

Application of Alankara Dhvani Theory for critical Analysis of Western Literary Text

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Abstract

This research paper explores the application of Alankar Dhvani concept, which is the foundational concept of Dhvani theory propounded by Anandavardhana as a treaty of Indian aesthetics and poetics for critical analysis of English literary texts. The aim of this paper is to bridge the gap between Indian literary theory and western literature by exploring how Alankar Dhvani concept can enhance our understanding of the subtle nuances in English literary texts.

The literature review stipulates a thorough overview of Dhvani theory, discovering its historical development and fundamental principles. Depicting the previous comparative study, this paper tries to highlight previous applications of this theory in various cultural and textual contexts and the potential it holds for analyzing literature beyond its original cultural boundaries of Indian aesthetics.

The core of the paper focuses on the application of Alankara Dhvani concept to a selection of English literary text (i.e Shakespearan Sonnet No. 54) with a particular emphasis on identifying Alankara Dhvani elements and exploring the emotional resonance (Rasa) generated by these texts. The findings reveal various layers of suggestion and responsive experience that may not be immediately evident through conventional literary analysis.

The paper further elaborates the implications of findings in the context of Alankara Dhvani theory, shedding light on how Alankara Dhvani enriches our understanding of English literary texts. By delving into the interplay between suggestion, emotion, and aesthetics, this paper attempts to provide a fresh perspective on the chosen texts and highlight the universal applicability of Dhvani theory depicted by Anandavardhana, as a tool for literary analysis.

To conclude this research contributes to the comparative analysis of Indian aesthetics and English literature, demonstrating the cross-cultural relevance of Dhvani Rasa theory as a means to uncover the deeper emotional and aesthetic dimensions of literary works. By incorporating Dhvani Rasa theory into the critical analysis of English literary texts, this offer a greater and more holistic interpretation of these texts, encouraging further exploration of this approach in future literary research.

Key words: Alankar Dhvani, Indian aesthetics and poetics, English literary texts, Dhvani theory, cultural boundaries, comparative analysis

1. Introduction

According to the theory of Dhvani, the suggestive power of a literary work lies in its ability to create a sense of emotional resonance or vibration within the reader or audience. This resonance is created through the use of various literary devices such as metaphor, simile, allusion, and symbolism. By engaging the reader or audience in a process of active interpretation, the literary work stimulates their imagination and emotions, leading to the experience of a particular mood or emotional state.

The Dhvani theory also emphasizes the importance of the reader or audience's own personal and cultural background in their interpretation of the literary work. This means that different people may experience different emotional responses to the same work depending on their individual experiences, beliefs, and cultural context. This leads to the discerning of exploring the English Literary text of William Shakespeare's Sonnet No.54 in the light of Alankara Dhavani Concept.

Concept of Dhavani by Aanandavardhan

Aanandavardhan, an Indian literary theorist who lived in the 9th century CE, propounded the concept of Dhavani, which is a Sanskrit term that means "suggestive" or "implied meaning". According to Aanandavardhan, the purpose of literature is to create a certain emotional impact on the reader or listener. This emotional impact is not created through the literal meaning of the words used in the text, but rather through the suggested or implied meaning. Aanandavardhana remarks Dhavani as the soul of poetry. He regards it as the basic principal of all poetic speech. In Dhavnyaloka the word Dhavani is used in technical sense of a particular type of poetry and meaning. Here Aanandavardhana denotes that words can convey suggested meaning in addition to their conventional primary meaning. In the poetry genre the meaning is reflected through the matter of fact (factual meaning), figure of speech (aesthetic meaning) and the impact on the reader (Rasadi).

योऽर्थः सहृदयश्लाघ्यः काव्यात्मेति व्यवस्थितः ।

वाच्यप्रतीयमानाख्यौ तस्य भेदावुभौ स्मृतौ ॥ २ ॥¹

As suggested in the above lines there are two types of meaning Vachaya and Pratiyaman, For the difference between the meaning of poetry, which is beautifully incorporated and is situated in the form of the essence of the body, which is praiseworthy with the heart, is expressed and perceived. Aanandavardhan divided Dhavani into two types - Vyangya Dhavani and Rasa Dhavani. Vyangya Dhavani refers to the implied meaning of words that are not meant to be taken literally, while Rasa Dhavani refers to the emotional impact created by the literary work.

Aanandavardhan's concept of Dhavani had a significant impact on the development of Indian literary theory and criticism. It emphasized the importance of suggestion and implied meaning in literature, and inspired many later literary theorists and writers.

काव्यस्य हि ललितोचितसन्निवेशचारुणः शरिरस्येवात्मासाररूपतया स्थितः सहृदयश्लाघ्यो योऽर्थस्तस्य वाच्यः प्रतीयमानश्चेति भेदो काव्यस्य हि ललितोचितसन्निवेशचारुणः शरिरस्येवात्मा साररूपतया स्थितः सहृदय श्लाघ्यो योऽर्थस्तस्य वाच्यः प्रतीयमानश्चेति भेदो !²

With the advancement of technical resources encourages the cross literary and cross linguistic studies, the present paper attempts to explore the application of Alankara Dhavani Theory for analysis of

western literary text more precisely speaking, Shakrsperean Sonnet no.54. According to the Dhavani Theory, there are nine different rasas, or emotional moods, that literature can evoke in the reader or audience. These Rasas include: Shringara (erotic or romantic), Hasya (comic or humorous), Karuna (pathetic or sad), Raudra (anger or violent), Veera (heroic or brave), Bhayanaka (fearful or scary), Vibhatsa (disgusting or repulsive), Adbhuta (wonder or marvelous), Shanta (peaceful or tranquil)

Various Western Concepts related to the Meaning:

On the other hand the Western scholar, I.A. Richards, developed the concept of "four types of meaning" in his book "The Meaning of Meaning." According to Richards, there are four types of meaning: Referential meaning - the basic denotative or referential meaning of a word or phrase, Connotative meaning - the emotional or cultural associations attached to a word or phrase, Affective meaning - the personal feelings or emotions evoked by a word or phrase, Reflective meaning - the deeper, philosophical or symbolic meaning of a word or phrase.³

Richards' theory focuses on the multiple layers of meaning that can be present in language, and how these different types of meaning can influence.

Even the views of Ronald Barthes are quite considerable in order to understand the western concept of derivation of meaning from text. Roland Barthes was a French philosopher and literary theorist who contributed significantly to the field of semiotics, which is the study of signs and symbols and how they convey meaning. Barthes proposed several concepts of meaning in his work, including denotation, connotation, myth, and the death of the author.

Denotation refers to the literal or surface meaning of a sign or symbol, while connotation refers to the cultural and social meanings that are attached to the sign or symbol. Barthes argued that connotation was more important than denotation in understanding the meaning of a text or image, as connotation is shaped by the cultural and social context in which the sign or symbol is used. Barthes also introduced the concept of myth, which he defined as a cultural narrative or story that is used to naturalize or normalize certain values, beliefs, or practices. According to Barthes, myths are often used to reinforce dominant ideologies and to maintain the status quo.

Finally, Barthes proposed the idea of the "death of the author," which suggests that the meaning of a text is not determined by the author's intention, but rather by the reader's interpretation. In other words, the author's role is limited to create the text, but once the text is published, its meaning becomes open to interpretation by the reader. Overall, Barthes' concepts of meaning have been influential in the field of semiotics and literary theory, and continue to be studied and debated by scholars today.

Alankara Dhavani concept:

Kavipraudhokti matra siddha is born out of poets intentative fancy and Swatah sambhavi is grounded in material possibilities. So the Swatah Sambhavi has certain sanction of realism while Kavipraudhokti happens to be a mere poetic imagination.

स ह्यर्थो वाच्यसामर्थ्याक्षिप्तं वस्तुमात्रमलंकारसादयश्चेत्यनेक- प्रभेदप्रभिनो दर्शयिष्यते सर्वेषु च तेषु प्रकारेषु तस्य वाच्यादन्यत्वम् । तथा ह्याद्यस्तावत्प्रभेदो वाच्यादूर् विभेदवान् । स हि कदाचिद्वाच्ये विधिरूपे प्रतिषेधेरूपः । यथा-

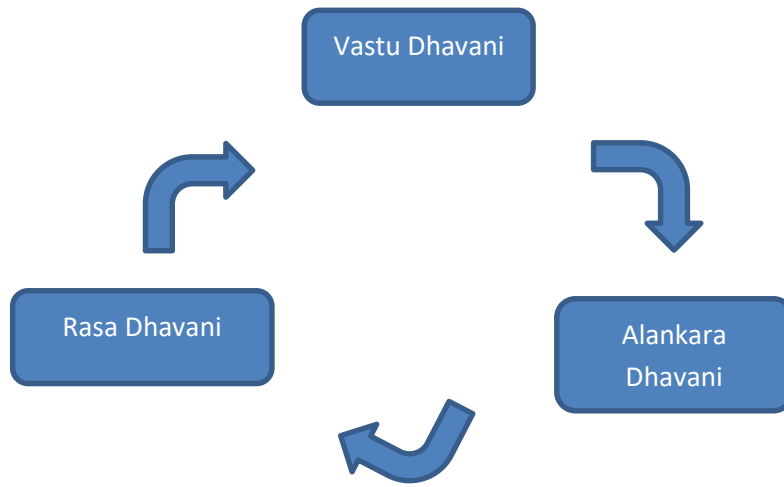
भम धम्मिअ वीसत्थो सो सुणओ अज्ज मारिओ देण । गोलाणइकच्छकुडंगवासिणा दरिअसीहेण ॥⁴

Poetic Figures satisfy the basic demand of human nature, i.e the pleasant surprise,' The poet, by his art, imagines a divine beauty in it and its character becomes potent and prominent, manifesting a new form of beauty and art is not different from alankar or poetic figure. Lakshana born Dhavani

Abhidha born Dhavani (Vastu, Alankar,Rasadi)

Vastu Dhavani is of two kinds

1. Kavipraudhoktimatrasiddha
2. Swatahsambhavi



Anandavardhana's innovation was to combine the concept of Dhvani with Alankara, suggesting that the most powerful and aesthetically satisfying poetry is one that not only uses literary devices for embellishment but also creates a profound suggested meaning or resonance in the reader's mind. In other words, Alankara Dhvani is the poetic technique that elevates the reader's experience by using literary devices to convey a deeper, suggested meaning that transcends the literal words.

Alankara Dhvani had a profound impact on the development of Sanskrit poetics and literary criticism. It highlighted the importance of suggestion, emotional resonance, and the indirect communication of feelings and ideas in poetry. His ideas also paved the way for the development of the later RasaDhavani theory, which further explored the emotional and aesthetic dimensions of literature. Application of Alankara Dhvani can be propounded in English text as well. Here the core of the paper focuses on the application of Alankara Dhvani concept to Shakespearean (Sonnet No. 54) with a particular emphasis on identifying Alankara Dhvani elements and exploring the emotional resonance (Rasa) generated by these texts.

“Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, my verse distills your truth”⁵

By using the figure of speech Allusion, The speaker alludes to the idea of a "sweet death," which was a common literary convention in Shakespeare's time. The idea is that something beautiful is at its most perfect just before it fades away, and this idea is applied to the "sweet odours" produced by roses when they die and to the truth that will be revealed about the youth when his beauty fades. This polyptoton occurring in line 12 reveals a threat for the young man, who is represented by the rose, as the poet works best when dealing with a dead subject.

"But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo'd and unrespected fade,"⁶

The canker-blooms are personified as living beings who fade away without recognition. This personification highlights the idea that true beauty requires more than just external appearances.

Throughout the sonnet, there's an antithesis between the transitory nature of external beauty and the enduring nature of inner beauty or truth. This is a central theme in the poem. Vahyaartha (Linguistic Meaning): which is the surface or literal meaning of the words used in a poem can lead to Dhvani (Suggestive Meaning) that is the deeper, emotive, and suggestive meaning that goes beyond the literal words and creates emotional resonance in the audience and reader.

In Sonnet 54, the language used is highly suggestive. The sonnet explores the idea that the true beauty and value of the beloved are not just skin-deep but lie in deeper qualities like truth and virtue. The language used suggests that the beloved's beauty is more than what meets the eye.

O, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.⁷

The sonnet employs various forms of ornamentation, such as metaphors and similes. For example, "The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem" uses a metaphor comparing the beloved to a rose, enhancing the poetic imagery. Alankara Dhvani often aims to evoke emotions in the reader. In Sonnet 54, the poet's emotions are evident as he reflects on the transient nature of beauty and the enduring power of poetry and art. The emotions of admiration and longing are conveyed through the language. The true meaning and depth of Sonnet 54 go beyond the literal words. The suggestion is that the beloved's beauty is eternalized through the poet's words, even as external beauty fades. This aligns with the idea of Vyanjana in Alankara Dhvani, where the suggested meaning is deeper and more profound than the surface level.

The use of metaphors (comparing the beloved to a rose) and antithesis (contrasting external beauty with inner qualities) in the sonnet enhances the suggestive power of language and contributes to the overall aesthetic experience. While Shakespearean poetry belongs to a different cultural and literary tradition than classical Indian poetry, the application of Alankara Dhvani concept can help us appreciate the nuanced and suggestive nature of Sonnet 54, highlighting how poetry across cultures can share common elements of aesthetic beauty and emotional resonance.

Conclusion

The present research establishes that Ānandavardhana's *Dhvani* theory—particularly the *Alankāra Dhvani* aspect—provides a rich hermeneutical framework for analyzing Western literary texts. By applying the principles of *Vācya* (denotative meaning) and *Vyangya* (suggestive meaning) to Shakespeare's *Sonnet 54*, this study demonstrates how Indian aesthetic theory can illuminate the deeper emotional and philosophical layers of English poetry.

Through the lens of *Alankāra Dhvani*, Shakespeare's sonnet reveals a dynamic interplay between *Vācya* and *Pratīyamāna* meanings, where literal imagery (the rose, beauty, decay) transcends into suggestive and emotive significance—the permanence of inner virtue over transient physical beauty. The poet's use of metaphor, antithesis, and personification exemplifies *Alankāras* that stimulate *Rasa*, particularly *Śṛṅgāra* (romantic), *Śānta* (tranquil), and *Adbhuta* (wonder). This aesthetic transformation echoes Ānandavardhana's assertion that “*yo 'rthaḥ sahrdaya-ślāghyaḥ kāvyātmā iti vyavasthitaḥ*”—that the soul of poetry lies in that meaning which evokes the admiration of the sensitive reader (*Dhvanyāloka* 1.2) (Ānandavardhana; Abhinavagupta).

Comparatively, Western semantic theories—such as those of I. A. Richards' *fourfold meaning* and Roland Barthes' *semiotic connotation*—reflect similar concerns with the multiplicity of meaning, yet remain primarily linguistic or structural (Leech; Richards; Barthes). In contrast, the *Dhvani* theory transcends the textual plane to evoke aesthetic and emotional realization (*Rasa-anubhava*), emphasizing the reader's experiential participation.

Thus, the application of *Alankāra Dhvani* to Shakespeare's *Sonnet 54* bridges the conceptual distance between Indian poetics and Western literary criticism, revealing that the experience of suggestion, emotional resonance, and aesthetic delight are universal phenomena in poetic art. This synthesis enriches comparative literary studies by validating *Dhvani* as a timeless and intercultural analytical tool—one that continues to unveil the subtle symphony of emotion and meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Ultimately, this study affirms that Ānandavardhana's *Dhvani* theory is not merely a historical construct of Sanskrit poetics but a living interpretive principle that can deepen modern literary understanding. The fusion of *Rasa* and *Dhvani* with Western literary analysis offers a holistic, humanistic, and cross-cultural approach—redefining how literature, irrespective of origin, can be experienced, interpreted, and celebrated.

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