

Some Notes on the Dhvanyāloka

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Introduction

One of the principal achievements of Indian aesthetics (*alāṅkāra*) is its analysis of the nature of the poetic experience. According to its two foremost theorists, poetry consists in the power of suggestion (*dhvani*), and, conversely, produces in the audience an experience of relishing (*rasa*) that is not emotional but transcendental (*alaukika*). The crucial texts of these theorists, however, do not lend themselves to a straightforward study. Anandavardhana wrote verses (*kārikā*), upon which he composed a commentary (*vṛtti*), the *Dhvanyāloka*. Abhinavagupta subsequently composed a commentary on both the verses and commentary of Ānandavardhana, called the *Locana*. Given the length, complexity, and seeming randomness of topics taken up in these works, a simplifying approach seems in order. To provide a roadmap, as it were, of the *rasa*-theory, a chapter from A. B. Keith's *The Sanskrit Drama*, "The Sentiments", is first provided. Select passages from Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, from the excellent translation of Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, are then presented; these selections contain the most direct, if not exhaustive, formulations or discussions of *dhvani* and *rasa*.

Please note that the scholarly footnotes to the selections are supplied for completeness' sake only: they are not crucial to understanding the texts. The complete translation will be on reserve in the library.

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Terms

Some helpful terms from Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan's translation. Additional explanation is attached, from pages 15–17 of their Introduction to this text.

anubhāva consequent

bhāva emotion

vibhāva determinant

ālambanavibhāva objective
determinant

uddīpanavibhāva stimulative
determinant

vyabhicārin/vyabhicāribhāva temporary/transient state of mind

sthāyibhāva abiding emotion

rasa flavor/sentiment – based on the
sthāyibhāvas respectively, as shown in
following table.

	<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>English Term</i>	<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>English Term</i>
	sthāyibhāva	abiding emotion	rasa	flavor, sentiment
1	rati	sexual desire	śṛṅgāra	erotic
2	hāsa	laughter	hāsyā	comic
3	śoka	grief	karuṇa	tragic
4	krodha	anger	raudra	furious, cruel
5	utsāha	heroic energy	vīra	heroic
6	bhaya	fear	bhayānaka	fearsome, timorous
7	jugupsā	disgust	bībhatsā	gruesome, loathsome
8	vismaya	wonder, amazement	adbhuta	wondrous
9			śānta	peace (<i>this term added later</i>)

Abbreviations Used

K *Kārikā* (verse) of the *Dhvanyāloka* ('Light on Suggestion'), by Rājānaka
Ānandavardhana, Kashmiri [9th AD]

A Ānandavardhana's *vṛtti* (commentary) on the *Kārikā* of their *Dhvanyāloka*

L *Locana* ('The Eye'), commentary by Abhinavagupta, Kashmiri [10th AD]

Some Authors Mentioned

Bhāmaha author of works on literary criticism, largely concerned with the figures
of speech [8th AD]

Bharata (legendary) author of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (*BhNS*), an ancient manual on dra-
maturgy, source of first eight sthāyibhāva and rasa noted above.

Bhattanayaka critic of Ānandavardhana, apparently a Mīmāṃsaka, answered by
Abhinavagupta