience, and the tacit experience of philosophy and experiential knowledge of *sahṛdaya* is one and the same, and therefore both fall in the realm of the Tacit. The Tacit experience, as explained above, always arrives first to put that experience into transformative words or statements or to re-create that experience for the other. The formal language was developed as a tool where different sounds and pronunciations were given various specific meanings or understandings using *dhvaniśakti*, or the power of suggestion. So, the suggestive meaning that predates not just words but also language has existed ever since the first ever attempted communication. The power of suggestion gives meaning to sounds, noises, and gestures, but it is now used only to enhance quality and meaning in literature and the arts because of the tide of time and the changing nature of our worldly experiences. To experience meaning, language and words were used as tools; they were formed using suggestion. Now, the same suggestive meaning is used to enhance literature and poems, making them more experiential and emotive, rather than using them in everyday language because of the readily available formal structure of meaning. The use of suggestion

today in *drama* and literature is to enhance their quality and make their meanings experiential. The ability to bind the tacit experience in words is possible because of the power of suggestion that is *dhvani*, and the experiential sense of meaning is a component of *dhvani* itself, which makes it possible for tacit experience to come to words. The role portrayed by the *sahṛdaya* is to convey meanings in poetry, arts, and literature, while the philosopher enriches philosophical literature through the power of suggestion.

4.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter discusses the interplay between hermeneutics, suggested meaning, *sahṛdaya*, speculative philosophy, and tacit experience presenting a nuanced landscape for understanding aesthetic interpretation. The ideal engagement with any literary work requires a delicate balance employing the rigour of hermeneutics while fostering a keen sensitivity for the implicit meanings accessible through the *Sahṛdaya*'s lens. As one explores these interconnected philosophical strands, one recognises that proper understanding, which transcends mere theoretical discourse, invites an integrative approach that embraces both empirical experience and intellectual engagement. Ultimately, by weaving together speculative philosophy and tacit experience and beginning with the suggestion where the rational ends, one opens pathways to deeper, more profound interpretations of texts, enriching the literary discourse and existential understanding. The discourse is even easier to understand when the perspective of Classical Indian philosophy is taken into account, and the distinction between having knowledge of oneness or unity with *Brahman* and realising one's unity with *Brahman* is considered. Even the *jñānamārgin* believes and understands that the ultimate knowledge is experiential; no amount of knowledge storage or reciting of "I am Brahman" would help one realise the knowledge of ultimate reality. It is only

through the realisation of oneness and the experience of unity that one achieves liberation. It is the *sahṛdaya* that becomes one with knowledge and experiences the oneness. Through such an understanding of Tacit experience in Indian philosophy, one can understand that the entirety of Indian philosophy heavily relies on the suggested meaning achieved through the *dhvani* because the form of knowledge is only achieved when it is realised; until then, it is only information. In bringing together the multiple perspectives and philosophies discussed in this chapter, there was a rigorous attempt to compare the theory of *dhvani* with other literary theories and philosophies to substantiate the leap from poetics to philosophy. The philosophical discourse highlights the significance of the *dhvani* theory and tacit experience while considering the existing rationalistic philosophical theories and the method of Speculative philosophy. In contemporary philosophical discourse, there is an increasing emphasis on balancing abstract reasoning with empirical research and lived experience. Practical philosophy, including applied ethics and social philosophy, aims to bridge the gap between purely speculative abstractions and real-world implications, emphasising the importance of context, application, and the lived experiences of individuals. The dual aspect laden Speculative philosophy method of Whitehead would help *dhvani* achieve both theoretical grounding and experiential learning. In this context a prominent ancient Indian *subhashita* states, “*jñānam tu dvividhaṃ proktaṃ śābdikaṃ prathamam smṛtam, anubhavākhyam dvitīyam tuṃ jñānam tadurlabham nṛpa*”.¹³⁷ A good utterance is one that gives experiential knowledge. Experiential knowledge is very significant. The *dhvani* theory enables one to experience knowledge through words that are generally understood to be merely informative. But the Speculative philosophy provides *dhvani* with a method for bringing both

¹³⁷ ज्ञानं तु द्विविधं प्रोक्तं शाब्दिकं प्रथमं स्मृतम् । अनुभवाख्यं द्वितीयं तु ज्ञानं तदुर्लभं नृप ॥ (Hey King, there are two kinds of knowledge available in the world: memory-oriented and transferred through words, and experiential knowledge achieved through realisation. The second experiential knowledge is very rare (gather as much as possible) (Haṇamante, 1963, p. 66).

together under a single philosophical practice, making it possible to take the leap from poetics to philosophy. In essence, the *dhvani* theory enables one to be one with the meaning through the experiential nature of the suggested meaning and the *sahṛdaya's* ability to be one with it, suggesting that experiencing the suggested meaning is being *sahṛdaya*, and vice versa. This is what makes the *dhvani* theory unique and distinct from other hermeneutical theories of knowledge, and this ability of *sahṛdaya* to be one with meaning opens another door, i.e, a leap from poetics to philosophy, which will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: *Dhvanyartha* an Epistemic Source for Philosophical Explorations

*Dhvaneryaḥ saguṇībhūtavyaṅgyasyādhvā pradarśitaḥ, anenānantyamāyāti
kavīnām pratibhāguṇaḥ (DL: IV.1).¹³⁸*

5.1 Introduction: Social Epistemology of *Dhvani*

Ānandavardhana's work, by demonstrating the path of *dhvani* and *guṇībhūtavyaṅgya* (subordinate suggestion), has opened the door to innumerable possibilities for gaining knowledge. The genius and creative brilliance of poets attain infinite possibilities because of the theory of *dhvani*; that is why it is a benchmark in Indian literature, linguistics, and aesthetics. In this final chapter of the thesis, an attempt is made to shift from poetics to philosophy through multiple perspectives; *first*, by attempting to establish *dhvani* as a philosophical framework that extends beyond aesthetics into epistemology and social knowledge production. *Second*, by attempting to bring forward the two paths of *dhvani* through *saṃvādaśakti* and *śabdaśakti*, this work argues for *dhvani* as an epistemic source of knowledge. *Third*, by taking a lead from the suggestive meaning (*dhvanyartha*) of the text *Dhvanyāloka*, this work analyses the *prasthāntrayi*

¹³⁸ ध्वनेर्यः सगुणीभूतव्यङ्ग्यस्याध्वा प्रदर्शितः।अनेनानन्त्यमायाति कवीनां प्रतिभागुणः॥4.1॥ By the ways of principal suggestion as also subordinated suggestion shown thus far the quality of creative imagination in poets will assume endlessness -(DL: IV.1)

texts and argues that the suggestive meaning (*dhvanyartha*) of a text (like Vedas, *Brahmasūtras*) is the source of its multiple interpretations, leading to the Vedāntic philosophies such as *Advaita*, *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, and *Dvaita Vedānta*. *Fourth*, by arguing for the oneness of purpose in philosophising and aesthetic rupture (*sahṛdaya*), in realising the *sat-citi-ānanda*, this thesis attempts to identify the nexus between Indian Philosophy and Indian Aesthetics. *Fifth*, by highlighting that the *sahṛdaya* is essentially a philosopher, and *sixth*, by noting the element of realisation in *sahṛdaya*, this work argues for *dhvani* as an indispensable component of philosophising. Drawing upon Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, this chapter argues that *dhvani* functions as both an aesthetic and an epistemic instrument, in which meaning transcends literal linguistic expression and emerges through suggestion, interpretation, and shared cultural understanding. The analysis positions *dhvani* in the domain of an autonomous semantic and epistemic category, distinct from *abhidhā*, *lakṣaṇā*, and *anumāna*, demonstrating that knowledge may be implicit, context-sensitive, and socially mediated rather than merely propositional. Through the framework of social epistemology, the chapter shows that *dhvani* operates collectively through the interaction of poet, text, and *sahṛdaya*, where tacit understanding emerges through participation, interpretive skill, and cultural competence (Philips, 2011, p. 2; Keating, 2016, p. 13; Keating, 2016, p. 14). Abhinavagupta's comparison of *rasa* with *brahmānanda* further elevates aesthetic cognition into a form of metaphysical insight (Abhinavagupta, 1956, p. 130). The chapter further argues that *dhvani* provides a context-dependent and interpretive model of knowledge that challenges universal and purely rational epistemologies. Meaning in *dhvani* cannot be separated from cultural, linguistic, and situational context, and its apprehension depends upon shared traditions and interpretive discipline rather than arbitrary subjectivity (Sukla, 2016, p. 13). Through the triadic interaction

of poet, text, and *sahrdaya*, *dhvani* resembles distributed cognition and socially structured epistemic practices (Shearmur, 1985, p. 273). The *sahrdaya* emerges as a culturally refined and aesthetically sensitive knower whose interpretive competence functions similarly to epistemic virtue (Dongen & Paul, 2017, p. 66). *Dhvani* therefore expands the domain of epistemology by legitimising tacit, experiential, and affective knowledge systems that cannot be fully reduced to logical or propositional forms (Fricker et al., 2021, p. 11). It establishes that the deepest forms of knowledge are often suggested rather than explicitly stated and that understanding depends upon socially shared symbols, traditions, and cultural literacy.

The discussion also connects *dhvani* with testimony, hermeneutics, and interpretive participation, arguing that meaning arises through collaborative epistemic engagement rather than unilateral transmission. The poet does not impose meaning directly but causes it to arise within the consciousness of the reader through suggestion (Ā., 1990, p. 88). This process aligns with social epistemology's understanding of testimony and communicative practices where authority emerges through recognition and communal validation rather than coercion (Goldman, 1994, p. 27). *Dhvani*, therefore, anticipates hermeneutic epistemology by treating meaning as dynamically realised through the interaction between text, interpreter, and tradition. The *sahrdaya* does not passively receive meaning but co-creates it through interpretive participation, emotional refinement, and cultural awareness. Meaning remains context-sensitive yet norm-governed, allowing interpretive plurality without collapsing into relativism. *Dhvani* thereby functions as a living hermeneutic model in which each act of reading becomes a renewed epistemic event grounded in shared cultural frameworks (Mohanty, 1992, p. 145). Chapter culminates in the analysis of *rasa* and *ānanda* as forms of affective cognition and collective epistemic realisation. Through *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, individual emotions become universalised

aesthetic experiences, transforming subjective feeling into intersubjective knowledge (Abhinavagupta, 1956, p. 156). *Dhvani* thus challenges traditional epistemological distinctions between emotion and knowledge by demonstrating that affect itself can function as a valid mode of cognition. The chapter argues that epistemic authority in *dhvani* is reciprocal, negotiated between poet and *sahr̥daya*, and dependent upon successful interpretive realisation rather than institutional hierarchy (Fricker, 1998, p. 189; Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 162). By integrating tacit understanding, contextual sensitivity, interpretive mediation, cultural embeddedness, and affective cognition, *dhvani* emerges as a comprehensive epistemic framework characterised by socially grounded and experiential modes of knowing (Fuller, 1996, p. 154; Sukla, 2016, p. 16; Tanesini, 2017). The *dhvani* theory follows social epistemology and arrives at socially understood meanings and social cognition. The argument here is that from the very origins of the theory, *dhvani* has been a social creation, without which *dhvani* is not a possibility. Even the role of *dhvani* as *saṃvādaśakti* too was born out of the need to share the tacit experience with the other. *Dhvani* has always been, and always will be, a socially oriented theory of meaning.

5.2 The Two Paths: Through *Samvādaśakti* and *Śabdaśakti*

The history of *dhvani* can be understood as the evolution of two distinct yet interconnected paths of meaning. The first path is the primordial and experiential path of *saṃvādaśakti*, the power of dialogue, communication, and lived exchange. The second is the refined aesthetic path of *śabdaśakti*, the power of words and literary expression. The distinction between these two paths is essential for understanding the deeper philosophical significance of *dhvani* and *dhvanyartha*. The present study gives priority not merely to *dhvani* as a literary ornament, but to *dhvani* as the original communicative force embedded in human existence itself. In its earliest form, human existence depended not on formal grammar, systematic literary expression, or codified linguistic

structures, but on communication born of necessity. Before language became refined into structured literary systems, human beings relied upon gestures, tones, emotional expressions, contextual cues, symbolic references, silence, and lived interaction to communicate experience and intention. Meaning was not confined to isolated words; it arose from the totality of interaction. This primordial communicative force is what may be identified as *saṃvādaśakti*, the power of meaning generated through dialogue, conversation, and experiential participation. *Samvādaśakti*, therefore, becomes the original source of *dhvani* and *dhvanyartha*. *Dhvani* did not first arise in poetry; it arose in human interaction itself. The suggestive meaning existed long before it was theorised by Ānandavardhana, as Ānandavardhana himself agreed. The first poetic expression of *dhvani* definitely arrived through Vālmiki, but the first ever occurrence of *dhvani* will never be known to history. Human beings always understood more than what was directly spoken (Blanchette, 2003, p. 103). A mother's silence, a teacher's gesture, a lover's pause, or the symbolic language of ritual all communicated meanings beyond literal expression. Meaning was experiential, contextual, relational, and dialogical. The listener grasped meaning not merely through words, but through participation in the communicative event itself (Oestreich, 2016, p. 251). This is the earliest form of *dhvani*. This original communicative structure of *dhvani* can be connected to the dialogical traditions of the *Upaniṣads* themselves. The *Upaniṣads* are fundamentally conversations, *guru* and *śiṣya*, seeker and sage, question and revelation. The knowledge transmitted there is not merely informational; it is experiential and suggestive. The *Mahāvākyas* themselves do not function as simple literal propositions. Their force lies in their suggestive depth, which becomes meaningful only within the context of dialogue and lived philosophical experience. Thus, the earliest philosophical traditions of India already relied upon *saṃvādaśakti* as the medium through which tacit and experiential knowledge was transmitted.

However, as civilisation evolved, formal language systems emerged. Grammar became systematised through thinkers like Pāṇini, and linguistic structures became increasingly codified (Jain, 1989, p. 57). Language moved from experiential communication toward formal representation. Meaning gradually became associated with words, sentences, and linguistic structures rather than with the entirety of communicative experience. The rise of formal language made direct communication more efficient, precise, and transferable across time and geography (SW, 1899, p. 10). Yet this same process also reduced the immediacy of experiential meaning. As formal language became dominant, the original communicative role of *dhvani* through *saṃvādaśakti* began to diminish in visibility. Every day use of *saṃvādaśakti* was redundant as the meaning was already decided. Ogden states;

Suggestive meaning in ordinary communication became overshadowed by the increasing emphasis on literal clarity, grammar, logic, and linguistic correctness. The analytic concern shifted toward words as units of meaning rather than dialogue as the source of meaning (Ogden & Richards, 1989, p. 88).

The focus shifted from what language says to what communication reveals. This transition can be seen in both Indian linguistic traditions and Western analytic philosophy. It is precisely at this historical moment that the second path emerges, the path of *śabdaśakti*. The aestheticians, poets, and literary philosophers recognised that formal language, while effective for communication, lacked the emotional depth, beauty, resonance, and experiential richness of living dialogue. Therefore, they reconstructed *dhvani* within the domain of aesthetics to restore brilliance to language. Through poetry, metaphor, symbolism, rhythm, *rasa*, and literary suggestion, they reintroduced the hidden dimensions of meaning into formal linguistic expression. This became the path of *śabdaśakti*, the power inherent in words themselves to evoke meanings beyond literal

expression. The genius of Ānandavardhana lies precisely here. He systematically theorised what humanity had already been experiencing implicitly for centuries. In the *Dhvanyāloka*, he transformed *dhvani* into a refined aesthetic principle and established suggestive meaning as the soul of poetry. Through *śabdaśakti*, language regained its emotional and experiential capacity. Poetry was no longer merely decorative speech; it became a vehicle for aesthetic revelation (Jasper, 1989, p. 81). The aestheticians, therefore, elevated *dhvani* primarily as *śabdaśakti*. They focused on how words produce resonance, evoke *rasa*, and generate layered meanings. This tradition became extraordinarily influential in Indian poetics and literary criticism. The majority of scholars, linguists, philosophers, literary critics, and aestheticians subsequently concentrated upon this literary dimension of *dhvani*. Discussions revolved around poetic suggestion, *rasa-dhvani*, *alaṃkāra*, *vyāñjanā*, aesthetic pleasure, and interpretative multiplicity. *Dhvani* became largely confined to the realm of poetry and literature, and it came to be known as the aesthetic turn. Even contemporary scholarship largely continues to engage *dhvani* through this aesthetic pathway. Most thinkers examine *dhvani* as a literary mechanism or linguistic phenomenon that enriches textual interpretation. The focus remains on language as artistic expression. The tradition of *dhvani* as *śabdaśakti* has thus dominated intellectual discourse for centuries.

However, the present philosophical inquiry attempts to reverse this historical priority. While recognising the brilliance and importance of *śabdaśakti*, the primary concern here is with the original path of *dhvani*, the path of *saṃvādaśakti* (Jha, 1904, p. 9). The argument is that *dhvani* was not born in poetry; poetry merely refined and aestheticised a much older human phenomenon. The original source of suggestive meaning lies in communication itself, in lived dialogue, in experiential exchange, and in tacit understanding between conscious beings.

Samvādaśakti, therefore, precedes *śabdaśakti* both historically and philosophically. “*Śabdaśakti* is a later refinement of a deeper communicative reality” (J, 1904, p. 3). If *dhvani* is viewed only as *śabdaśakti*, it remains confined to literature and aesthetics. But if *dhvani* is understood through *saṃvādaśakti*, then it becomes a universal epistemic principle underlying all human understanding, dialogue, philosophy, and experiential meaning-making. *Dhvani* then ceases to be merely a poetic device and becomes the very condition for the transmission of tacit experience. Thus, the two paths of *dhvani* represent two stages in the evolution of meaning itself: first, the existential and communicative path of *saṃvādaśakti* born from the necessity of human interaction; and second, the aesthetic and literary path of *śabdaśakti* born from the attempt to restore beauty, depth, and resonance to formal language.

This distinction is crucial because it changes the entire orientation of *dhvani* theory from being merely a literary doctrine into becoming an epistemic and philosophical principle underlying human understanding itself. “Human existence begins not with grammar but with experience” (Kashyap, 1891, p. 117). Before formal language emerged, human beings survived through interaction, emotional exchange, symbolic gestures, expressions, silence, sound, rhythm, imitation, and shared experiential contexts. As Martinez stated, communication existed prior to linguistic formalisation. Meaning was not contained in words because words themselves were not yet fully developed. Meaning arose through participation in life itself (Martínez-San Miguel & Arias, 2020, p. 495). A child understands a mother's anger before understanding vocabulary. A tribe understands danger through tone and gesture before possessing systematic linguistic categories (Jha, 1904, p. 11). Silence between two individuals often communicates more than elaborate speech. This demonstrates that meaning fundamentally precedes formal linguistic structure. This primordial communicative force is what can be understood as *saṃvādaśakti*, the

power of dialogue, interaction, and communicative participation. The word *saṃvāda* itself does not merely mean “conversation” in the ordinary sense. Philosophically, it signifies the mutual participation of consciousness in the unfolding of meaning. Meaning emerges not from isolated words but from relational engagement.

A warrior does not need a full explanation before battle. A disciple often understands the teacher through silence. A devotee experiences divinity through symbolic gestures. A philosopher experiences tacit insight before conceptual articulation. In all these situations, the meaning exceeds the spoken word. This is why the earliest Indian philosophical traditions themselves are dialogical traditions (Black & Patton, 2016, p. 19). Then the focus shifted from what is experienced to what is stated. “This transition parallels what later occurs in Western analytic philosophy, where language becomes treated as a logical structure rather than a living experiential phenomenon” (Greene et al., 2012, p. 1129). As formal language gained dominance, the original experiential and dialogical richness of communication gradually became secondary. *Samvādaśakti* did not disappear. But it became hidden beneath linguistic formalism.

Once language became highly formalised, ordinary communication became increasingly incapable of expressing: subtle emotions, transcendental experiences, aesthetic states, mystical insights, existential suffering, and philosophical intuition. Literal language could communicate information. But it could not adequately communicate experience. A person can define love scientifically without having experienced it. A philosopher can discuss the *Brahman* conceptually without realising *Brahman*. A grammarian can analyse poetry without experiencing *rasa*. This distinction becomes central to *dhvani*. The problem was no longer how to communicate facts. But, how to communicate experience? It is precisely at this point that the second path emerges. The aestheticians recognised the limitations of ordinary formal language.

They understood that literal communication alone cannot evoke experiential depth. “Thus emerged the second path: *Śabdaśakti*, the power of words” (Jha, 1904, p. 1). The aestheticians reconstructed suggestive meaning within literary expression. Poetry became the laboratory through which language regained its lost experiential brilliance.

Samvādaśakti becomes the bridge through which this tacit experience is communicated to others. The distinction between *saṃvādaśakti* and *śabdaśakti* fundamentally alters the understanding of language and meaning. This makes *Dhvani* not merely an aesthetic principle, but a theory of human understanding itself. Thus, the two paths are not contradictory. *Śabdaśakti* is the refined artistic continuation of the original communicative force of *Samvādaśakti*. *Samvādaśakti* is the origin. *Śabdaśakti* is the aesthetic evolution. The first belongs to existential communication. The second belongs to artistic refinement. The first produces lived meaning. The second beautifies and preserves it, and therefore, while the literary tradition historically privileged *Śabdaśakti*, the present philosophical investigation returns to the primordial source of *Dhvani*, the path of *Samvādaśakti*.

5.3 *Samvādaśakti* and the *Prasthānatrayī*

The concept of *Samvādaśakti* may be understood as the dialogical potency inherent within language, through which meaning is not exhausted by literal expression but continuously unfolds through interpretive engagement between text, commentator, and reader. In the philosophical context of Indian hermeneutics, especially when read alongside the theory of *dhvani* in the form of *saṃvādaśakti*, it signifies the communicative resonance that allows scriptural texts to generate multiple layers of meaning without losing their textual unity. The *Prasthānatrayī*, namely the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the *Brahmasūtras*, provide the most significant example of

this phenomenon. Although these texts remain linguistically identical across centuries, they have produced radically different philosophical systems through distinct modes of interpretive dialogue. The possibility of divergent yet intellectually rigorous interpretations emerges because these texts are not merely propositional documents; they are dialogical structures saturated with suggestive meaning, *dhvanyartha*. “Their philosophical depth lies precisely in their semantic openness” (Jha, 1904, p. 39). Through *saṃvādaśakti*, the same statement can reveal metaphysical non-dualism, qualified non-dualism, or dualism depending upon the interpretive horizon of the commentator. Meaning, therefore, does not remain static within the text; rather, it emerges relationally through the interaction between scripture and consciousness. The *Prasthānatrayī* survives across millennia not because it imposes a single fixed doctrine, but because its dialogical power continually renews itself within changing intellectual, spiritual, and historical contexts.

5.3.1 The Great Saying of Upanisads

The *Mahāvākyas* of the *Upaniṣads* constitute some of the most concise yet philosophically fertile statements in Indian thought. Traditionally, four *Mahāvākyas* are recognised: ‘*Prajñānam Brahma*’ (Consciousness is *Brahman*; Aitareya *Upaniṣad* 3.3)¹³⁹, ‘*Aham Brahmāsmi*’ (I am *Brahman*; *Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.10)¹⁴⁰, ‘*Tat Tvam Asi*’ (Thou Art That; *Chāndogya Upaniṣads* 6.8.7)¹⁴¹, ‘*Ayam Ātmā Brahma*’ (This Self is *Brahman*; *Māndukya Upaniṣads* 1.2)¹⁴². There is confusion among scholars over the total number of *Mahāvākyas*; some say there are five, and the majority say there are four. Hence, this thesis focuses only on four principal

¹³⁹ प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म (Aitareya Upaniṣads 3.3)

¹⁴⁰ अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि (Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣads 1.4.10)

¹⁴¹ तत् त्वम् असि (Chāndogya Upaniṣads 6.8.7)

¹⁴² अयम् आत्मा ब्रह्म (Māndukya Upaniṣads 1.2)

Mahāvākyas. These *Mahāvākyas* have generated fundamentally different metaphysical systems. This diversity demonstrates the operation of *dhvani* as *saṃvādaśakti*. The statements themselves are semantically condensed and suggestive rather than mechanically definitive. Their philosophical meaning emerges through interpretive dialogue. Śaṅkarācārya interprets the *Mahāvākyas* through the lens of Advaita Vedānta. For him, *Tat Tvam Asi* reveals the absolute identity between the individual self (*jīva*) and *Brahman*. The apparent difference between the individual and the absolute is caused by *avidyā* (ignorance). “*bhrāntikalpita-jagatkalāśrayaṃ svāśrayaṃ ca sadasadvilakṣaṇam, niṣkalaṃ nirupam ānamṛd dhimat-brahma tattvamasi bhāvayātmani*” (VC 258).¹⁴³ ‘That’ (*Brahman*) part of the sentence is taken up. *Brahman* is the support of the entire universe that is superimposed on It out of delusion. There is no entity that supports *Brahman*. All distinctions based on duality, like gross and subtle, obtain only in the world; *Brahman* is neither gross nor subtle. In the world, the earth element is gross, and the space element is subtle. Again, the waking world is gross, the dream world is subtle, and the causal sleep (potential) world is the subtlest. *Brahman* that transcends all the three states does not come under the category of gross and subtle. ‘I am That *Brahman*’ is the mode of contemplation. Through spiritual knowledge, one realises that the self was never truly separate from *Brahman*. Thus, the suggestive meaning in the statement is ontological non-duality. The sentence transcends ordinary grammar and points toward an experiential unity beyond subject-object distinction.

Rāmānujācārya rejects absolute identity and interprets the same *Mahāvākya* within the framework of qualified non-dualism (*Viśiṣṭādvaita*). “*Tathā hi-“tat tvam” iti sāmānādhikaraṇye*

¹⁴³ भ्रान्तिकल्पित-जगत्कलाश्रयं स्वाश्रयं च सदसद्विलक्षणम् । निष्कलं निरुपमानमृद्धिमत-ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ That which is the substratum of the universe with its various subdivisions which are all creations of delusion; which Itself has no other support; which is distinct from the gross and subtle; which has no parts, and has verily no exemplar – that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind -VC258.

'tat" ityanena jagatkāraṇaṃ sarvakalyāṇaguṇākaraṃ niravacaṃ brahmocyate | "tvam" iti ca cetanasamānādhikaraṇavṛttena jīvāntaryāmirūpi, taccharīraṃ tadātmatayā avasthitaṃ, tatprakāraṃ brahmocyate"¹⁴⁴ According to him, the individual self is not identical with *Brahman* but is a mode or attribute of *Brahman*. *Tat Tvam Asi*, therefore, signifies dependence and inseparability rather than total identity. Just as the body exists in relation to the soul, the individual exists in relation to God. Here, the suggestive meaning of *dhvani* communicates organic unity rather than metaphysical sameness. The statement becomes devotional and relational instead of purely monistic. In the passage affirming identity 'That thou art', the term 'that' signifies *Brahman*, as the cause of the world, as the abode of all perfections. By the term 'thou' also, denotative of the individual self, *Brahman* itself is signified as the inner ruler of the *jīva*, as possessed of it as its body, as existing within the *jīva* as its self and as possessing the *jīva* as its mode.

Madhvācārya advances yet another interpretation. *Dvaita* considers that there is eternal difference between *Jiva*, *Brahman* and *Jagat*. Anand Tirtha (Madhvacharya) interpreted *sa ātmā atat tvam asi*¹⁴⁵ that means That *Atman*, thou art not. For him, the distinction between God and soul is eternal and irreducible. Therefore, *Tat Tvam Asi* cannot literally mean identity. Madhva interprets the statement in a manner that preserves ontological duality between the individual and the supreme reality, identified with Viṣṇu. The *dhvani* here suggests proximity, dependence, or participation, but never essential unity. The soul remains subordinate to God eternally. The existence of these divergent interpretations despite the textual constancy of the *Mahāvākyas*

¹⁴⁴ तथा हि-"तत् त्वम्" इति सामानाधिकरण्ये 'तत्' इत्यनेन जगत्कारणं सर्वकल्याणगुणाकरं निरवचं ब्रह्मोच्यते । "त्वम्" इति च चेतनसमानाधिकरणवृत्तेन जीवान्तर्यामिरूपि, तच्छरीरं तदात्मतया अवस्थितं, तत्प्रकारं ब्रह्मोच्यते। 'That thou art', the term 'that' signifies *Brahman*, as the cause of the world, as the abode of all perfections. By the term 'thou' also, denotative of the individual self, *Brahman* itself is signified as the inner ruler of the *jīva*, as possessed of it as its body, as existing within the *jīva* as itself and as possessing the *jīva* as its mode...

¹⁴⁵ स आत्मा अतत् त्वम् असि।

reveals the power of *saṃvādaśakti*. The *Upaniṣadic* statements are not philosophically inert declarations; they are dialogical centres of meaning capable of resonating differently with varying metaphysical assumptions. The same sentence becomes non-dual in *Advaita*, qualified relational in *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, and dualistic in *Dvaita*. This plurality is possible because the meaning of scripture operates through suggestiveness, *dhvani*, rather than rigid semantic closure.

5.3.2 The Logic of *Śrīmad-Bhagavadgītā*

The *Bhagavad Gītā* occupies a unique place within Indian philosophical tradition because it continually speaks to changing historical and existential conditions. For nearly five thousand years, the same text has remained intellectually alive, offering fresh guidance to successive generations. This enduring relevance cannot be explained merely through literal meaning. Rather, it is made possible through *saṃvādaśakti*, the dialogical and suggestive force through which the *Gītā* continually generates new interpretations and philosophical possibilities. *Gītā* itself is structured as a dialogue between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa. Because it is fundamentally conversational, its meanings unfold dynamically rather than dogmatically. Every age approaches the *Gītā* with new anxieties, ethical crises, political struggles, and spiritual questions. The text responds differently because its language contains layered *dhvani* capable of entering into renewed dialogue with human experience. Some interpreters read the *Gītā* primarily through the metaphysics of *Brahman*. In *Advaitic* interpretations influenced by Śaṅkarācārya, the ultimate teaching of the *Gītā* is the realisation of non-dual *Brahman* beyond all phenomenal distinctions. *Karma* and devotion are considered preparatory disciplines culminating in liberating knowledge (*jñāna*). Here the *dhvani* of the text directs consciousness toward metaphysical unity and transcendence. Other commentators, particularly within the *Vaiṣṇava* traditions influenced by Rāmānujācārya, interpret the *Gītā* as affirming Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa as the supreme absolute

reality. In this understanding, devotion (*bhakti*) becomes the central spiritual path. The *Gītā* is not merely a metaphysical discourse but a theology of surrender to the personal God. The same verses that *Advaitins* interpret symbolically are understood here in deeply devotional and theistic terms. Within traditions inspired by *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, especially later Vaiṣṇava schools, the *Gītā* is interpreted as the direct revelation of Kṛṣṇa himself as the ultimate reality. The statement “*Sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*”¹⁴⁶ (18.66 *Śrīmad-Bhagavadgītā*) is understood not abstractly but personally, as a call to total surrender to Kṛṣṇa. The text thus becomes not merely philosophical instruction but divine conversation. Modern interpreters further expand the semantic possibilities of the *Gītā*. Some read it as an ethical treatise on action and duty; others interpret it psychologically as a discourse on inner conflict; still others approach it politically, existentially, or spiritually. Each reading derives from the same text, yet each reveals different dimensions of meaning. In this context, we can refer to the following *śloka* in *Gītā*: “*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtāmdharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge*”(Gītā 4.8).¹⁴⁷ The *śloka* simply means an assurance from God that if you keep the work in progress, I will always be going to help you. Some read it and take it as a message to do nothing, and ultimately God will come and take care of everything. Some others believe it to be the definition and conditions of an *avatāra*. And some others believe that it is a message of destruction.

This multiplicity demonstrates the operation of *saṁvādaśakti*. The *Gītā* survives because it does not imprison meaning within one doctrinal framework. Its dialogical structure allows new interpretations to emerge continuously. Every rereading produces fresh insight because the text

¹⁴⁶ सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य माम् एकं शरणं ब्रज 18.66 *Śrīmad-Bhagavadgītā*. Leave all duties and responsibilities and surrender yourself to only my feet.

¹⁴⁷ परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृतामर्धर्म-संस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे. | 4.8 *Śrīmad-Bhagavadgītā*. to protect the good, destroy the bad, to establish a rule based kingdom. I will come again and again.

communicates not only through explicit doctrine but through suggestive resonance. The same verses become metaphysical, devotional, ethical, psychological, or existential depending upon the interpretive consciousness engaging with them. Thus, the *Gītā* exemplifies how *dhvani* enables scripture to remain eternally relevant without changing its textual form.

5.3.3 The Argumentative *Brahasūtra*

The *Brahasūtras* represent one of the most argumentative and philosophically condensed texts in Indian intellectual history. Composed in aphoristic form, the text systematically addresses metaphysical questions concerning *Brahman*, the self, causality, liberation, and scriptural interpretation. However, the extreme brevity of the *sūtra* style renders the text semantically open and dependent upon commentary. The first *sūtra* itself is very controversial; “*Om athāto brahmajijñāsā*” 1.1.1, *Brahasūtra*.¹⁴⁸ *Atha* (Now / Therefore). *Advaita* interprets ‘*atha*’ strictly as “subsequently.” It means that the enquiry begins only after a seeker has attained the fourfold qualifications (*Sādhana Chatuṣṭaya*), which include discernment (between the eternal and non-eternal) and detachment from worldly pleasures. *Viśiṣṭādvaita* interprets ‘*atha*’ as “after.” It means that after a person has studied the ritualistic portions of the Vedas (*Karma-Kāṇḍa*), they realise that rituals yield temporary results and subsequently turn to an enquiry into the *Brahman*. The Word: *Brahma-jijñāsa* (Enquiry into *Brahman*) *Advaita*: Viewed as an enquiry into the nature of the attributeless, absolute Supreme Reality (*Nirguṇa Brahman*). Attaining this knowledge dissolves the illusion (*Māya*) that the individual soul and the universal soul are distinct, granting immediate liberation. *Viśiṣṭādvaita* interprets *Brahma* as the supreme, infinite repository of all auspicious qualities, specifically Lord Narāyaṇa. The enquiry here is the pursuit of loving devotion (*Bhakti*) to a personal, yet supreme God. *Dvaita* views *Brahma* as Lord

¹⁴⁸ अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा 1.1.1|| *Brahasūtra*

Viṣṇu. The enquiry focuses on developing the realisation of the absolute difference and devotion between the dependent individual soul (*Jīva*) and the supreme God (*Īśvara*). This interpretive openness becomes the basis for radically divergent philosophical traditions. The most remarkable feature of the *Brahmasūtras* is that nearly every major *Vedāntic* school claims the text as authoritative while simultaneously producing mutually contradictory interpretations. This phenomenon becomes intelligible only through the framework of *dhvani* and *saṃvādaśakti*. The *sūtras* do not communicate meaning merely through direct denotation; they operate through suggestive philosophical potential that unfolds differently within distinct hermeneutic traditions. Śaṅkarācārya interprets the *Brahmasūtras* as defending non-dual *Brahman*. According to his *Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya*, multiplicity belongs ultimately to the realm of ignorance, while *Brahman* alone is absolutely real. The argumentative movement of the text is therefore directed toward establishing metaphysical unity.

Rāmānujācārya, however, interprets the same *Brahmasūtras* as affirming a personal *Brahman* endowed with qualities. For him, the world and individual souls are real and constitute the body of God. Thus, the *Brahmasūtras* become a defence of qualified non-dualism rather than pure monism. Similarly, Madhvācārya interprets the *Brahmasūtras* as establishing an eternal distinction between God, soul, and matter. The text, in his reading, confirms the supremacy of Viṣṇu and the irreducible plurality of existence. What is philosophically astonishing is that all these commentators rely upon the same *sūtras* while arriving at fundamentally different ontological conclusions. The text, therefore, functions not as a closed doctrinal system but as a dialogical field of meaning. Each *Bhāṣya* constructs an internally coherent philosophical universe from the same foundational aphorisms. This interpretive plurality is possible because the *Brahmasūtras* possess *saṃvādaśakti*. Their aphoristic and argumentative nature invites

participation, debate, inference, and philosophical reconstruction. The text does not mechanically dictate one meaning; rather, it enters into dialogue with the interpreter. The *dhvani* inherent within the *sūtras* allows meanings to expand beyond literal brevity into vast metaphysical systems. Thus, the various *Brahmasūtra Bhāṣyas* are not merely disagreements about doctrine; they are manifestations of the dialogical power of language itself. The existence of *Advaita*, *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, and *Dvaita* as distinct philosophical systems emerging from the same textual source demonstrates that meaning within Indian philosophy is fundamentally suggestive, relational, and dialogical. The *Brahmasūtras* therefore stand as one of the clearest examples of *dhvani* operating as *saṃvādaśakti* within the philosophical tradition of India.

5.4 Ānanda: Aesthetics of Experience and Reason

This whole structure of understanding *dhvani*, the conditions, the rules, and the definitions is all essential to finding the one that everyone is looking for, ultimate bliss, *ānanda*. This well-known system is one of sound and meaning and of the figures and qualities built to achieve this one thing: *ānanda*. Ānandavardhana equates this Ānanda with *rasa*. But before that, one has to understand Ānandavardhana's definition of poetry through a larger mind and a broader perspective. The "System" means the path people follow in a continuous tradition; Ānandavardhana stands against that and systematically defines *dhvani* as a philosophy. He intends this method to be a type of poetry because it gives him something that poetry first gave him: a state of bliss. The *rasa* is achieved through the suggestive meaning of poetry, which provides a temporary state of bliss; therefore, he has called it "the soul of poetry." Why is it poetry? Because of the state of bliss, it provides for a sensitive audience. To see this method through wider lenses, he means that it is used in dancing, singing, the motion of the eyes, etc., to

supply *rasa*. This definition of supply consists of sounds and meanings that delight the heart of a sensitive audience, which is poetry. Now, it might be argued that the only sensitive auditors or *sahṛdayas* are those who recognise this novel form of poetry, and as that which lies outside the well-known system is approved by them, it may serve as a definition of poetry. But if an individual arrives and says, “I will define a scissor”, and starts to do so as follows. “A scissor has length and breadth, it can be worn, it covers the whole body, it is soft, it is woven of woollen threads, it can be spread out or rolled up, but it cannot cut anything, and it can itself be cut. This is the best kind of scissors.” Then, if and when someone objects that the description is of a cloth, not of a scissor, the answer is that this is the definition of a scissor according to him. Ānandavardhana gives a similar definition to poetry. All of the text, by his definition, cannot become poetry. Still, according to his definition, all of the text can deliver *rasa*, which is *ānanda*, which means that poetry is not essential for suggestive meaning to exist. “The author means that what we define should be what it is known to be, not a figment of the imagination” (Ā., 1990, 60). Therefore, what one knows to be is the suggestive meaning, the *dhvanyartha*, proven beyond doubt, which takes one to *rasa*; that means the state of bliss is also known to exist, so the only thing which gets eliminated is that not everything that consists of *dhvani* and delivers *ānanda* is poetry.

Ānandavardhana tells us that *dhvani*, that is, suggestion, or more specifically, suggestive meaning as the primary sense of a passage, is the soul of poetry in the very first *kārikā* of the first chapter.¹⁴⁹ But as one moves ahead, it comes to our attention that it is only half the story, for his critique explains the goal of poetry to be in the state of *rasa*, and *dhvani* is just a means to

¹⁴⁹ काव्यस्यात्माध्वनिरितिबुधैर्यःसमाम्नातपूर्वः. To indicate that learned scholar men of yore have repeatedly declared that the soul of poetry lay in suggestion -DL:1.1

achieve it.¹⁵⁰ The concept of *rasa* and *ānanda* is a priority, but it is more critical than the *dhvani* theory in furnishing a criterion of beauty. “For not all *dhvani* leads to *rasa*, nor does all *dhvani* lead to beauty” (Ingalls, 1990, p. 19). *Rasa*, *ānanda*, or bliss, is the ultimate goal of the aesthetic experience. The deep, abiding joy comes from the realisation of *rasa*. When the audience experiences *rasa* through the suggestive power of *dhvani*, they achieve a state of *ānanda*.

As for the poet himself, when one is under such a heightened state of emotion as *rasa*, one can write suggestive poetry that will transfer this *rasa* to his hearers (Ā., 1990, p. 18). As the legendary Western poet Wordsworth says, “Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (Tutschka, 2009, p. 3). This experience *ānanda* achieved through *dhvani* is emotional and spiritual, leading to an inner sense of fulfilment and transcendence, but also temporary. Experiencing *ānanda* through *rasa* and *dhvani* is akin to a spiritual journey. The audience moves from the mundane to the sublime, guided by the poet’s suggestive language. The emotions evoked are not personal or subjective but universal, allowing for a shared aesthetic experience that transcends individual boundaries. *Rasa* and *dhvani* together form the cornerstone of classical Indian aesthetic theory. *Rasa*, as the essence of emotional experience, is realised through the suggestive power of *dhvani*. This interplay allows for a profound and nuanced aesthetic expertise that leads to *ānanda*, or bliss. The fourth stanza of the second chapter signifies the importance of *rasa*, as shown. “*vācyaavācakacārutvahetūnām vividhātmanām, rasādiparatā yatra sa dhvanerviṣayo mataḥ*”¹⁵¹ (DL: II.4). Ānandavardhana says that only in that text are all the beautifiers in the expressed sense; these expressions, with the single purpose of conveying a

¹⁵⁰ सन्धिसन्ध्यङ्गघटनं रसाभिव्यक्त्यपेक्षया। न तु केवलया शास्त्रास्थितिसम्पादनेच्छया ॥३/१२॥ The construction of divisions and subdivisions of the plot only with a view to delineating sentiments and not at all with a desire for mere conformity to rules of poetics -DL: III.12

¹⁵¹ वाच्यवाचकचारुत्वहेतूनां विविधात्मनाम् । रसादिपरता यत्र स ध्वनेर्विषयो मतः ॥ Only that, wherein all the several beautifiers of the expressed sense and the expression exist with the single purpose of conveying sentiment and so on, is to be regarded as coming under the scope of suggestion -DL:2.4

sentiment (*rasa*, *ānanda*) and so on, are only to be regarded as coming under the scope of the highest suggestion. This means that meaning which does not convey any form of *rasa* or *ānanda* is not the highest form of suggestion. Anywhere and everywhere, the varied word, meaning, and their causes of beauty are subordinated to *rasa*, *ānanda*; this is considered the domain of the *dhvani* theory. In the *dhvani* theory, “*rasa* means love and compassion for the entire humanity” (Prasad, 1994, p. 37), which is central to it. “The Indian theory of *rasa*, as we have seen above, is the product of Indian culture and defines a typically Indian attitude to life” (Prasad, 1994, p. 37). This concept has helped Indian literary critics analyse a literary work's emotional impact and appreciate how literature can evoke different emotions in the reader. “The critics of *rasa* school believe that the suggestive meaning is the crown and capital of poetry and comes to our help when the literal meaning or the metaphorical meaning becomes inoperative” (Prasad, 1994, p. 36). Inoperative means no longer necessary for the reader or the *sahṛdaya* who sees the suggested. “It need not be emphasised that the foundation of *rasa* theory is laid on such diverse disciplines as aesthetics, psychology, moral science, ethnology, sociology and philosophy” (Prasad, 1994, p. 38).

There is a significant difference between sensual enjoyment and aesthetic pleasure. Sensual enjoyment pertains to the gratification derived from sensory experiences such as taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell. This form of enjoyment is rooted in the physical and immediate responses of the body to stimuli. It is often fleeting and tied directly to the senses and their corresponding objects. In contrast, aesthetic pleasure transcends mere sensory gratification and engages a deeper, more profound appreciation. Aesthetic pleasure involves a more complex interaction of the mind and emotions, often evoked by art, nature, or beauty. It goes beyond the surface level of sensory input and taps into an intellectual and emotional response, fostering a

sense of connection and understanding. However, there are instances where sensual enjoyment can reach such an intense level that it surpasses the boundaries of the physical senses. In these moments, the experience becomes so profound that it transcends the usual distinctions between subject, reason, and sense object. This heightened enjoyment leads to a merging of dualities, creating a moment of ecstasy where all distinctions blur, and one is immersed in a unified experience. However, there is a clear distinction between sensual enjoyment and aesthetic pleasure. “Moreover, even a sensual enjoyment could be so heightened that automatically a transcendence over subject, sense and sense object perception is achieved; in other words, all dualities are merged into one suspended moment of ecstasy” (Narasimhaiah, 1994, p. 52).

In this suspended moment of ecstasy, the individual may feel a sense of oneness with the experience, where the boundaries between self and others dissolve. While originating in sensual pleasure, this state of transcendence achieves a higher level of experience akin to the rapture often associated with aesthetic pleasure. This merging of dualities into a single, transcendent moment exemplifies the potential for sensual enjoyment to evolve into an experience that bridges the gap between the physical and the sublime. Within the classical Indian tradition, particularly in aesthetics and literary theory, the concept of *rasa*, seen as *ānanda* by Ānandavardhana, holds a central place. *Rasa* refers to the delightful essence or flavour of a work of art, particularly its emotional or aesthetic impact. The idea is articulated here and centres on the function of suggestion in conveying *rasa* and *ānanda*. Through suggestion, one can achieve the state of *rasa*, the state of bliss. The phrase,

“Only that, wherein all the beautifiers of the expressed sense and the expression exist with the single purpose of conveying sentiment that is *rasa* or *ānanda* and so on, is to be regarded as coming under the scope of suggestion, encapsulates a fundamental principle”.

It suggests that the highest form of artistic expression is one where every element of the work, language, imagery, rhythm, or structure harmonises to evoke a profound emotional response of "*rasa*" in the audience.

Ānandavardhana was the first Indian critic to state that a *rasa* cannot be directly expressed....By suggestion, the *rasa* arises without conscious realisation that a perception of the determinants, consequent, and transitory states of mind has preceded our experience. These have been denoted literally and are not unintended by the author. They are intended, however, only as being productive of the *rasa* (Ingalls, 1990, p. 19).

The beautifiers of the expressed sense refer to the various artistic elements and techniques the creator employs. These can include metaphor, simile, alliteration, rhythm, tone, and other literary devices or forms of expression that enhance the suggested quality of the work and ultimately lead to a state of bliss. The ultimate goal of this endeavour is to achieve *ānanda* through *rasa*.

5.4.1 The Quintessence of *Rasa* and *Ānanda* in *Dhvani* Theory

“The thesis of the *dhvani* theorist can be simply stated:- *dhvani* is the quintessence of poetry, and '*rasa*' is the quintessence of *dhvani*” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, xxxi). This is truly what most literary critics agree upon and do not question. *Rasa*, mainly as *ānanda*, plays a crucial role in inspiring poets. This explanation takes the words of the last line of the very first *kārikā* by Ānandavardhana in *Dhvanyāloka*, bringing bliss or delight to the mind of the sensitive reader through suggestion, is the highest goal for the *dhvani* theory. Ānandavardhana further states the significance of *rasa* and the way it is achieved in the next explanatory *śloka*.
“*rasabhāvādītātparyamāśritya viniveśanam, alaṇātīnām sarvāsāmalaṃkāratvasāadhanam* ||

(DL:2.5v).¹⁵² Only by employing figures, one and all, because the main purport of sentiment, emotion, *ānanda*, delight, bliss, etc., justifies their being regarded as sources of charm and as something valuable. What makes any figure of speech a figure of speech is that it is introduced depending on a *rasa*, *bhava*, or the like, which serves the sentence's purpose. Therefore, wherever a *rasa* or the like forms the primary purpose of a sentence, it is not included under the figure of speech *rasavat*¹⁵³ or any other but must be considered to fall under the suggestion domain itself. Ānandavardhana himself is seen slyly hinting at his name, using genuinely poetic expression, as observed in the wording of the first *kārikā*, which contains the word “*sahṛdayamanahprīti*,” a synonym for *ānanda*. Ānandavardhana himself equates the two, *rasa* and *ānanda*, as one. This *sahṛdayamanapriti*, which is *rasa*, he calls *ānanda*; *ānanda* is essentially the final result of the *dhvani*, and *rasa* and *ānanda* are the same. This can also be affirmed from the concluding line of *Dhvanyāloka*: “*ānandavardhana iti prathitābhīdhāṇaḥ*” (DL: 4.17v)¹⁵⁴ Increasing *ānanda*, bliss, joy or delight is the prime reason for the existence or proponent of this entire theory of *dhvani*. “The nature of *dhvani*, which is clearly at work in all great poetry, will be revealed for the delight of those readers who notice that it is clearly at work in all great poetry. Their initial observation of *dhvani* has brought them bliss, but this bliss will take permanent hold in their hearts (or minds) only by the precise definitions of *dhvani* that the author is about to reveal” (Ingalls, 1990, p. 68). Therefore, the whole purpose of Ānandavardhana for systematically defining the *dhvani* theory is to achieve *rasa* and increase

¹⁵² “रसभावादितात्पर्यमाश्रित्य विनिवेशनम् । अलङ्करीणां सर्वसामलङ्कारत्वसाधनम् ।” (DL:2.5v). It is only the employment of figures, one and all, in view of the main purport of sentiment, emotion, etc., that really justifies their being regarded as sources of charm (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 45).

What makes any figure of speech a figure of speech is the fact that it is introduced in dependence on a *rasa*, *bhāva*, or the like, which serves as the purport of the sentence (Ingalls, 1990, p. 240).

¹⁵³ Something like *rasa*, or something that mimics *rasa*, or has the same role and sentiments as *rasa*.

¹⁵⁴ आनन्दवर्धन इति प्रथिताभिधानः । Increasing *Ānanda*, bliss, joy or delight is the prime reason for the existence or proponent of this entire theory of *Dhvani*-(DL: 4.17v)

the portion of *ānanda* in everyone's life. This holistic approach to artistic creation and appreciation underscores the depth and sophistication of classical Indian aesthetic theory, emphasising the transformative power of art to elevate the human spirit. In the *dvitiya udyota* of *Dhvanyāloka*, Ānandavardhana also states that the text's quality depends entirely on its ability to convey *ānanda* through suggestion. The *kārikā* is given next: “*samarpakatvaṃ kāvyasya yattu sarvarasān prati, sa prasādo guṇo jñeyah sarvasādhāraṇakriyah*” (DL: 2.10).¹⁵⁵ That quality in poetry that throws itself open to the entry of all different sentiments of *rasas* may be taken as perspicuity. Its applicability is universal, like the *dhvani* theory. A poem's ability to communicate to the reader any *rasa*, or a poet's ability to speak to a reader through a poem conveying *rasa*, an ability essentially found operative in all *rasas* and styles, is called clarity (Ā., 1990, p. 259). *Rasa* or *ānanda* is the goal to be achieved through the endeavour of the *dhvani* theory. “*Rasa*, indeed, is the cornerstone of the arch of *dhvani*; it is, first and foremost, an aesthetic canon” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. xxx). The concepts of *rasa* and *dhvani* are foundational, and the experience of *ānanda* (bliss) is achieved through this intricate relationship. *Rasa* is a Sanskrit term that translates to “essence”, but Ānandavardhana uses the term as “*ānanda*”. In aesthetics, it refers to the emotional or aesthetic experience evoked by suggestion.

One may make a distinction in this matter of the primary goal being bliss; for the poet, delight is undoubtedly his goal, but it may also be achieved by fame, for the poet, as the verse famously proclaims, “for they say that fame has a heavenly reward.” One may take *svarga* to be heaven, either literally, understanding that fame leads one to heaven, or metaphorically, understanding

¹⁵⁵ “समर्पकत्वं काव्यस्य यत्तु सर्वरसान् प्रति । स प्रसादो गुणो ज्ञेयः सर्वसाधारणक्रियः ॥ DL:2.10॥” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 52). That quality in poetry by which poetry throws itself open to the entry of all sentiments(*rasas*) may be taken as perspicuity. Its applicability is universal (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, 53). A poem's ability to communicate [to the reader] any *rasa*, an ability which is found operative in all *rasas* and styles, is called clarity] (*prasāda*) (Ā., 1990, 259).

that fame gives its possessor a delight equal to that of heaven. For the audience, auditors or readers, both instruction and delight are indeed goals, for it has been said by the great sage, philosopher and poet Bhāmaha that “The study of good poetry imparts skill in *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *moksa*, and the arts; it gives both fame and joy” Bhāmaha 1.2, (Nair, 2014, p. 37). Nevertheless, without a doubt, joy is the chief goal which can be driven by all the instructions and conditions of Ānandavardhana. Compared with Ānandavardhana’s instruction, with the instructions to achieve all four aims¹⁵⁶ of human life, the rendered bliss is a far more critical goal. As Bhāmaha, a legendary Indian philosopher and poet, has already said, “The authors of great works, even after death, leave a body of undiminishable beauty with us in their poems” Bhāmaha 1.6, (Shrawan, 2019, p. 161). One may judge the author’s heart and sentiments from the place that the author attains in their hearts. The sense state he achieves is that he is a prince of connoisseurs. The exact use of “place” is found in the line of verse: “In battle, the highest place was Arjuna’s.” Ānandavardhana’s mention of his name encourages his audience and readers to study his work by increasing their respect and trust. Thus, the word “bliss” hints at the primary goal of the author, the poet, and the reader (Ā., 1990, p. 71). Ānandavardhana chose the word bliss to express the final goal of his work, which is *Ānanda*. His theory of suggestive meaning will give bliss to his audience and readers. His choice of words is appropriate because it hints at the thesis that poetry’s primary purpose is the bliss it provides rather than any instruction one may gain from it (Ingalls, 1990, p. 73-74).

It is this *rasa*, which is temporary delight or partial bliss, which acts as proof for individuals of the society that a state of bliss can exist, and if a state of bliss can exist, then the possibility of the permanence of this state of bliss also arises. “In showing the primary object to be bliss,

¹⁵⁶ *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*. The four *purusharthas* are agreed upon to be the four goals of human life, according to classical Indian philosophy (García & Miralles, 2024, p. 1).

which is nothing more than the relishing of *rasa*, he shows that of the three types of *dhvani*, it is the suggestion of *rasa* that is the most important and is the real soul of poetry” (Ā., 1990, p. 70).

5.4.2 *Raso Vai Sah: Ānandavardhana and Upaniśad*

That is when the question arises: if partial bliss can exist, why not its permanence? Why can a state exist full of continuous delight, pure joy and permanence of bliss? The partial bliss - *ānanda*, achieved through *rasa*, makes us strive for the state of *sacchitānanda*. The partial bliss achieved through *rasa* makes us strive for the permanence of bliss. The *anand* of *rasa* is the partial evidence for the existence of a state of bliss, and *sacchitānanda* is a state of permanence of bliss; it is also known by various other names such as *Mokṣa*, Liberation, Enlightenment, Revelation, Salvation, *apavarga*, *mukti*, *vimukti*, *kaivalya*, *nirvāṇa* or *vimokṣa*. Thus, impersonal, disinterested, and universal delight is exclusive to suggestion and is termed *rasa*. Similarly, spiritual or philosophical bliss is also termed *rasa* in the *Upaniśadic* language¹⁵⁷; it differs from *kāvyarasa* as it does not follow any prescribed course such as *yoga* but is more or less a result of the inborn taste of knowledge. “If poetry is thus *sui generis*, it is only because of *rasa*; this paramount *rasa* status must be emphasised in any adequate analysis of poetic beauty” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, xxxi). Similarly, the *rasa* or *ānanda* of *Upaniśads* also needs analysis for its achievement and realisation for ordinary humans through a more accessible path of suggestion. This suggestive analysis of *Upaniśadic* texts could lead to the birth of various paths to embrace the permanence of bliss. “*Dhvani* is not a cause of beauty; it is the beauty of poetry” (Ā., 1990, 77). The *rasa* of *Upaniśads* is achieved through *chittavṛtti nirodha*¹⁵⁸, getting rid of all the various forms of mind and restraining the mind from multiple thoughts; only then can one

¹⁵⁷ Taittiriya Upaniśad: 2.7.1.

¹⁵⁸ योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः, attaining oneness is only possible by restraining the mind-stuff (Chitta) from taking various forms (Vrittis) (Patañjali, 1892, p. 4)

achieve oneness with bliss. As the *Upaniṣads* also suggest the same, it is said in the *Brahmānanda Valli* of the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* in its first verse of the seventh chapter; “*raso vai saḥ | rasaṃ hyevāyaṃ labdhvānandī bhavati | 2.7.1*”¹⁵⁹ *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*. That¹⁶⁰ is indeed *rasa*. The one who attains this *rasa* becomes blissful. The phrase above originates from the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*, a part of the *Yajurveda*. This *Upaniṣad* delves deeply into the nature of *Brahman*, the ultimate reality, and provides profound insights into the spiritual pursuit of attaining ultimate bliss. The term “*raso vai saḥ*” can be translated to “That (*Brahman*) is indeed *rasa*.” The Sanskrit word “*rasa*” has multiple meanings, including essence, flavour, and joy. Verily, *Brahman* is no other than the delight behind existence. *Advaita Vedānta* posits that the individual self (*Ātman*) and the ultimate reality (*Brahman*) are fundamentally the same. The realisation of this non-duality is described as the highest goal of human life. The attainment of this realisation is synonymous with the experience of boundless joy and contentment. *Swami Vivekānanda*, a prominent spiritual leader and proponent of *Vedānta*, emphasised the importance of realising one's true nature as *Brahman*. He stated, “Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal” (*Vivekānanda & Patanjali*, 1899, p. 175). This divinity, or the realisation of *Brahman* as *rasa*, leads to a state of *ānanda*, as described in the *Upaniṣads*.

Sri Aurobindo, another renowned philosopher and mystic, elaborated on the concept of *ānanda* in his works. He explained that the bliss of *Brahman* is inherent in all aspects of life and can be experienced through spiritual awakening and inner realisation. In “The Life Divine,” he wrote, “The bliss of the *Brahman* is not an abstraction; it is a concrete, tangible reality that permeates

¹⁵⁹ रसो वै सः। रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वानन्दी भवति। २.७.१. Taittiriya Upaniṣad (Sarvānanda & Vivekānanda, 1970, p. 82).

¹⁶⁰ (*Brahman*) When discussing the *Upaniṣads* such terms are always interpreted in relation with *Brahman* and *Ātman* or *Jiva*. Therefore here That means *Brahman*, the Ultimate Reality.

every aspect of existence” (Aurobindo, 1990, p. 191). The phrase “*raso vai sah, rasam hyevāyaṃ labdhvānandī bhavati*”¹⁶¹ from the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* beautifully encapsulates the profound truth that *Brahman*, the ultimate reality, is the essence of all joy and that the realisation of this essence leads to a state of perpetual bliss. Indeed, the *Brahman*, called *rasa*, embodies bliss because this living soul attains that bliss and becomes blissful (Pandeyey, 2024, p. 23). This teaching serves as a cornerstone of *Advaita Vedānta* and inspires spiritual seekers to strive for the ultimate realisation of their true nature as embodiments of divine bliss. That is indeed *rasa*, indicating that even spiritual bliss can be termed *rasa*. The *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* further says that it is *ānanda* only; if not *ānanda*, then what is it? The Brahman itself is *Ānanda*. “*yadeṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt|eṣa hyevānanda yāti|yadā hyevaiṣa etasminnadṛśye' nātmye' nirukte 'nilayane 'bhayaṃ pratiṣṭhāṃ vindate.*” (*Taittiriya Upaniṣad*: 2.7.1).¹⁶² If this blissful *Brahman* were not bliss and not there, then who could survive and move forward without the goal of achieving bliss? Undoubtedly, this *Brahman* is the one true bliss. If there were not that (*Brahman*) bliss in the heaven of its heart, the ether within its being? *Brahman* is the fountain of bliss; for when the spirit or soul within us findeth *Brahman's* refuge and firm foundation in the invisible bodiless undefinable and unhoused eternal, he hath passed beyond the reach of fear, complete bliss.

This spiritual connection underscores the unique status of poetry in eliciting *Ānanda*, setting it apart from other forms of artistic expression. For the critic, *rasa* ensures aesthetic delight through a deep engagement with the work of art. Like the poet, the critic experiences *ānanda*

¹⁶¹ रसो वै सः। रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वानन्दी भवति। *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*.

¹⁶² यदेष्ट आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात्। एष ह्येवानन्द याति। यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन्नदृश्येऽनात्म्येऽनिरुक्तेऽनिलयनेऽभयं प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते।

(*Taittiriya Upaniṣad*: 2.7.1). If there were not that Bliss in the heaven of his heart, the ether within his being? It is He that is the fountain of bliss; for when the Spirit that is within us findeth his refuge and firm foundation in the Invisible Bodiless Undefinable and Unhoused Eternal, then he hath passed beyond the reach of Fear (Mishra & AuroBharati, 2024).

If this blissful Brahman were not there then who could survive and who could move forward. Undoubtedly this Brahman is the one who gives bliss (Pandeyey, 2024, p. 23).

through the appreciation and analysis of the poet's craft. This delight is impersonal and universal, allowing the critic to transcend subjective biases and engage with the poetry on a deeper level. The critic's role is to decode the *dhvani* (suggestion) embedded in the poetry, ultimately leading to the experience of *rasa*. This subtle interplay between what is said and what is suggested elevates the aesthetic experience, making the realisation of *ānanda* possible. *Rasa* as *ānanda* is integral to both the creation and appreciation of poetry. It inspires poets and ensures the aesthetic delight of critics, making it a cornerstone of poetic beauty.

The argument is that the *rasa* of Ānandavardhana and the *rasa* of *Upaniśads* are identical, with similar characteristics and necessary conditions. Both need philosophers or educated individuals who can realise knowledge through the experience of *ānanda* using *dhvani*. The experience of both the *rasas* and *ānanda* is transcendental in nature. The level of *ānanda's* experience in both stages is extraordinary. The only difference that exists between the two is that of temporality. The *ānanda* of Ānandavardhana is very much temporal and partial in existence; one can achieve this transcendental state of bliss, but only for a limited time. Once the experience of bliss ends, one goes back to the normal emotions and sentiments of ordinary beings and strives for the permanence of this bliss. "Abhinavagupta emphasises the communication of impact not as a delivery of some stored meaning in the text; rather, here the signs of communication transport the *sahṛdaya* into a state of heightened and true pleasure, or *saccidānanda* (Shrawan, 2019, p. 120).

5.5 Philosophical Significance of *Dhvani*

This entire chapter has been an attempt to bring out the philosophical significance of *dhvani*. The focus here is on the *dhvani* theory and its ability to give multiple meanings to singular sentences, statements or words when applied to philosophy. The goal of poetry and philosophy is ultimately the same attainment of *ānanda*. Applying the *dhvani* theory to philosophical text is experimented with to attain new meanings and an easier path to ultimate bliss. “The question as to what is the soul of poetry was well discussed and answered by these epoch-makers in the field of poetics” (Toshakhānī & Warikoo, 2009, p. 100). The question is whether it is also the soul of language and philosophy, or if it can help one reach the soul of philosophy. Thought is the soul and the essence of philosophy. Then, can the *dhvani*, when applied to philosophy, result in new thought using its methodology of giving *rasa* the highest priority? The answer is yes, as when the *dhvani* theory is applied to philosophy, it generates multiple thoughts from meanings derived through suggestion. The *dhvani* theory not only increases acceptance in society but also ensures that the acceptance is valued. As *dhvani* is applied to philosophy, it not only increases the multiplicity of interpretations but also limits it and gives all a tool to realise and appreciate the highest possible meaning of all truly. The concentration here is on the *dhvani* theory in practice, compared with other literary theories. It also responds to criticisms of the theory. It highlights its benefits, such as developing critical thinking ability, emotional intelligence, significant argumentation skills, brilliance in imagination and problem-solving ability. Ultimately, it demonstrates the significance of the *dhvani* Theory and the strengths and benefits it provides by enabling the multiplicity of meaning and interpretation in philosophy.

5.5.1 *Śabdārthadoṣa*: Superfluous in *Dhvanyārtha*

One of the final yet significant concepts of the thesis is the concept of *Śabdārthadoṣa*, which essentially completes the concept of *dhvani*. *Śabdārthadoṣa* refers to defects related to expression and meaning that obstruct aesthetic effectiveness and interpretive clarity. Sanskrit poetics classifies literary faults into two broad categories of *śabda-doṣa*, the defects of language or expression, and *artha-doṣa*, the defects of meaning or conceptual coherence (Parvin, 2026, p. 16). *Śabda-doṣa* includes problems such as grammatical inconsistency, unpleasant sound patterns, redundancy, obscurity, or awkward diction. *Artha-doṣa* includes logical contradiction, emotional impropriety, incoherence, irrelevance, or conceptual confusion. These defects are necessary for understanding an inferential meaning, but not at all necessary for realising the suggestive meaning. The lack of the need for *Śabdārthadoṣa* essentially completes the *dhvanyārtha*. Even if language is consistent and flawless or becomes mechanically flawed or conceptually inconsistent, *dhvani* and *dhvanyārtha* do not lose their effectiveness. The concept reflects the sophisticated literary criticism of Indian aesthetics, where poetic excellence requires both technical precision and experiential depth. Great literature achieves a balance between linguistic elegance, semantic richness, emotional universality, and suggestive subtlety. Philosophically, *śabdārthadoṣa* also demonstrates that communication is fragile. Meaning depends upon the careful coordination of language, intention, context, and interpretive sensitivity. To understand *dhvani*, there does not need to be a senseless meaning either in the *Abhidhā*/literal sense or in the *Lakṣana*/intended meaning; it exists regardless. The *dhvanyārtha* can exist with or without the author's intention; it can be born out of pure, spontaneous emotions or implemented literary brilliance. *Dhvani*, that is, *Vyanjana*, can exist even in an entirely sensible statement, which has no flaws but suggests something completely different. Ānandavardhana even states that even if there is any flaw in the statement, it does not

necessarily mean it is a statement with *dhvani* or suggestive meaning. Suggestions in language are a brilliant method of enabling others to interpret and understand meanings with their own scholarly ability and academic efforts. Ānandavardhana also clearly states in the *dvitiya udyota* that error does not necessitate *dhvani*, that usage of words with only a necessity of metaphorical application due to either one's inadequate education or want of a tag of being a genius does not come within the scope of suggestion. It cannot be considered a suggestion at all. Ānandavardhana states: “avyutpatteraśaktervā nibandho yaḥ skhaladgateḥ, śabdasya sa ca na jñeyāḥ sūribhirviṣayo dhvaneḥ” (DL: 2.32).¹⁶³ Ānandavardhana states that the usage of a word with faltering denotation, either because of the poet's lack of education or the want of the tag of being educated or accomplished or because of his lack of genius, should not be regarded by the learned as a way of suggestion or *dhvanyārtha* if a word that shifts from its principal or primary meaning is used out of lack of mature judgement or lack of skill, such a word is not considered anywhere in the province of the *dhvani* theory. That makes it clear that the error does not give birth to *dhvani*, but a studious attempt to provide a sentimental masterstroke through excellent meaning does. The employment of a term with an uncertain meaning, whether due to the poet's insufficient education or a deficiency in creativity, should not be viewed by scholars as a form of suggestion. Utilising words solely in a figurative sense because of limited education or a lack of brilliance does not fall under the concept of suggestion. When a poet employs a word whose meaning is ambiguous or unclear, whether it stems from a lack of formal education or an inherent deficiency in creative genius, it is vital for scholars and critics not to misinterpret this as a deliberate suggestion. A poet might unintentionally misuse a word due to unfamiliarity with its

¹⁶³ “अव्युत्पत्तेरशक्तेर्वा निबन्धो यः स्वलङ्घने । शब्दस्य स च न ज्ञेयः सूरिभिर्विषयो ध्वनेः ॥ DL:2.32 ॥ *Dhvanyāloka* The usage of a word with faltering denotation either because of the poet's want of education or because of his lack of genius, should not be regarded by the learned as a way of suggestion (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 105). If a word that shifts [from its primary meaning] (*skhaladgati*) is used out of lack of mature judgment (*avyatpatti*) or lack of skill, such [a word] too is not in the province of *dhvani* (Ā., 1990, p. 364).

precise definition or a gap in their intellectual or creative capabilities. This misuse should not be seen as an artistic or symbolic choice intended to convey a deeper meaning. The exclusive use of words in a metaphorical context, driven by the poet's insufficient educational background or a shortfall in creative brilliance, should not be conflated with the concept of suggestion. Suggestion in poetry typically implies a nuanced, intentional use of language designed to evoke specific thoughts, feelings, or images in the reader's mind. However, when a word is used metaphorically merely due to the poet's limited knowledge or lack of ingenuity, it does not carry the same weight or intention. Scholars must differentiate between genuine poetic suggestions and inadvertent linguistic errors to maintain the integrity of literary analysis and appreciation. Recognising this distinction ensures that the true intent and skill of the poet are accurately interpreted and valued. Ānandavardhana further states, while explaining the importance of the quality of *dhvani*, that clarity and principality of the suggested meaning should be a priority for a *dhvanyartha* to become a primary meaning. It is the same for any statement; according to him, for any expression to become a *dhvanivākya*¹⁶⁴, it has to consist of *dhvanyartha* as the suggested meaning as the primary meaning or the highest meaning; if it is not so, then it is not *dhvanivākya*. Ānandavardhana states “*sarveṣveva prabhedeṣu sphuṭatvenāvabhāsanam, yadvayaṅganyasyāṅginbhūtasya tatpūrṇa dhvanilakṣaṇam*” (DL: 2.33).¹⁶⁵ The full definition of the *dhvani* theory, which is the suggestion in all its types and varieties, includes clarity of manifestation and the principal importance of the suggested meaning or element. The transparent

¹⁶⁴ A statement consisting of suggestive meaning that has *dhvanyartha* as the primary meaning. Any statement that elucidates *dhvanyartha* as the primary meaning becomes *Dhvani Vākya*, any poetry that elucidates *dhvanyartha* as the primary meaning becomes *Dhvani Kavya*.

¹⁶⁵ “सर्वेष्वेव प्रभेदेषु स्फुटत्वेनावभासनम् । यद्वयङ्गन्यस्याङ्गिभूतस्य तत्पूर्णं ध्वनिलक्षणम् ॥ DL: 2.33 ॥” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 104). “The full definition of suggestion in all its varieties includes clarity of manifestation and the principal importance of the suggested element” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 105).

The clear appearance of the suggested sense as the predominant sense of the passage is the essential mark of *dhvani* in all its varieties (Ā., 1990, p. 366).

and clear appearance of the suggested meaning as the predominant sense of the passage's meaning is the essential mark of the *dhvani* theory in all its appearances, types, specifications and varieties. The suggested sense of meaning appearing clearly as the predominant sense of meaning is on the principle that when told to bring a verbal abstract, one brings a substance qualified by that verbal activity adhering to the essential mark of the *dhvani* theory, that is, the whole nature of *dhvani*. Or we may take “appearance” to mean the perception of the *dhvani* theory, which it cannot be; only the appearance of suggestion is not enough to be a *dhvanikāvya*. The mark, or proof of the *dhvani* theory, is complete, for it informs one of the whole nature of *dhvani* as suggested. Or, through perception, it is the mark of *dhvani* because the mark of *dhvani* can only be ascertained by the perception of the suggested sense of meaning.

5.5.2 Understanding *Sahṛdaya* as a Philosopher

Although an argument was made above to bring *dhvani* under the domain of philosophy, the one element that makes *dhvani* uniquely philosophical in nature is the concept of *sahṛdaya*. Ānandavardhanan proves this point in his second *udṇya* when he states how *Śringāra rasa* can be attained: “*dingātram tucyate yena vyutpannānām sacetasām, buddhirāsāditālokā sarvatraiva bhaviṣyati*” (*DL*: 2.13).¹⁶⁶ According to Ānandavardhana, he only gives a broad indication here because it should be enough to educate refined critics. The minds of the refined critics will have received the light or will see the light of suggestion, enabling them to guess right everywhere, every time. “A mere indication will be given here, by which the minds of persons of education and taste may be furnished with a criterion for all other cases” (Ingalls, 1990, p. 266). So, it is not at all necessary to be a critic first to understand *dhvani*, but a keen observer who can catch

¹⁶⁶ दिङ्गात्रं तुच्यते येन व्युत्पन्नानां सचेतसाम् । बुद्धिरासादितालोका सर्वत्रैव भविष्यति ॥ Hence their broad indication only will be given here. But it should be enough to educate refined critics. Their minds will have received the light which would enable them to guess right everywhere -*DL*: 2.13.

every indication, a scholarly linguist who can interpret all the words and a thinking philosopher who can question and understand every aspect of the text; that is what makes a *sahṛdaya*. Even in the *kārikā* (above) of Ānandavardhana, it has been stated that an individual with education, a keen sense of observation to catch every indication, and good taste must arrive at a proper suggestive meaning. “Of sensitive readers ‘*sahṛdayanām*’, The word *sahṛdaya*, “having their hearts with it”, denotes persons who are capable of identifying with the subject matter, as the mirror of their hearts has been polished by the constant study and practice of poetry, and who respond to it sympathetically in their hearts. As has been said, “The realisation of that object which finds sympathy in the heart is the origin of *rasa*. The body is pervaded by it as dry wood by fire” (Ā., 1990, p. 70). So, if not a critic, to see a *sahṛdaya* as a sensitive reader, a *sahṛdaya* can be a philosopher, as reading and writing based on it, reading and answering thinkers and philosophers of the past, is considered one of the most crucial tasks by a philosopher.

To equate this concept to philosophers, one can consider how philosophers, much like refined critics, develop a deep, nuanced understanding of their field through extensive study and contemplation. Philosophers seek to illuminate their minds by exploring fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language. This illumination equips them to discern subtle differences between significant and insignificant elements within complex arguments and ideas. Philosophers can often derive profound insights from minimal external input, like refined critics. “Philosophy is the tenacious attempts of reasoning men to think through the most fundamental issues of life, to reach reasonable conclusions on first and last things to suggest worthwhile goals that can command the loyalty of individuals and groups” (Aggarwal, 2010, p. 53). Education, experience and thinking allow philosophers to understand and apply abstract concepts quickly and accurately. Philosophy is also known as the “the science

and criticism of cognition” (Samuel, 2021, p. 4) so critical evaluation through cognitive abilities becomes a prescribed job of every philosopher. Therefore, any ability of a refined or sensitive critic is a given ability of a philosopher, as criticism of cognition is the job of philosophers. This is akin to the refined critic's ability to be educated by mere indication. Ānandavardhana also states that any *sahṛdaya* who understands *dhvani* must also be able to scrutinise carefully, keenly recognise, and thoughtfully interpret a word with a suggestive meaning. He clearly says that in the very first chapter and the eighth *kārikā*. It can be understood through the *kārikā* here “*so'rthastadvaya kti sāmāthyayogī śabdaśca kaścana, yatnataḥ pratyabhijñey au tau śabdārthom mahākaveḥ*” (DL: I.8).¹⁶⁷ A suggestive meaning and that rare word which possesses the power of conveying it, only these two deserve the scrutiny of a first-rate poet, so even for a great poet or a *sahṛdaya*, the process of arriving at the suggestive meaning is genuinely the same as a philosopher's quest to arrive at new knowledge. That means the job of a *sahṛdaya* is essentially the same as the job of a philosopher. Ānandavardhana further clarifies that meaning always refers to a specific thing in existence; it is usually not concerned with something non-existent or non-literal. But when it comes to the *dhvani* theory, the literal sense of the meaning is ignored; it is not considered an essential meaning; therefore, such a word might be necessary, which can convey the suggestive meaning and be able to contain the power of suggestion. It is, therefore, the task and duty of the *sahṛdaya* to employ words with a specific meaning and instil in them the power of suggestion by enhancing the strength of the word with the potency of *dhvani*. This task is very similar to that of philosophers, who employ meaning to different words and provide the word with its strengths, even through common sense, inference, or rigorous studies. Ānandavardhana also explains the eighth *kārikā* of the first chapter, which

¹⁶⁷ सोऽर्थस्तद्वयं क्ति सामर्थ्ययोगी शब्दश्च कश्चन | यत्नतः प्रत्यभिज्ञेयौ तौ शब्दार्थौ महाकवेः || That meaning, and that rare word which possesses the power of conveying it, only these two deserve the careful scrutiny of a first-rate poet -DL: I.8.

states the task and duty of a *sahṛdaya*. With this *kārikā*, the definition of the work or duty of a great poet or a *sahṛdaya* is prescribed. One can find the explanation below.

*Sam vyaṅgayo 'rthamtadvyaktisāmarthyayogī śabdaśca kaścana, na sarvaḥ
tāveva śabdārtho mahākaveḥ pratyabhijñeyau, vyaṅgayavyaṅjakābhyāmeva hi
suprayuktābhyām mahākavitvalābho mahākavīnām, na
vācyavācakaracanāmātreṇa.*¹⁶⁸

Ānandavardhana elaborates further on what he means when he says ‘that meaning’; he refers to the implicit meaning which needs understanding and that rare word which possesses the power of conveying it. This points out that it is not any and every word recorded in the dictionary that can deliver *dhvanyartha*. “The status of first-rate poets is achieved only by the effective employment of suggested meanings and suggestive expressions and not by a mere use of conventional meanings and words” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 17). He states further that by using the word ‘*pratyabhijñeyau*’, he would indicate that although poetry may flash forth of its own accord in the way described, poetry comes to the man of genius, and at that only sometimes; still, the meaning increases in a thousand ways if that man will keep considering the poem carefully, thinking, this should be better like this, i.e., one should say such and such, not such and such. in this way always seeking the suggestive word and sense (Ā., 1990, p. 125). Education, linguistic knowledge, critical thinking, a sense of emotional care, the study of rhetoric, and mastering dialectics and logic might all be necessary conditions to be a great poet or a *sahṛdaya*.

¹⁶⁸ सं व्यङ्ग्यो ऽर्थस्तद्व्यक्तिसामर्थ्ययोगी शब्दश्च कश्चन, न सर्वः तावेव शब्दार्थो महाकवेः प्रत्यभिज्ञेयौ । व्यङ्ग्यव्यञ्जकाभ्यामेव हि सुप्रयुक्ताभ्यां महाकवित्वलाभो महाकवीनां, न वाच्यवाचकरचनामात्रेण । (Abhyankar, 1974, p. 16). 'That meaning' refers to the implicit and 'that rare word which possesses the power of conveying it' points out that it is not any and every word (recorded in the dictionary). Such a word and such a meaning - only these two deserve the careful recognition of a first-rate poet. The status of first-rate poets is achieved only by the effective employment of suggested meanings and suggestive expressions and not by a mere use of conventional meanings and conventional words. (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 17)

These things are also part of being a philosopher. A philosopher hones all of these abilities if one is not already occupied with them and tries to achieve them; these abilities are the abilities of a philosopher. Therefore, it is argued that *sahṛdaya* is essentially a philosopher. Illuminating the mind of philosophers and refined or sensitive critics involves internal development and self-education. It requires cultivating a keen sense of discernment and an ability to see beyond superficial appearances to the core of the matter.

As *Mahārṣi* Veda Vyāsa said in the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* as well, it is the knowledge of the *śāstrās* that brings light to our mind; this light of knowledge teaches and instils in us ‘*Vivek*’ or wisdom, and this wisdom gives us illuminated or enlightened mind. The definition of philosophy itself is love for wisdom or love of wisdom, so it is essential for a philosopher to strive for wisdom. The *śloka* from *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* can be referred to. “*andaṃ tama ivājñānaṃ dīpavaccha indriyodbhavaṃ, yathā sūryastathā jñānaṃ yad viprarṣe vivekajam*” ||62||*Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* (Vyāsa, 2002, 547).¹⁶⁹

According to the *Bādarāyana Mahārṣi* Veda Vyāsa, the lack of knowledge or the absence of knowledge is like pure pitch-black darkness or the positive existence of ignorance.

Another reason why the role of a *sahṛdaya* is vital for Ānandavardhana is that, according to him, the *dhvani* theory is different from all other ways of conveying a meaning, and “... cannot be included in them¹⁷⁰ because the life of poetic qualities and figures lies in the nature of the word and literal sense, whereas the essence of *dhvani* lies in the nature of the suggestor and the suggested, which are different from that” (Ā., 1990, p. 134). Ānandavardhanana also says that a *sahṛdaya* needs to be able to see the larger picture and must be able to look beyond the

¹⁶⁹ “अन्दं तम इवाज्ञानं दीपवच्छ इन्द्रियोद्भवं | यथा सूर्यस्तथा ज्ञानं यद् विप्रर्षे विवेकजम्” ||62||*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. Oh the learned saint! Lack of knowledge is pure pitch darkness. The knowledge obtained by reading Shastras is like the light from a lamp, which drives the darkness away (for one to attain wisdom). Knowledge obtained through wisdom is like the light of the Sun it will drive away darkness in totality. (Vyāsa, 2002, p. 547)

¹⁷⁰ *Abhidā* and *lakṣanā*, the other two accepted ways of conveying meaning in Indian linguistic philosophy.

limitations of the literal meanings and literal contexts of the words. In the twelfth *kārikā* of the first *uddiyota*, he states that the suggested sense of meaning can only be understood when one looks beyond the literal meaning of the word or statement. One needs to be able to look beyond. Only when one can look beyond the literal can one be capable enough to understand *dhvanyartha* as the *kārikā* says, “*tadvatsacetāsāṃ so'rtho vācyārthavimukhātmanām, buddhau tattvārthadarśinyāṃ jhaṭityevāvabhāsate*” (DL: I.12).¹⁷¹ Here, Ānandavardhana clearly states and justifies the need to look beyond for meaning away from the traditional sense of meaning. He states that the suggested meaning flashes suddenly across the truth-perceiving or truth-seeking minds of perceptive and observant critics when they turn away from the literal meaning when they can ignore it and look beyond it for something more profound. “The suggested sense (of meaning) flashes forth instantly in the minds of intelligent auditors who are averse to the literal sense and (are) in a quest of the reed(impressionable) meaning” (Ā., 1990, p. 130). *Sahṛdaya* needs to have the intelligence and brilliance to search for meaning in a statement beyond its words, beyond its literal meaning and must achieve a goal which one does not even know exists. Philosophers like *sahṛdayas* are constantly looking beyond the limited, and they are always working for the greater good, looking at the larger picture and reading between the lines; they are also like *sahṛdaya* who are averse to the literal sense of meaning and look beyond it for understanding and finding something more.

The term illuminated minds suggests individuals who have achieved high intellectual and spiritual enlightenment concerning poetry and literature, according to Ānandavardhana. These individuals can see beyond surface appearances and grasp deeper truths. Their illumination often

¹⁷¹ तद्वत्सचेतसां सोऽर्थो वाच्यार्थविमुखात्मनाम् । बुद्धौ तत्त्वार्थदर्शिन्यां झटित्येवावभासते So also that suggested meaning flashes suddenly across the truth-perceiving minds of perceptive critics when they turn away from the literal meaning -DL: I.12.

comes from rigorous intellectual training and profound personal insight. In this sense, they are akin to philosophers who seek wisdom and understanding through contemplation, study, and dialogue. Ānandavardhana believed that illuminated minds possess a heightened awareness and knowledge of more profound truths because of the blessing of Goddess *Sarasvatī*, the goddess of knowledge. The presence of *Sarasvatī* in their minds gives them intellectual and spiritual insights and allows them to see beyond surface appearances and grasp fundamental principles. Being in the presence of *Sarasvatī*, that is, knowledge, parallels the philosophical journey of seeking wisdom, self-awareness, and a deeper understanding of the world. Illuminated minds apply their insights to various domains, including art, literature, science, and ethics, much like philosophers apply their methods to different branches of inquiry. According to Ānandavardhana, a *sahṛdaya* has to possess *Sarasvatī*, that is knowledge. Without *Sarasvatī*, which means knowledge in one's life, one cannot bring sentiments to words, ideas to reality, and suggestions to statements. Ānandavardhana's statement in the sixth stanza of the first chapter can be seen below. “*Sarasvatī svādu tadarthavastu niṣṣyandamānā mahatām kavīnām, alokasāmānyamabhivyanakti' parisphurantam pratibhāviṣeṣam*” (DL: I.6).¹⁷² The speech of first-rate poets, great poets, or brilliant, accomplished poets constantly streams forth that sweet content of suggestion revealing their extraordinary genius, which is as unearthly as it is ever bright because of the presence of *Sarasvatī* that is knowledge in their meaning. It is as if *Sarasvatī* is herself working with these great poets; in pouring forth through their works, this sweet matter filled with worthy meaning felt through the emotions and their flavours reveals a remarkable, vibrant genius *rasa*, which is superhuman. The speech of first-rate poets¹⁷³ which

¹⁷² सरस्वती स्वादु तदर्थवस्तु निःस्पन्दमाना महतां कवीनाम् । अलोकसामान्यमभिव्यनक्ति' परिस्फुरन्तं प्रतिभाविशेषम् ॥१.६॥ The speech of first-rate poets streaming forth that sweet content reveals clearly their extraordinary genius which is as unearthly as it is ever bright -DL: I.6.

¹⁷³ The first rate-poet is a not so perfect translation of महतां कवीनाम्, the correct translation can be great poets, or Brilliant and accomplished poets.

streams forth such subjects as are full of the said meaning will reveal most clearly the extraordinary genius of the poets, which appears unearthly and ever-bright. Poetry, at its best, is a philosophical endeavour. It examines the nature of existence, the human condition, and the mysteries of life and death. Poets often grapple with questions of meaning and purpose, using metaphor and symbolism to communicate their insights. They explore how language can reveal and obscure truth, a central concern in many philosophical traditions. Their work embodies the essence of philosophy: a relentless pursuit of wisdom, a deep engagement with fundamental questions, a commitment to exploring the profound mysteries of human existence, and to achieve the ultimate goal of “*Satchitānanda*”¹⁷⁴. They continue the age-old philosophical quest for truth and meaning through various methods and mediums.

In Ānandavardhana's philosophy, a “*sahṛdaya*” refers to a sensitive reader or connoisseur who can fully appreciate and understand the suggested meaning in poetry. A *sahṛdaya* is, therefore, essentially a philosopher in the classical sense because of being an ideal reader or audience with a questioning mind and specific qualities that enable them to engage deeply with poetry. These qualities are all similar to those of a philosopher; they include sensitivity to language, linguistics and aesthetics, emotional intelligence and empathy, philosophical, spiritual, cultural and literary knowledge, ability to imagine logically and intuit meanings, and finally, the capacity for critical thinking, logical analysis and interpretation. Ānandavardhana considered the *sahṛdaya* an essential component in the poetic experience, a *sahṛdaya* being a philosopher and philosophising being the method to arrive at a meaning; philosophy also becomes an essential component. In essence, the *sahṛdaya*, through philosophising, is receptive and discerning to the poet's intended

¹⁷⁴ *Sat* is existence, *cit* is conscious or consciousness and *Ānanda* is bliss. Continuous pure consciousness of existence of permanent bliss. Permanence of bliss, pure joy. The state of experiencing the *SatchitĀnanda* is known by several names in classical Indian philosophy, primarily as one of the goals of liberation. It is also known and understood by several other names such as *ātamagnyana*, *brahmajnana*, Liberation, Enlightenment, *kaivalya*, *nirvāṇa*, Complete Knowledge, etc (Porel, 2026, p. 316).

and suggested meaning and the emotional nuances of the poem, thereby completing the poetic experience. *sahṛdaya*, like a philosopher in the classical sense, possess a deep understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of poetry and aesthetics, which enables them to engage with poetry on a profound level. One can draw many parallels between the qualities of a *sahṛdaya* and those of a philosopher. A *sahṛdaya* and a philosopher engage in critical thinking, analysing complex ideas, and interpreting meaning to uncover deeper meanings and understand complex concepts. Philosophers like *sahṛdaya* require emotional intelligence to understand human experiences, emotions, and perspectives. *Sahṛdaya* and philosophers employ empathy to comprehend different viewpoints, cultural contexts, and artistic expressions. Both possess an analytical mind, breaking down complex concepts, identifying patterns and relationships, and verifying complex ideas into their constituent parts. *Sahṛdayas* and philosophers share a passion for knowledge, seeking to understand the world, human nature, and the arts. Both are open to new ideas, perspectives, and experiences, allowing them to grow in understanding and wisdom. *Sahṛdayas* and philosophers engage in reflective thinking, contemplating their thoughts, biases, and assumptions. Both value nuance and subtlety in meaning, recognising that truth often lies in complexity and ambiguity. *Sahṛdayas* and philosophers strive to grasp things' essence or underlying reality, whether in poetry or philosophical concepts. Ultimately, the *sahṛdaya* and the philosopher seek wisdom to deepen their understanding of the world and human experience. A *sahṛdaya* interprets poetry to uncover its suggested meaning, while a philosopher interprets philosophical texts to understand their underlying ideas. A *sahṛdaya* analyses complex poetic metaphors, while a philosopher analyses complex philosophical concepts like justice or morality. A *Sahṛdaya* empathises with the poet's emotions, while a philosopher empathises with different perspectives on human experience. Ānandavardhana describes the *Sahṛdaya* as one who "enters

into the mind of the poet", similar to how philosophers seek to understand the thoughts and ideas of other persons.

By recognising these parallels, we can see how the concept of *sahyodaya* can be equated with the qualities and characteristics of a philosopher, highlighting the importance of critical thinking, empathy, and analytical skills in artistic appreciation and philosophical inquiry. A person who seeks wisdom, knowledge, and understanding through critical thinking is a Philosopher. *Sahyodayas* and philosophers strive to understand different perspectives, emotions, and experiences through wisdom. Each of these roles involves critical thinking, deep analysis, and a quest for understanding, which are core components of philosophical practice. They are all essential behind the same goal. The same goal is *rasa* or *ānanda*.

5.6 Conclusion

Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* and deconstruction focuses on the meaning of the language of literature. Ānandavardhana holds that enumerable *dhvani* (suggestions) can lead to enumerable meanings, and through *dhvani* (suggestion), the meaning of a text can be differed and deferred endlessly (Shrawan, 2019, p. 4). As already suggested through the *dhvani* theory, the suggested meaning is more critical than the literal meaning even in philosophy, as it is the suggested meaning that creates the emotional resonance or echoes in the reader, which leads to the birth of new thought. These new thoughts can lead one to ultimate bliss through an aesthetic path unlike any pre-existing paths. This new path born through the priority given to the highest *rasa* could help one achieve the same goal as *ānanda* through a path with fewer hardships and thorns. "The poet expresses an idea in a sentence, and to the reader's mind flashes an idea not expressed by words, but implied or suggested by them" (Pī, 2006, p. 7). This connotation is created through suggestive language, allowing the reader to fill in the gaps and create their

interpretation of the work. *Dhvani* is often used to analyse Indian poetry, particularly in studying Sanskrit literature. It has also been applied to other forms of literature, including modern fiction and poetry. The theory has influenced the development of Indian aesthetics and has significantly impacted the study of literature and poetry worldwide. “Ānandavardhana establishes the concept of *dhvani* as the soul of poetry, and his work ‘*Dhvanyāloka*’ remains outstanding” (Panda, 2008, p. 7). Most thinkers and architects of literary criticism who arrived before Ānandavardhana mainly focused on the *Alamkaras* in language. Still, Ānandavardhana pointed out and tried to prove that *dhvani* is more significant in language. “Ānandavardhana's view that *alamkaras* are those elements which, depending upon word and meaning, minister to the generation of literary charm, being external embellishments; the central element is *dhvani*, which is the soul of a literary composition and also certifies the creative use of language in literature” (Shrawan, 2019, p. 23). The theory suggests that language is not just a collection of words but a medium through which the reader can experience emotions, ideas, and thoughts. This means that literature can explore complex concepts and emotions in a way impossible through other mediums. “By engaging with literature on all three levels, readers can better understand the text and the ideas it presents” (D’cruz, 2023, p. 01). This deeper engagement can lead to a more profound appreciation of philosophy and a greater understanding of the human experience.

Dhvani also identifies multiple levels of meaning in a philosophical work. It suggests that a philosophical work has both a literal meaning and a suggested meaning and that the suggested meaning is more important than the literal meaning. Another benefit of the *dhvani* is that it allows multiple meanings and interpretations. The theory suggests that literature is not fixed in meaning but open to interpretation. This means that different readers can interpret the exact text differently, depending on their own experiences and perspectives. As seen before with the

prasthāntrayi. *Dhvani* suggests that literature has multiple layers of meaning, and each reader can interpret the text differently. “He holds that *dhvani* is indicated by composition, phonemes, words, sentences, construction, case termination, personal termination, number, affix and compounds” (Shrawan, 2019, p. 24). This means that philosophical texts can explore various ideas, ideologies and perspectives and challenge and expand our understanding of the world. *Dhvani* can help develop critical thinking skills through its multiple perspectives on one specific thing. The theory encourages readers to engage with philosophy on numerous levels and interpret the philosophical text; this requires them to think critically about the text and develop their ideas and perspectives. Engaging with philosophical texts allows readers to build critical thinking skills, including analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. These skills can be applied to other areas of life, such as work, relationships, and politics. By enabling more profound engagement with philosophy and literature, allowing for a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations, and developing critical thinking skills, *dhvani* can help us better understand ourselves and the world around us.

As argued above, many contemporary methods of literary analysis are very impressive, but the *dhvani* leaves an utterly different mark. As Sharma rightly says, “Speculations on poetics in India reached the zenith with the promulgation of the *dhvani* theory by Ānandavardhana” (Sharma, 1968, p. XI). *Dhvani* has significantly contributed to literary criticism and is the primary method that can take one to the highest meaning when applied to philosophy. When talking about *rasa*, the suggestion's goal is to reach the highest *rasa*, which is the highest point of *Ānanda*. The goal of classical Indian philosophy is similar to that of suggestion or *Dhvani*; it is the permanence of bliss, known as *Sachitānanda*, *Mokṣa*, *Mukti*, *Kaivalya*, etc, in Indian philosophy. As a result, when the *dhvani* theory is applied to philosophy, the goal naturally

should be attaining the highest possible *ānanda*, so any meaning that helps one reach there would be the right philosophical path for the individual. One example from the philosophical text based on ethics called *Cānakya Niti*, written by *Koutilya Cānakya*, is stated “*tyajeta ekaṃ kulasyārthe grāmasyārthe kulaṃ tyajeta, grāmaṃ janapadasyārthe ātmārthe pṛthvīm tyajeta.*”¹⁷⁵ The literal meaning of this statement would be to sacrifice a single member to save the entire family, sacrifice a family to save a whole village, sacrifice a village to save an entire country and sacrifice the world to save yourself. This literally means one should be sacrificed for the sake of the family, the family should be sacrificed for the sake of the village, the village should be sacrificed for the sake of the country, and everything should be sacrificed for the sake of the self. However, a new and unique meaning emerges when *dhvani* is applied to this philosophical text. The suggestive meaning arrived using the *dhvani* theory would be to be so brave and selfless that one can sacrifice oneself for the sake of the family, sacrifice your own family for the sake of the village, sacrifice your village for the sake of your country, and for the ‘*Ātmajñāna*’ that is complete knowledge or ultimate knowledge, sacrifice the entire world. Thus, the *dhvani* theory becomes a valuable and significant part of axiology in Indian philosophy, focusing on moral values and suggesting the prescriptive responsibilities of human existence.

Even according to Ānandavardhana, the foremost among the learned were the philosophers and grammarians because philosophy and grammar lie at the root of all studies. Philosophy was considered the mother of all knowledge, the way of existence, the way of life, the way of worship and the way of thought, and the grammarians figured out a way to pass all that

¹⁷⁵ “त्यजेत एकं कुलस्यार्थे ग्रामस्यार्थे कुलं त्यजेत | ग्रामं जनपदस्यार्थे आत्मार्थे पृथ्वीं त्यजेत || ३.१० ||” (Chanakya, 2024) (Gupt, 2022, 10). One should be sacrificed for the sake of the family, sacrifice the family for the sake of the village, sacrifice the village for the sake of the country and sacrifice everything for the sake of the self. (Gupt, 2022, 10). Give up a member to save a family, a family to save a village, a village to save a country, and the country to save yourself (Chanakya, 2024).

knowledge to each other and generations ahead by creating a valid way of communication. Grammarians and philosophers refer to articulate letters that deliver suggestive meaning by the term *dhvani* or Suggester, but that is because both the words that produce the *dhvanyartha* and the meaning itself are *dhvani*. The element of suggestion is common to both, not only the word and its meaning but its essential verbal power and also that which is usually referred to by the term has been given the identical designation to *dhvani* by other learned men whose insight into the fundamental truth of knowledge and the world is profound and who are also the followers of the principles laid down by the scholars. Ānandavardhana states while explaining this in the following.

“*sūribhiḥ kathita' iti vidvadupajñeyamuktiḥ, na tu yathākathañcitpravṛtteti śratipādyate, prathame hi vidvāṃso vaiyākaraṇāḥ, vyākaraṇamūlatvātsarvavidyānām, te ca śrūyamāṇeṣu varṇeṣu dhvanirīti vyavaharanti, tathāivānyaistanmatānumāribhiḥ sūribhiḥ kāvyatattvārtha darśibhir vācyavā cakasaṃmiśraḥ, śabdātmā kānyamīti vyapadeśyo vyañjakatv asāmyā dunirityuktaḥ, na caivaṃv idhasya dhvanerv akṣyamāṇa prabhedatadbh edasaṃ kalanayā, mahāviṣayasya yatprakāśanam tadarprasiddhā laṅkāraviśeṣamātra pratipādanena tulyamīti tadbhāvitacetasāṃ yukta eva saṃrambhah, na ca teṣu kathañcidī prnyayā kaluṣitaśemuṣikatvamāviṣkaraṇīyam*” (DL: I.13v).¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ “सूरिभिः कथित' इति विद्वदुपज्ञेयमुक्तिः, न तु यथाकथञ्चित्प्रवृत्तेति श्रुतिपाद्यते । प्रथमे हि विद्वांसो वैयाकरणाः, व्याकरणमूलत्वात्सर्वविद्यानाम् । ते च श्रूयमाणेषु वर्णेषु ध्वनिरिति व्यवहरन्ति । तथैवान्यैस्तन्मतानुसारिभिः सूरिभिः काव्यतत्त्वार्थदर्शिभिर्वाच्यवाचकसम्मिश्रः शब्दात्मा कान्यमिति व्यपदेश्यो व्यञ्जकत्वसाम्या दुनिरित्युक्तः । न चैवंविधस्य ध्वनेर्वक्ष्यमाणप्रभेदतद्भेदसङ्कलनया महाविषयस्य यत्प्रकाशनं तदप्रसिद्धा लङ्कारविशेषमात्र प्रतिपादनेन तुल्यमिति तद्भावितचेतसां युक्त एव संरम्भः । न च तेषु कथञ्चिदी प्रयया कलुषितशेषमुषीकत्वमाविष्करणीयम् ।” The expression, is designated by the learned” brings out the fact that this designation was first devised by the learned and that it has not gained currency in a haphazard fashion. The foremost among the learned are grammarians because grammar lies at the root of all studies. They indeed refer to articulate letters by the term *Dhvani* or Suggester. In the same way, since the element of suggestion is common (to both), not only the word and its meaning but its essential verbal power and also that which is usually referred to by the term poetry, has been given the same designation, viz., *dhvani* by other learned men whose insight into the fundamental truth about poetry is profound and who are followers of the principles laid down by grammarians -DL: I.13v.

When [Kārikā 1.13] says “which the wise call *dhvani*,” this means that the term was invented by men of knowledge and that it has not been put into use inadvisedly. The preeminent men of knowledge are the grammarians, for all the sciences rest upon grammar; and they gave the name *dhvani* to the sounds of speech that are heard. In the same

While explaining the thirteenth *kārikā* in the first *uddyota*, Ānandavardhana uses the phrase “which the wise call *dhvani*,” this means Ānandavardhana is not the founder of the term and that the term was invented by men of knowledge and men of wisdom, and that the term has not been put into use inadvisedly or unnecessarily, even by Ānandavardhana himself. The preeminent men of knowledge at the time of Ānandavardhana were grammarians, for all the sciences, all the knowledge, and all the philosophies rest upon grammar, and it is them the grammarians who gave the name ‘*dhvani*’ to the sounds of speech that are heard and convey the profound meanings through connotative methods. In the same manner, other wise men and scholars, who knew the true essence of knowledge as thought and the true nature of poetry as *rasa*, have followed the example of the grammarians by giving the title ‘*dhvani*’ the significance and recognition so that the verbal entity which contains a mixture of denotative, connotative, denoted and connoted elements and which designates and delivers *rasa* in every mind. “They did so because of the similarity to acoustical *dhvani* in its being a manifestor of suggested meanings just as the heard sounds manifest words (Ā., 1990, p. 169). “*Dhvani* by other learned men whose insight into the fundamental truth about poetry is profound and who are followers of the principles laid down by grammarians” (Krishnamoorthy, 1999, p. 29).

This way of recognising the highest meaning in poetry, language, and philosophy not only stops misadventures of meanings regarding the suggested meaning but also gives the reader and the audience a clear, distinct goal to achieve through the process of the *dhvani* theory. Thus, the *dhvani* theory becomes a significant part of one’s understanding of the spiritual path, recognition of the philosophical journey, or embracing and finding one’s ideologies. The concept of the

manner other wise men, who knew the true essence of poetry, have followed the example of the grammarians by giving the title *dhvani* to that verbal entity which contains a mixture of denotative and denoted elements and which is designated as “a poem.” They did so because of the similarity [to acoustical *dhvani*] in its being a manifestor [of suggested meanings just as the heard sounds manifest words] (Ā., 1990, p. 169).

highest meaning being the *dhvanyartha* negates all the negative interpretations and disadvantages of a multiplicity of meanings. Only those meanings are considered the highest, which takes one to the highest *ānanda*. When *rasa* or *ānanda* is the goal, all the other meanings that can be derived using the same statement or expression are ignored and considered insignificant. Thus eliminating the problem of having too many meanings. Even when *Dhvani* is applied to philosophical texts, the same principle applies: only those meanings are considered highest, leading one to the permanence of bliss or constant *Ānanda*. It goes beyond the literal and mundane interpretations to invoke a state of aesthetic rapture, thus making a work of art timeless and universally appealing. The quest for aesthetic bliss, known as *Ānanda*, is at the core of the *dhvani* theory, seeking to provide a glimpse into the transcendental states of consciousness. It transcends the mundane and points towards the emotional resonance and aesthetic experience that a text can evoke in individuals through the intricacies of suggestion and connotations, moving them beyond the confines of the ordinary into a realm of heightened sensory and emotional experience of bliss. This transcendence allows individuals to connect with the universal experience of oneness, which in Indian philosophy is known as *Brahman*.

Ānanda, pursuing bliss and joy beyond the material world, is fundamental to Indian philosophical thought. Applying the *dhvani* to philosophical texts seeks to elevate the reader's consciousness and lead them towards the realisation of *Satchitānanda*, the ultimate state of being. By delving into the underlying meanings and suggestions in philosophical writings, individuals can transcend the limitations of mundane existence and strive towards a state of eternal joy and spiritual fulfilment. This quest for transcendental bliss through the medium of philosophical texts underscores the significance of *rasa* and *dhvani* in guiding individuals towards a higher state of consciousness.

“After discussing the theory of *dhvani* in all its bearings, Ānandavardhana proceeds to demonstrate how poetry is enriched remarkably due to conforming to this principle” (Krishnamoorthy, 1950, p. 143). An unlimited variety of ideas and creative imagination in poetry are said to be generated only with the help of *dhvani's* theory. In other words, *dhvani* can be characterised as the watershed moment in the history of poetry, literature and linguistic philosophy. He also calls Ānandavardhana, the “prince of connoisseurs,” pitched his text to them in the first place: “The preeminent men of knowledge are the grammarians, for all the sciences rest upon grammar” (Ingalls & Regier, 1992, p. 1087).

Scholars spend their time debating, discussing, studying, learning, and re-learning literature and philosophy. While fools spent it on addiction, others on sleep and other useless acts. “*kāvyaśāstravinodena, kālogacchatidhīmatām, vyasanenacamūrkhāṇām, nidrayākalahenavā*” (Śāstrī, 1971).¹⁷⁷ The *dhvani* theory is a theory perfect for implementing the teaching above in everyday life. Suggestive meaning needs to be arrived at by *kavya-śāstra-vinod* or philosophising. Ānandavardhana argued that the suggestion in a poem makes the poem a jewel in itself and that the suggestion is the source of poetic pleasure. The *dhvani* has had a profound impact on Indian literature and continues to do so. It has inspired generations of poets and writers to explore the depths of their creativity and to use figures of speech to convey powerful and evocative messages. Ānandavardhana's *dhvani* is a testament to the power of suggestion and its importance in conveying the true meaning of a poem. We owe an outstanding debt to Ānandavardhana for his unforeseen and unimagined work in this field, further research in this field can only lead to more wonders.

Another vital perspective for this research comes from Mr Shastri's scholarly article ‘The *Rigvedic Poetic Spirit*. According to Mr Shastri, the *Rgveda* should be considered a brilliant

¹⁷⁷ “काव्यशास्त्रविनोदेन, कालोगच्छतिधीमताम्। व्यसनेनचमूर्खाणां, निद्रयाकलहेनवा।।” (Śāstrī, 1971 p. 166).

work of poetry. He argues that *R̥gveda* can be seen as poetry or interpreted as poetry. He believed that there existed many *rasas* in *R̥gveda*. Therefore, a reinterpretation through the *dhvani* perspective can lead to many astonishing discoveries of *rasasvāda* in *R̥gveda*. However, to prove the existence of *dhvani* in *R̥gveda*, he argues and tries to prove that *R̥gveda* itself is poetry, but that now feels unnecessary. Regardless of whether the *R̥gveda* is poetry or a philosophical text, it has *dhvani* in it, which helps any thinker, scholar or philosopher to reinterpret the Shruties that are the *Vedas* into *Smritis*, like *Manu Smriti*, *Parashar Smriti*, *Yadnyavalkya Smriti*, *Gita*, *Satyarth Prakash*, according to the time, space and need of the generation. As Kalidasa says in one of his excellent mahakavyas ‘*Raghuvansham*’, as *smriti* follows *śruti*, that is why there can be mistakes in *smriti*, *smriti* can be wrong, as they are only interpretations done by scholars at the time, it is their perspective, but *śruti* - the *Vedās* can never be wrong. To quote Kalidas: “*tasyāḥ khuranyāsapavitrapāṃsumapāṃsulānāṃ dhuri kīrtanīyā| mārgaṃ manuṣyeśvaradharmapatnī śruterivārthaṃ smṛtiranvagacchat||*” 2.2 *Raghuvansham*, (Kalidasa).¹⁷⁸ It would be fitting to quote Sastriji, “By suggestion, they take us through *anubhava* or experience proper, which alone can give us a perfect comprehension of truth” (Sastri, 1957, p. 74). Learning through experience has been the foundation of humanity. *dhvani*, or suggestion, allows us the privilege to experience within ourselves the experience of others and to learn through the experience of others. However, it is not considered a valid source of knowledge. Instead of being accepted as an essential method of attaining knowledge and being a part of cognitive sciences, *dhvani* has been relegated to only being an aesthetic theory of the past.

Analysing and using *dhvani* through various perspectives in contemporary times could only lead

¹⁷⁸ तस्यः खुरन्यासपवित्रपांसुमपांसुलानां धुरि कीर्तनीया। मार्गं मनुष्येश्वरधर्मपत्नी श्रुतेरिवार्थं स्मृतिरन्वगच्छत्॥2.2 Raghuvansham|| (Kalidasa) That proper wife of the lord of the men, the king (Dilip), queen, an estimable one atop the immaculate tread on the pathway behind that of a cow as if that pathway is being hallowed with the dust raised by the hooves of the cow(Kāmadhenu), like dharma shastras or contemporary, treatises or *dharma* kavya, treading the pathway hallowed by *Vedas* or *Vedakavyas* or the *Vedic* precepts” (Kalidas & Johnston, 1902, 2.2).

to more authoritative knowledge. Experiments using the *dhvani* theory could lead to the birth of various new perspectives, new knowledge, and new understanding. Exploring the application of *dhvani* in contemporary Indian literature can shed light on its relevance and adaptability in a changing literary landscape. Investigating the cognitive and psychological aspects of *dhvani* can provide insights into the emotional and cognitive processes involved in the reader's response to suggestive language and imagery. Role of genders can be analysed based on sentiments using *dhvani* and its impact on knowledge creation and interpretation can offer fresh perspectives on gender dynamics in Indian literary traditions. Exploring the integration of *dhvani* with digital tools and methodologies can open up new avenues for analysing and understanding large corpora of Indian literature.

With philosophy or rational thinking, education, and the practice of reading, writing, and analysing texts, one can attain the ability to be a *Sahṛdaya*. As *Cānakya Niti* also says, what's the use of that mind that cannot even think? A mind without a thought is useless, a statement without a meaning is futile, and the eyes without sight are useless. The *śloka* from *Cānakya Niti* is as follows. “*yasya nāsti svayaṃ prajñā śāstraṃ tasya karoti kim, locanābhyāṃ vihinasya darpaṇaḥ kiṃ kariṣyati*”¹⁷⁹ (Cānakya, 2023, p. 88). Cānakya asks what good the scriptures can do to a man with no sense of his own. He questions what use is as a mirror to a blind man. The mirror is designed for people with eyes. They can see themselves in it. However, the mirror is unimportant to the blind, and the mirror cannot be blamed for this. If one does not have the simple abilities of a philosopher, what would one do with the knowledge of the sciences or the shastras? For a *Sahṛdaya* to understand the meanings of the *śāstra* or the texts, abilities of a

¹⁷⁹ “यस्य नास्ति स्वयं प्रज्ञा शास्त्रं तस्य करोति किम् । लोचनाभ्यां विहीनस्य दर्पणः किं करिष्यति ॥१०.९॥” (Chanakya, 2023, p. 88). What good can the scriptures do to a man who has no sense of his own? Of what use is as mirror to a blind man? (Chanakya, 2024). Of what use is as mirror to a blind man? the mirror is designed for people with eyes. They can see themselves in it. But the mirror is unimportant for the blind. The mirror cannot be blamed for this. Similarly, the *Vedās* and *Purānas* are designed for intelligent and prudent people. These are beneficial only for those who have the power to think and understand. These cannot benefit the foolish (Chanakya, 2023, p. 88).

philosopher are a necessity. Similarly, the *Vedās* and *śāstras* are designed for intelligent and prudent people. These are beneficial only for those with the power to think and understand. These cannot benefit the foolish. Similarly, with a philosopher to understand it, *dhvani* would be helpful. The ability to be a *Sahṛdaya* is a process that needs to be earned through rigorous education, reasoning, rational thinking, and understanding of the emotive sense. With this philosophical process, the eyes of a *Sahṛdaya* can be achieved. Even Abhinavagupta, when he writes the text *Locana*, says it is the text to give eyes to the ordinary being, without which one cannot see the light of suggestive meaning. The word *Locana* literally means eyes. Abhinavagupta uses it to say that his writings make one a *sahṛdaya* and give them the ability to comprehend the light of *dhvani*.

Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, both philosophers, have become some of the first scholars to systematically write about the rules and regulations of *dhvani* because of their ability to philosophise. Even grammarians such as Patañjali and Pāṇini, to whom Ānandavardhana gives credit for creating *dhvani*, are also philosophers. The same transformative power of *dhvani* through the three forms, *saṃvādaśakti*, *śabdaśakti*, and *bhāśaśakti* can be applied to philosophical texts, unlocking a deeper level of understanding and connection with the text to ultimately achieve *satcitānanda* by embracing the suggestive meaning, that is *dhvanyartha*, one can experience the thrill of discovery as complex concepts and abstract ideas reveal their hidden depths of joy and nuanced bliss. In this journey of reaching transcendental bliss, where the pursuit of knowledge becomes but one step of self-discovery and another of spiritual growth, it is the application of *dhvani* to philosophy that offers a unique experiential meaning known as the *dhvanyartha* which gives an easier and less travelled pathway in first achieving the partial bliss or the momentary experience and the permanence of bliss, which makes one strive for more and

ultimately leads to achieving the *satcitānanda*.. This is *dhvani's* strength; it can provide a joyous path to *sacitānanda*, one that winds through the lush landscapes of *rasa*, or aesthetic experience.

Ultimately, the final say would be that in the vast expanse of *śāstrās*, which encompass various bodies of knowledge and sciences, lies an abundance of wisdom and teachings. However, our lives are finite¹⁸⁰, and the sheer volume of these texts makes it impossible to study each in great detail for an individual. Additionally, numerous obstacles and distractions in our daily lives further limit the time we can dedicate to such profound studies. One should strive to focus on the essence of the *śāstras*. This can be achieved through the concept of *dhvani* or suggestion, which allows us to grasp the deeper meanings and insights without getting entangled in every detail. According to C. J. Ducasse, philosophy is nothing but a general theory of criticism (Sweeney et al., 2007, p. 7), so if that definition is considered, then the *dhvani* theory itself is philosophy. By embracing this approach, one can prioritise the most critical and relevant teachings that resonate in lives and spiritual journeys. This selective and insightful study helps us to cultivate wisdom efficiently, enabling us to navigate our limited time and overcome obstacles with greater clarity and purpose. Thus, the essence of *śāstras* can enrich our lives profoundly, guiding us toward a more meaningful and enlightened existence.

anekaśāstram bahu veditavyam alpaśca kālo bahavaśca vighnāḥ | yatsārabhūtam tadupāsītavyam haṁso yathā kṣīramivāmbumadhyāt |”¹⁸¹ (Rao, 2022, p. 63).

¹⁸⁰ In the sense of remembrance, as a human one only remembers and lives one life at a time.

¹⁸¹ “अनेकशास्त्रं बहु वेदितव्यम् अल्पश्च कालो बहवश्च विघ्नाः । यत्सारभूतं तदुपासितव्यं हंसो यथा क्षीरमिवाम्बुमध्यात् ॥” (Rao, 2022, p. 63). There are many shastras (bodies of knowledge and doctrines, many sciences) and an abundance of knowledge. But we have limited time and a lot of obstacles. As a Swan extracts only milk from a mixture of milk and water, one should study the essence of the shastras (through suggestion(Dhvani) rather than studying each and every shastra in great detail).

The *śloka* explains clearly that there are many *śāstras* and significantly less time, too much knowledge and too little time to gain it all; it is up to the individual what one learns and ignores. There are multiple bodies of knowledge and doctrines, many sciences and an abundance of knowledge, but as human beings, the time in a single life is very limited. Along with this limited time, there are lots of obstacles, from small to big, from minor to major, yet one has to act as a Swan¹⁸² who extracts only milk from a mixture of milk and water; one should take only that which gives the highest *rasa*, study only the essence of the *śāstras* through suggestion using *dhvani*, rather than studying each *śāstras* in great detail. Focus should be on experiential learning.

According to *Bhagavadgītā bhāṣya*, even if the *Vedās* say that the fire is cold, one should not believe it, until it is proved by one's experience. Śankarāchārya says,

“na hi śrutiśatamapi ‘śīto’gniraprakāśo vā’ iti bruvat prāmāṇyamupaiti, yadi brūyāt
‘śīto’gniraprakāśo vā’ iti, tathāpi arthāntaram śruteḥ vivakṣitaṁ kalpyam,
prāmāṇyānyathānupapatteḥ, na tu pramāṇāntaraviruddhaṁ svavacanaviruddhaṁ vā”
(18.66 *Bhagavad Gita Bhāṣya*) .¹⁸³

Moreover Śankarāchārya says, "even if hundreds of *śrutis* or *Vedās* say that ‘fire is cold, it doesn’t shine’, it cannot be considered valid knowledge. If “*śruti* should at all declare that fire is

¹⁸² A mythical bird famous in Indian literature, used by many poets and philosophers in their Subhashitas, good verses of valuable teachings. This bird is blessed by nature with a mythical special ability of separating between milk and water and identifying a real pearl from a fake pearl.

¹⁸³ “न हि श्रुतिशतमपि ‘शीतोऽग्निरप्रकाशो वा’ इति ब्रुवत् प्रामाण्यमुपैति । यदि ब्रूयात् ‘शीतोऽग्निरप्रकाशो वा’ इति, तथापि अर्थान्तरं श्रुतेः विवक्षितं कल्प्यम्, प्रामाण्यान्यथानुपपत्तेः, न तु प्रमाणान्तरविरुद्धं स्ववचनविरुद्धं वा ।” (Śankarāchārya, 2022, p. xviii.66). na hi śrutiśatamapi ‘śīto’gniraprakāśo vā’ iti bruvat prāmāṇyamupaiti | yadi brūyāt ‘śīto’gniraprakāśo vā’ iti, tathāpi arthāntaram śruteḥ vivakṣitaṁ kalpyam , prāmāṇyānyathānupapatteḥ, na tu pramāṇāntaraviruddhaṁ svavacanaviruddhaṁ vā | - Even if hundreds of *śruti*-s (Veda-s) say that ‘Fire is cold, it doesn’t shine’, it cannot be considered as valid knowledge. If “*śruti* should at all declare that fire is cold or that it is dark,” we would still suppose that it “intends” quite a different meaning from the apparent one; for its authority cannot otherwise be maintained: we should in no way attach to *śruti* a meaning which is opposed to other authorities or to its own declaration. — Translation: A.M. Sastri (Śankarāchārya, 2022, p. xviii.66).

cold or that it is dark,” one would still suppose that it “intends” quite a different meaning from the apparent one (here Śāṅkarāchārya is referring to suggestive meaning) for its authority cannot otherwise be maintained: one should in no way attach to a *śruti* meaning which is opposed to other authorities or its one’s own declaration. Śāṅkarāchārya further defines his support for tacit knowledge and suggestive meaning in his *Bṛhadāraṇyaka bhāṣya*, in which he says that scriptural texts also cannot give one experiential knowledge or can falsify one’s experiential knowledge. The statement is shown below:

Nanu vacanenāpi agneḥ śaityam udakasya ca auṣṇyam na kriyata eva, jñāpakatvādvacanānām ; na ca deśāntare'gniḥ śīta iti śakyate jñāpayitum ; agamyē vā deśāntare uṣṇamudakamiti na, pratyagātmanyānandavijñānadarśanāt ; na¹⁸⁴ (3.9.7, Brihadaranyak Upaniṣad Bhaṣya).

Śāṅkarāchārya first raises the objection, saying, “Even a scriptural text cannot make fire cold or water hot, for these texts are merely informative. They cannot tell one that in some other country, fire is cold, or that in some inaccessible country, water is hot. Realising the limitation of explicit knowledge and abstract philosophy, Śāṅkarāchārya raises this question so that the significance and prominence of Tacit experience and suggestive meaning in language may achieve greater heights. Shri Śāṅkarāchārya himself further elucidates on the topic and presents a tentative answer to the objection raised, he says, Not so, for we observe bliss and knowledge in the

¹⁸⁴ “ननु वचनेनापि अग्नेः शैत्यम् उदकस्य च औष्ण्यं न क्रियत एव, ज्ञापकत्वाद्बचनानाम् ; न च देशान्तरेऽग्निः शीत इति शक्यते ज्ञापयितुम् ; अगम्ये वा देशान्तरे उष्णमुदकमिति — न, प्रत्यगात्मन्यानन्दविज्ञानदर्शनात् ; न ‘विज्ञानमानन्दम्’ इत्येवमादीनां वचनानां शीतोऽग्निरित्यादिवाक्यवत् प्रत्यक्षादिविरुद्धार्थप्रतिपादकत्वम् ।” (3.9.7, Brihadaranyak Upaniṣad Bhaṣya) (Śāṅkarāchārya, 2022). *Objection*: But even a scriptural text cannot make fire cold or water hot, for these texts are merely informative. They cannot tell us that in some other country fire is cold, or that in some inaccessible country water is hot. *Tentative answer*: Not so, for we observe bliss and knowledge in the individual self. Texts such as, ‘Knowledge, Bliss,’ etc., do not convey a meaning that clashes with perception and other means of knowledge, as for instance the sentence, ‘Fire is cold,’ does. On the contrary, we feel their agreement with them. One directly knows the self to be blissful, as when one feels, ‘I am happy.’ So, the agreement in question with perception etc. is quite clear. Translation: Swami Madhavananda.

individual self. (One feels it, experiences it) Texts such as ‘Knowledge, Bliss,’ etc., do not convey a meaning that clashes with perception and other means of knowledge, as, for instance, the sentence, ‘Fire is cold,’ does. On the contrary, one feels their agreement with them. One directly knows the self to be blissful, as when one feels, ‘I am happy.’ So, the agreement in question with perception is quite clear. Similarly, the importance of the realisation of knowledge is brought to light by *Īśa Upaniṣad*, where in *Śrī Śaṅkarā* says,

na ; vidyotpattau tadāśraye'vidyānupapatteḥ ; na hi agnirūṣṇaḥ prakāśaśca iti vijñānotpattau yasminnāśraye tadutpannam , tasminnevāśraye śīto'gniraprakāśo vā ityavidyāyā utpattiḥ | nāpi saṁśayaḥ ajñānaṁ vā, 'yasminsarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmaivābhūdviājānataḥ | tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śoka ekatvamanupaśyataḥ' (7, ī. u.) iti śokamohādyasambhavaśruteḥ |” 18, Īśa Upaniṣad Bhāṣya.¹⁸⁵

Śaṅkara further says, “When knowledge arises (Realisation of oneness with Brahman/ experiencing oneness), *karma* vanishes since *karma* cannot remain in the person in whom knowledge of *Brahman* exists. For it is fact that when the knowledge, “Fire is hot and effulgent,” has arisen in a person, then in that very person, there cannot arise the ignorance, doubt or error (of the form), “Fire is cold or non-illuminating.” The Vedic text declares the impossibility of sorrow and delusion (for a man of Knowledge): “When to the man of realisation all beings become the very Self, then what delusion and what sorrow can there be for that Seer of Oneness?” (7, *Īśa Up.*)

¹⁸⁵ न ; विद्योत्पत्तौ तदाश्रयेऽविद्यानुपपत्तेः ; न हि अग्निरूष्णः प्रकाशश्च इति विज्ञानोत्पत्तौ यस्मिन्नाश्रये तदुत्पन्नम् , तस्मिन्नेवाश्रये शीतोऽग्निरप्रकाशो वा इत्यविद्याया उत्पत्तिः । नापि संशयः अज्ञानं वा, ‘यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभूद्विजानतः । तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः’ (७, ई. उ.) इति शोकमोहाद्यसम्भवश्रुतेः । 18। *Īśa Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*

Answer: No. For when Knowledge arises, *karma* vanishes, since in the person in whom Knowledge exists, *karma* cannot remain. For it is fact that when the knowledge, “Fire is hot and effulgent,” has arisen in a person, then in that very person there cannot arise the ignorance, doubt or error (of the form), “Fire is cold or non-illuminating.” The impossibility of sorrow and delusion (for a man of Knowledge) is declared by the Vedic text: “When to the man of realization all beings become the very Self, then what delusion and what sorrow can there be for that Seer of Oneness?” (7, *Īśa Up.*). 18। *Īśa Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*.

The present thesis, *From Poetics to Philosophy: Exploring Philosophical Foundations of Suggestive Meaning in Dhvanyāloka*, has attempted to demonstrate that Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* is not merely a literary or aesthetic principle restricted to Sanskrit poetics, but a comprehensive philosophical framework capable of explaining meaning, experience, communication, interpretation, and knowledge. The central hypothesis proposed in the opening chapter, that suggestive meaning (*dhvanyartha*) originates not solely within poetic expression but from a deeper experiential, dialogical, and epistemic foundation, has been systematically verified through the course of this research. By tracing the conceptual evolution of meaning from tacit experience to communicative expression through *saṃvādaśakti*, and subsequently to linguistic and philosophical articulation through *śabdaśakti*, the research has shown that meaning emerges first as lived and experiential awareness before becoming systematised through language and philosophical discourse. The thesis has therefore attempted in repositioning *dhvani* from the confined sphere of aesthetics into a broader philosophical domain concerned with ontology, epistemology, hermeneutics, and social philosophy.

The study further attempted to fulfill its objective of investigating the philosophical foundations of suggestive meaning by critically engaging with the Indian traditions of *Vyākaraṇa*, *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Vedānta*, and aesthetics. Through the analysis of thinkers such as Bhartṛhari, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, Prabhākara, Bharata, Ānandavardhana, and Abhinavagupta, the thesis demonstrated that the problem of meaning in Indian philosophy was never limited to lexical denotation alone, but always involved questions concerning sentence cognition, contextual interpretation, emotional resonance, and experiential understanding. Ānandavardhana's intervention in the *Dhvanyāloka* was therefore shown to be revolutionary because it transformed these earlier semantic and grammatical debates into an aesthetic and philosophical theory of

suggestion. The thesis successfully established that *dhvanyartha* cannot be reduced to *abhidhā*, *lakṣaṇā*, *anumāna*, *arthāpatti*, or *vakrokti*, but functions as an autonomous and indispensable mode of cognition through which language transcends literal expression and becomes capable of communicating emotional, philosophical, and existential truth. One of the primary aims of this research was to transcend the conventional boundaries of poetics and demonstrate the philosophical relevance of *dhvani* within broader structures of communication and understanding. This objective has been achieved through the formulation and analysis of *saṃvādaśakti*, *bhāṣāśakti*, and *śabdaśakti*. The thesis argued that meaning does not arise from isolated words alone but from holistic communicative participation grounded in shared experience and contextual interaction. Through this framework, the study attempts to establish *saṃvādaśakti* as the primordial source of meaning-generation, preceding linguistic formalisation and textual systematisation. By extending the operation of *dhvani* beyond poetry into everyday dialogue, social interaction, philosophical discourse, and scriptural interpretation, the research demonstrated that suggestive meaning is intrinsic to all meaningful communication. This expanded understanding of *dhvani* allowed the thesis to establish language as experiential, relational, and socially embedded rather than merely semantic or structural.

The thesis also attempted to accomplish its objective of exploring the relation between *sahṛdaya*, tacit experience, and philosophical understanding. The reinterpretation of the *sahṛdaya* as a philosophical agent capable of experiential cognition became central to this argument. Just as aesthetic appreciation requires emotional sensitivity and intuitive participation, philosophical understanding too was shown to depend upon tacit and pre-reflective experience prior to rational articulation. By distinguishing experiential realisation from detached speculative rationality, the thesis established that *dhvani* bridges emotion, intuition, interpretation, and cognition into a

unified mode of understanding. In doing so, the research successfully fulfilled its aim of demonstrating that philosophical knowledge itself emerges through suggestive and experiential structures rather than through abstract conceptualisation alone. Another major hypothesis of the thesis concerned the plurality of philosophical systems emerging from singular foundational texts such as the *Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, and *Brahmasūtra*. The study demonstrated that this multiplicity becomes intelligible only through the operation of *dhvani* and *dhvanyartha*. Through the analysis of the *Prasthānatrayī*, the thesis established that the suggestive openness of scriptural language enables diverse interpretive traditions such as *Advaita*, *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, and *Dvaita* to emerge from the same textual sources. This plurality was shown not to be interpretive arbitrariness but the consequence of the inexhaustible and layered nature of suggestive meaning. The thesis thereby fulfilled its objective of demonstrating that philosophical systems themselves are born from the suggestive capacities of language, where meaning unfolds differently according to interpretive orientation, experiential realisation, and contextual understanding. This insight significantly expands the relevance of *dhvani* from literary aesthetics into scriptural hermeneutics and the philosophy of interpretation. The research further attempted to achieve its aim of establishing *dhvani* as a legitimate epistemic category and a form of social epistemology and by applying the *dhvani* to philosophical texts. Through the analysis of communicative participation, testimony, *rasa*, *ānanda*, and shared cultural understanding, the thesis demonstrated that knowledge is often socially mediated, context-sensitive, and suggestively communicated rather than explicitly propositional. The study argued that *dhvanyartha* functions as an experiential mode of knowing accessible through aesthetic and philosophical participation. By connecting *rasa* with *ānanda* and ultimately with forms of philosophical realisation, the thesis established continuity between aesthetic experience and epistemic cognition. The

distinction between literal meaning and suggestive understanding revealed that many of the most profound dimensions of human experience, including metaphysical insight, ethical awareness, emotional truth, and existential understanding, cannot be fully expressed through direct language alone. In this sense, *dhvani* emerged as a philosophical theory capable of explaining how meaning, knowledge, and understanding arise through resonance, suggestion, and experiential participation.

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