

Core English 313

Literary Criticism 3

UNIT 3: Elements of Indian Poetics

01. 'Theory of Dhvani'

[01] Introduction:

△ Dhvani, a ***fundamental concept in Indian Poetics, is the theory of suggested meaning or resonance in poetry and literature.***

△ It was ***expounded in the “Dhvanyaloka” by Anandvardhana* and *refined further by Abhinav Gupta in his work “Alochanadhvanyaloka.”***

△ This theory ***delves into the layers of meaning beyond the explicit words,* *emphasizing the power of suggestion, allusion, and resonance in poetry and literary expression.***

△ It emphasizes ***the role of suggestion, resonance, and emotional impact through the use of symbols, metaphors, and subtle linguistic nuances.***

[02] Types of Dhvani:

****(1) VASTU Dhvani (the Plot):****

“VastuDhvani” refers to the ***resonant or suggestive power of the subject matter or content (vastu) of a poetic work.***

VastuDhvani implies that ***the themes, motifs, or subjects depicted in a poem can evoke emotions, thoughts, and aesthetic experiences* beyond their literal *interpretation, enriching the overall poetic experience.***

****(2) ALANKARA Dhvani (Figures of Speech):****

In Dhvani theory, ***Alankara refers to the figures of speech or literary embellishments used in poetry and prose* to enhance its beauty and effectiveness.**

i.e. → ***Upama, Rupaka, Utpreksha, Atisayokti, Anuprasa, Yamaka, Visheshoktialankaras* etc.**

****(3) RASA Dhvani (the Sentiment):****

In Dhvani theory, ***Rasa refers to the emotional essence or sentiment evoked in a reader or audience member through literature, poetry, or art.***

The ***interplay between Dhvani and Rasa* is central to the *aesthetic experience in Indian literature and arts.***

i.e. → In poetry or literature, the ***use of metaphors, similes, and allegories can invoke Dhvani,*** which in ***turn can lead to the experience of different Rasas*** such as,

1. Love (shringara), 2. Heroism (vira), 3. Humor (hasya), 4. Sorrow (karuna), 5. Anger (raudra), 6. Fear (bhayanaka), 7. Disgust (bibhatsa), and 8. Wonder (adbhuta), etc.

****[03] The Levels of Meaning:****

****(1) Abhidha (Denotation):****

This is the ***primary or literal meaning of words, phrases, or sentences*** . It represents the ***straightforward, dictionary definition of the words used.***

****(2) Laksana (Implication):****

Laksana is the ***highest level of meaning in Dhvani theory.*** It ***involves the implied or suggested meaning that is not explicitly stated in the text but is inferred through suggestion, connotation, or context.***

****(3) Vyanjana (Suggestion):****

While Abhidha deals with the literal meaning, ***Vyanjana refers to the suggested or implied meaning beyond the literal interpretation*** . It includes ***connotations, suggestions, and emotional resonances invoked by the text.***

****[04] Category of Works:****

****(1) Chitrakavaya (Lowest Category):****

In Dhvani theory, ***Chitrakavaya refers to the lowest category of works.***

Chitrakavaya works ***typically emphasize descriptive language and imagery to paint vivid pictures for the audience.***

****(2) Gunibhutavyangya (Alankar):****

It refers to the category of literary works that ***employ irony or sarcasm to convey deeper meanings.***

Gunibhutavyangya is ***appreciated for its skillful use of language and its ability to provoke thought and reflection in the audience.***

****(3) DhvaniKavya (Supreme Category):****

It refers to a category of literary works within the Dhvani theory, *a critical concept in Indian aesthetics, particularly in Sanskrit poetics.* Dhvanikavya represents *the highest category of works according to Dhvani theory.

In Dhvani theory, “dhvani” refers to the *suggestive power of poetry, which goes beyond the literal meaning of words to evoke emotions, moods, and aesthetic experiences in the reader or listener.*

[05] Conclusion:

”काव्यस्यात्माध्वनिरीति,

बुधैःसमाम्नातपूर्वम्”॥

- (From *Ch. 1* *Dhvyanyaloka* by *Anandavardhana*)

This shloka means “ *The essence of poetry is sound, as recognized by the wise ones of the past.”* It emphasizes the *importance of sound and rhythm in poetry, acknowledging that the ancient sages understood this fundamental aspect of poetic expression.*