

Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana
'The Light of Suggestion'

Critically edited with Introduction, Translation & Notes
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Chapter 1

THE FIRST FLASH

*May Lord Hari's claws preserve you
In his Lion's form self-adopted;
They outshine the moon in clear hue
And destroy the woes of the devoted.*

I, Kārikā 1

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.

I, Vṛtti 1

The word learned men has the sense of those who know the truth about poetry. Through an unbroken tradition, these have taught that the soul of poetry has been named Suggestion. Although it is felt so by cultured critics in their minds (even to-day), others affirmed its non-existence. The following are the different views of those who believe in its non-existence:

I, Vṛtti 1 continued — 1.1a A in IMP

According to some (of the objectors): “Poetry is but that whose body is constituted by sound (or word) and meaning. Sources of charm through sound such as ‘alliteration’ are well-known; and so are the sources of charm through meaning such as ‘simile’. Merits or qualities of composition like ‘sweetness’ are also familiar to us. Also we have heard of dictions such as the ‘cultured’ propounded by some, though in truth their features are no different from qualities of style. We have further heard of styles like *Vaidarbhī*. But what could this concept of DHVANI (suggestion) be which is different from any of these?”

I, Vṛtti 1 continued — 1.1b A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

Others assert thus: “ ‘Suggestion’ does not exist indeed; for a species of poetry opposed to all well-known canons will 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. This will not be achieved by a route which excludes all the well-known canons mentioned. Even if the designation of poetry were to be accepted as applying to DHVANI on the unanimous support of a coterie of self-styled critics, it would fail to win the acceptance of all the learned.”

I, Vṛtti 1 continued — 1.1c A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

Yet another opinion about its non-existence is: “It is indeed impossible that ‘suggestion’ can be something unknown before. Since it is not distinct from a source of charm, it gets naturally included in the causes of charm already enunciated. By coining a novel designation to just one of them nothing profound will have been stated. Moreover, since the ways of speech are endless, even if there should be an insignificant element left unexplained by the famous framers of the rules of poetry, we cannot understand the reason why persons should close their eyes under the self-assumed illusion of being ‘perceptive critics’ and dance about with joy saying that they have discovered DHVANI therein. Thousands of other great men have expounded, and are still expounding, figurative elements (of speech). But we do not hear of any

such over-excitement on their part. Therefore, DHVANI is but a fabrication; and it would be impossible to demonstrate any truth about it which can bear scrutiny. In fact, a gentleman has already composed a verse to this effect:

Poetry, wherein there is nothing to delight the mind and no embellishment, which is destitute of felicitous words and artful turns, is praised so warmly by the dunce as being endowed with DHVANI (Suggestion). But we are at a loss to imagine what answer he would give when faced with a straight question by an intelligent critic about the nature of DHVANI itself!

I, Vṛtti 1 continued — 1.1d A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

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. Although it is true that no literary theorist has ever shown any element like a secondary usage of words as being specifically identical with Suggestion by mentioning the word ‘Suggestion’ itself, we have noted here such a view because we can conclude that one who points out the secondary usage of words in poetry has slightly touched the fringe of the doctrine of Suggestion, though one does not define it.

I, Vṛtti 1 continued — 1.1e A in IMP

Still others, not astute enough to frame a definition, rest content with saying that the true nature of suggestion is beyond all words and that it is discernible only to the minds of perceptive critics.

In view of the prevalence of so many conflicting opinions, we propose to elucidate the nature of Suggestion for the delight of the perceptive critics.

Suggestion itself is both the quintessence of the works of all first-rate poets and the most beautiful principle of poetry though it remained unnoticed even by the subtlest of the rhetoricians of the past. However, refined critics are certainly alive to its primary presence in literary works like the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*; and with a view to placing their delight on a secure footing, we shall explain its nature (in detail).

I, Vṛtti 1 continued — 1.1f A in IMP

The following is meant to serve as a groundwork for the theory of Suggestion which has been taken up for a detailed study:—

I, Kārikā 2 (skipped in EC Manual)

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.

I, Vṛtti 2 (skipped in EC Manual)

That meaning which wins the admiration of perceptive critics and which is of the very essence of poetry—even as the soul is of a body which is naturally handsome by the union of graceful and proper limbs—has two aspects, viz., the explicit and the implicit.

I, Kārikā 3 (skipped in EC Manual)

Of these, the explicit is commonly known and it has been already set forth in many ways through figures of speech such as the simile by other writers; hence it need not be discussed here at length.

I, Vṛtti 3 (skipped in EC Manual)

The expression, ‘*other writers*’, alludes to writers on poetics (like Bhaṭṭa Udbhaṭa). ‘(*Hence it need not be discussed here at length*)’ should be taken to imply that) the conclusions of earlier writers will be freely quoted whenever a need arises for them.

I, Kārikā 4

But the implicit aspect is quite different from this. In the words of first-rate poets it shines supreme and towers above the beauty of the striking

external constituents even as charm in ladies.

I, Vṛtti 4

The implicit aspect is entirely different from the explicit aspect and it is found in the words of first-rate poets. It is most familiar to the minds of refined critics and it shines forth as being over and above the ‘striking external constituents’. The expression ‘striking’ connotes not only what is ‘adorned with figures’ but also what is ‘perceptible to the senses’. Charm in ladies is a simile in point. Just as charm in ladies exceeds the beauty of all the individual limbs observed separately, and delights like ambrosia the eye of the admirer in a most unique fashion, so also does this implicit meaning.

I, Vṛtti 4 continued — 1.4a A in IMP

It will be shown in the sequel that this meaning embraces various divisions such as the bare idea, figures and sentiments, all implied by the inner power of the explicit. In all these varieties, it will be seen to differ from the explicit. To illustrate: even the first variety itself differs very widely from the explicit. Sometimes the implicit meaning will be of the nature of a prohibition when the explicit is of the nature of positive proposal;

I, Vṛtti 4 continued — 1.4b A in IMP

e.g.,

*Ramble freely, pious man!
That dog to-day is killed
By the fierce lion that dwells
In Godā river dells.*

I, Vṛtti 4 continued — 1.4c A in IMP

Sometimes, though the explicit meaning is of the nature of a prohibition, the implicit will be of the nature of a positive proposal; e.g.,

*Mother-in-law lies here, lost in sleep;
And I here; thou shouldst mark*

*These before it is dark.
O traveller, blinded by night,
Tumble not into our beds aright.*

I, Vṛtti 4 continued — 1.4d A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

Sometimes, though the explicit meaning may be of the nature of a positive proposal, the implicit may be neither a definite prohibition nor a definite proposal; e.g.,

*Get thee gone! I pray,
May all sighs and tears be mine, I say.
Let them not be thine again
In false courtesy to me.*

I, Vṛtti 4 continued — 1.4e A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

Sometimes, though the explicit meaning is of the nature of a prohibition, the implicit is neither a prohibition nor a proposal; e.g.,

*Humbly I beg thee, please go back;
Indeed, O sweet, thou drivest all gloom
By the bright light of your moon-face.
A pity it is that thou dost harm
The journeys of other wantons
Seeking their lovers' arms.*

I, Vṛtti 4 continued — 1.4f A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

Sometimes, the implicit meaning will relate to something entirely different from that to which the explicit is related. e.g.,

*Who will not rise in rage
Seeing his beloved's lip wounded?
You heeded not my warning*

*And kissed the lotus hiding a bee.
Now rightly pay the penalty!*

I, Vṛtti 4 continued — 1.4g A in IMP

There are various other forms besides these in which the varieties of the implicit meaning appear distinct from the explicit. What has been demonstrated above should be taken only as a pointer in that direction.

That the second class of the implicit (viz. figures of speech) too differs from the explicit will be demonstrated in detail later on.

But the third class of the implicit, viz., sentiments etc., is seen to shine forth as a result of the latent power in the explicit. It never becomes an object of direct verbal denotation and hence it is decidedly distinct from the explicit. If at all it could be an object of the explicit, it might be so alleged either as being directly denoted by its proper names or as being denoted through the delineation of characters in a setting, etc. If the first alternative were true, there would be no possibility of an experience of sentiments etc., in instances where their proper names are not employed. Never are they so denoted directly by their proper names. Even when proper names are present, the experience of sentiments etc. is not due to them but only due to the delineation of characters in a proper setting etc. The experience of sentiments etc. is only given a designation by the proper name and is not at all conditioned by it. In fact we do not have the experience (of sentiments etc.) in all the instances where proper names are used. Indeed, there is not even the slightest experience of the presence of sentiments in a composition which contains only their proper names such as the *Erotic* and which is destitute of all delineation of the characters in a setting and so forth. Since we can have the experience of sentiments etc. only through the characters in a setting etc. irrespective of their proper names and since we cannot have the experience only by the use of proper names, we may conclude on the basis of these considerations, both positive and negative, that sentiments etc. are only implied by the latent power of the explicit and in no way denoted explicitly. Thus it is established that even the third class of the implicit meaning is quite distinct from the explicit. It will be shown in the sequel, however, that its experience will appear to be almost simultaneous with the explicit.

I, Kārikā 5

That meaning alone is the soul of poetry; and so it was that, of yore, the sorrow of the First Poet (i.e. Vālmīki) at the separation of the curlew couple took the form of a distich.

I, Vṛtti 5

That meaning alone happens to be the quintessence of poetry whose outward charm is secured by the combination of varied and uncommon explicit meanings, expressions and art of arrangement. That is why the sorrow of the First Poet, on hearing the wail of the he-curlew afflicted with separation from its close mate, ‘transformed itself into a distich. Sorrow indeed is the abiding emotion which is at the basis of the sentiment of pathos. As already explained, it is only of the nature of the implicit. Though one can discern other sub-species of the implicit, they can all be understood by the synecdoche of sentiments and emotions since these happen to be the most important representatives of the rest.

(I, Kārikā 6–17 are skipped in EC Manual)

Therefore—

I, Kārikā 18

The fact is that indication is grounded on the primary denotative force of words. How can it ever be a definition of suggestion whose sole support is suggestivity?

I, Vṛtti 18

Hence suggestion is one thing and indication another.

The definition (that suggestion is indication) contains the fallacy of Too Narrow also. Indication does not cover instances of suggestion like ‘that with intended but further-extending literal import’ as also numerous other instances. Hence, indication cannot be a definition of suggestion.

Chapter 2

THE SECOND FLASH

So far, two varieties of suggestion, viz., ‘that with unintended literal import’ and ‘that with intended but further-extending literal import’ have been mentioned. Now the sub-varieties of the first are set forth in what follows:—

II, Kārikā 1 (skipped in EC Manual)

‘Merged in the other meaning’ and ‘Completely lost’—these are the two kinds of the expressed in ‘Suggestion with intended literal import’.

II, Vṛtti 1 (skipped in EC Manual)

The first, viz., ‘Merged in the other meaning’ is instanced in the following:—

*The quarters all are painted deep
With the glistening black of clouds,
And the cranes in circles fly (with excitement);
The breezes are moisture-laden
And these friends of clouds, the peacocks,
Send their joyous notes in the wind.
Let them all confront me!
I shall bear them all, as I am Rāma
Whose heart is adamant to be sure;*

*But how will Sitā fare!
 Alas! Alas! My dear queen!
 Be bold, I beseech thee.*

The word Rāma in this example carries the suggestive force mentioned. The word does not merely denote an individual with that proper name but conveys the sense of a person endowed with various qualities by the force of suggestion. An illustration is also found in my own work, *Viṣamabāṇalīlā*:—

*Merits become merits indeed
 When critics of culture hold them so.
 Lotuses will be lotuses
 Only when sunshine shelters them.*

Here the word ‘lotuses’ repeated a second time is an instance in point.

We can cite the following verse of the First Poet, Vālmīki, to illustrate the second variety, viz., ‘Suggestion with completely lost literal import’:—

*All the charm to the sun hath fled And the orb is hid in snow;
 Like a mirror by breath blinded, The moon now does not glow.*

Here the word ‘*blinded*’ contains the said suggestion. So also the following verse:—

*The sky with dizzy cloud,
 The Arjun woods with rain-drops dripping loud,
 And nights with moons not proud,
 Though black in hue,
 They capture you.*

Here the words ‘*dizzy*’ and ‘*not proud*’ are full of suggestion.

II, Kārikā 2 (skipped in EC Manual)

The nature of suggestion ‘with intended literal import’ is also two-fold: (i) ‘of discernible sequentiality’ and (ii) ‘of undiscernible sequentiality’.

II, Vṛtti 2 (skipped in EC Manual)

The nature of suggestion is the implied sense which is communicated prominently. A variety of it is grasped simultaneously with the expressed, since the sequentiality existing between the two is not discernible. Another variety of the same comes about when the sequentiality is discernible. Of these two,

II, Kārikā 3

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.

II, Vṛtti 3

Categories like sentiment shine forth along with the literal import. If they shine also with prominence we have the very soul of suggestion.

II, Vṛtti 3 continued — 2.4 Introduction A in IMP

It will be shown in what follows that the sphere of this suggestion ‘of undiscerned sequentiality’ is quite distinct from that of the figure of speech called *Rasavalankāra* or Figurative Sentiment:—

II, Kārikā 4

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.

II, Vṛtti 4

The poem in which the chief category is of the nature of sentiment, emotion, their semblance or cessation and wherein all figures, both of sound and

sense, and qualities come in only as handmaids of the chief category and remain as much distinct from what is suggested as from one another, gets the designation of Suggestive Poetry.

II, Kārikā 5

But if in a poem the chief purport of the sentence should relate to something else, and if sentiment and so on should come in only as auxiliaries to it, it is my opinion that sentiment and so on are figures of speech in such a poem.

II, Vṛtti 5

Although others have explained the scope of Figurative Sentiment (in quite a different way), still it is my view that only such sentiments etc. as become auxiliaries to some other purport of the sentence which happens to be much more important are to be regarded as figures.

II, Vṛtti 5 continued — 2.5a A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

For instance, one can easily see how in hymns of praise, sentiments etc., appear as auxiliaries though they are generally regarded as instances of the figure of Affectionate Praise.

II, Vṛtti 5 continued — 2.5b A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

The Figurative Sentiment according to our view may be either pure or mixed. The following is an illustration of the first kind:—

*‘Why this jest?
Thou shalt not certainly part again from me,
Having returned after so long,
O ruthless one! whence this flair for travel? —
Thus in dreams do the wives of your enemy speak*

*Clasping fast the necks of their beloved lords;
But soon they awake
To find empty their embraces
And to lament loud.*

In this example the pure sentiment of pathos is an auxiliary (to the praise of the king) and hence it is clearly Figurative Sentiment.

II, Vṛtti 5 continued — 2.5c A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

The mixed variety of auxiliary sentiment is instanced in the following:—

*Let the fire of Siva's shaft burn down
our sins; a shaft that conducted itself
in the manner of a lover who has given
offence afresh to his beloved:—Though
shaken off by the wives of Tripura with
fearful eye-lilies, it would cling fast to
their hands; though forcibly pushed out,
it would ho Id on to the ends of t' eir skirts;
though violently thrust aside by the hair
(of its feather), it would fall at their
feet and yet remain unnoticed because of
their agitation; and though pushed back,
it would hug them verily.*

Here, the main purport of the sentence is the extraordinary glory of Siva. The sentiment of love-in-separation due to jealousy is conveyed by *double entendre* and this is made auxiliary to it (i.e. praise of glory.) Only such instances are proper illustrations of Figurative Sentiment. Hence it is that though the sentiments of love in-separation due to jealousy and of pathos are mutually opposed, since they have been both rendered auxiliary (to the main purport, their inclusion in the same place does not become a defect. But in instances where sentiment itself happens to be the main purport) how can it ever be a figure? It is well known that a figure is (nothing but) an enhancer of charm. It is indeed impossible that a thing can become an enhancer of its own charm.

II, Vṛtti 5 continued — 2.5d A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

The following verse sums up the position:—

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.

Therefore, none of those cases where sentiment etc. happen to be the main purport, become instances of Figurative Sentiment. On the other hand they will only form a species of suggestion. Simile etc. are all enhancers of its charm alone. But in cases where the main purport happens to be some other meaning and when its beauty is enhanced by sentiment etc., we get proper instances of Figurative Sentiment.

Thus understood, the distinct spheres of suggestion, figures like simile and Figurative Sentiment become clearly demarcated.

II, Vṛtti 5 continued — 2.5e A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

If one were to assert that the treatment of sentient subjects alone serves to exemplify Figurative Sentiment, it would mean that figures like simile would either be left with very little scope or no scope at all. For even when the theme happens to be the behaviour of an insentient object, the behaviour of a sentient object also will in one way or another be superimposed upon it. Again, even when such a superimposition is present, one would have to say that it is not an instance of Figurative Sentiment in case the insentient ones alone form the main theme of description. And this would be tantamount to an assertion that the vast bulk of literature which happens to be really the golden treasury of sentiments is without any sentiment.

II, Vṛtti 5 continued — 2.5f A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

Here is an example:

Frowning with its waves as with brows,

*Girdled with the line of fluttering birds,
 Throwing off its foam as a garment slipped in anger,
 Hurrying in devious ways with far too tumbling steps
 Surely, here is my jealous beloved,
 Changed into the form of the stream.**

This is another example:

*There standest thou creeper,
 All slender, thy poor sad leaves are moist with rain
 Thou silent, with no voice of honey-bees
 Upon the drooping boughs; as from thy lord
 The season separated, leaving off
 Thy habit of bloom. Why I might think I saw
 My passionate darling penitent
 With tear-stained face and body unadorned
 Thinking in silence how she spurned my love.**

* Translation Sri Aurobindo's.

Or? to take a still another example:

*How do they do, those bower-huts, O friend,
 On the bank of the river Jamunā?
 Those companions of the sports of cowherdesses
 And those witnesses of Rādhā's amours?
 Now that none will pluck them soft
 To turn them into beds of love,
 I am afraid that all those fresh green leaves
 Do lose their greenness and become old.*

II, Vṛtti 5 continued — 2.5g A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

In these examples, though insentient objects happen to be themes of description, the attribution of sentient behaviour to them is quite obvious. Perhaps it might be argued that one may accept the presence of Figurative Sentiment in instances of this type wherein one finds attribution of sentient behaviour. At that rate, figures like simile will be left with no scope at all or,

at the most, with very little scope. For, there is no such insentient theme at all in poetry in which the attribution of sentient behaviour is wholly absent; it will be found at least in the form of (a sentimental description of) the setting or situation. Hence, only sentiments that are secondary in importance should be regarded as figures. If one finds a sentiment or emotion with paramount importance, it will serve only as the object for beautification by other figures etc. and is of the very essence of suggestion.

II, Vṛtti 5 continued — 2.5h A in IMP (skipped in EC Manual)

Furthermore—

(II, Kārikā 6 is skipped in EC Manual)

II, Kārikā 7

The Erotic indeed, is the sweetest and the most delectable of all sentiments. The quality of sweetness is grounded securely on poetry which is full of this sentiment.

II, Vṛtti 7

The Erotic shines indeed as sweeter and more delectable than every other sentiment. ‘Sweetness’ is a quality which relates to word and meaning of compositions (imbued with this sentiment) and not to mere sound-harmony. For, sound-harmony is found alike in forcefulness too (and is not a differentia of sweetness).

II, Kārikā 8

In sentiments viz., Love-in-separation and the Pathetic, sweetness will be uppermost. It is so because the mind is moved very much in such instances.

II, Vṛtti 8

The quality of sweetness alone is uppermost in the sentiments of Love-inseparation and the Pathetic as it causes great delectation in the minds of refined critics.

II, Kārikā 9

Sentiments like the Furious are characterised by great exciting power in poetry. The quality of forcefulness is that which inheres in sound and sense which produce this effect.

II, Vṛtti 9

Indeed sentiments like the Furious produce excessive excitement (in the readers). Hence, by secondary usage, one might refer to the sentiments themselves by the term ‘excitement’. The sound which produces this effect is none other than a sentence adorned by lengthy compound constructions. As for instance:

*cañcad-bhuja-bhramita-caṇḍa-gadābhīghāta-
samicūrṇitoru-yugalasya suyodhanasya /
styānāvabaddha-ghana-śonita-śoṇa-pāṇi-
ruttamśayīṣyati kacānistava devī bhīmaḥ //*
(O Queen! this Bhīma shall himself bind
Your scattered curls with his hands
Reddened by the profuse and coagulated puddles
Of Suyodhana’s blood as he lies low
With thighs pulverised by hard blows
From this terrible mace
Swung by these redoubtable arms of mine.)

The sense which produces this effect of forcefulness does not stand in need of lengthy compound constructions; it may contain simple constructions only. As for instance:—

yo yaḥ śāstrāṇi bibharti svabhujagurumadaḥ pāṇḍavīnāṃ camūnāṃ
 yo yaḥ pāñcālagotre śīśuradhikavayā garbhaśayyāṃ gato vā
 yo yastatkarmasākṣī carati mayi raṇe yaśca yaśca pratīpaḥ
 krodhāndhastasya tasya svayamapi jagatāmantakasyāntako'ham
 (Whosoever with over weening pride of his strong arms
 Bears weapons in Pāṇḍavas' battalions,
 Whosoever is sprung from Pāñcāla clan—
 Whether child, grown-up or embryo,
 Whosoever has been a silent witness of that ghastly deed
 And whosoever will cross my way as I move in the battle-field,
 I, in my blinding rage, shall prove a Destroyer
 Of each one of them and of even Yama himself!)

Thus sound and sense can both become imbued— with forcefulness.

II, Kārikā 10

That quality in poetry by which poetry throws itself open to the entry of all sentiments may be taken as perspicuity. Its applicability is universal.

II, Vṛtti 10

Perspicuity is just the lucidity in sound as well as in sense. It is a quality common to all sentiments and all kinds of composition. Hence this quality should be understood as primarily relating to the suggested sense only.

Chapter 3

THE THIRD FLASH

(The third chapter is skipped entirely in the EC Manual)

Chapter 4

THE FOURTH FLASH

(III, Kārikā 1–4 are skipped in EC Manual)

III, Kārikā 5

Though several varieties of the suggested-suggester relationship are possible, the poet should be most intent upon one of them in particular, viz., that relating to the delineation of sentiments etc.

III, Vṛtti 5

Though words involving the relation of suggested-suggester are possible in various ways, the poet desirous of securing novel poetic themes should be most intent upon one of them only, viz., suggestion of sentiments, etc. So long as the poet exercises undeflected concentration regarding the suggested contents, viz., sentiment, emotion, its semblance, and the suggesters previously explained, viz., letter, word, sentence, and texture, and the work as a whole, the poet's entire work will become strikingly novel. That is why in epics like the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, the subjects of 'battle' etc., appear quite new though they are described again and again.

In a work as a whole the delineation of a single sentiment as the predominant one will endow not only novelty of content but also abundance of charm. If one should ask for examples, we would say in reply that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is itself one example and that the *Mahābhārata* is another. Into the *Rāmāyaṇa* 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 Sīta 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 Vṛṣṇis as well as Pāṇḍavas, 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 that he intended final emancipation as the foremost of human values and Peace as the most predominant sentiment in the whole work. This has been partially brought out even by the other commentators on the *Mahābhārata*. Even the reverend sage himself whose foremost desire was the rescue of his fellowmen from the deep abyss of ignorance in which they were weltering by vouchsafing to them the light of supreme knowledge, has declared in no uncertain terms:—

*‘Just (as much) as wordly pursuits
Turn out to be unavailing,
One’s sense of aversion to them will become firm;
There is no doubt at all’.*

and so on in the same strain more than once. It stands out most clearly that the main purport of the *Mahābhārata* is the communication of the fact that Peace is to be regarded as the most prominent sentiment, the others being secondary to it and that final emancipation is the most prominent of human values, the other values being only subsidiary to it. The principal-subordinate relationship of sentiments has been set forth already.

Just as the body might be invested with prominence though it is only secondary when the really prominent soul is not taken into consideration, so also a secondary sentiment as well as a secondary value might be justly regarded as prominent in itself and beautiful.

It might be urged by some that all the points sought to be conveyed in the *Mahābhārata* have been enumerated exhaustively in the Introduction itself while the above point is conspicuous by its absence in the Introduction. They might add that, on the other hand, Vyāsa expressly claims in the Introduction that his work throws light on all the human values and that it contains all the sentiments.

Here is our answer to the objection: though it is true that nowhere in the Introduction we come across an express statement to the effect that in the

Mahābhārata, Peace is intended to be the most prominent of all sentiments and that final emancipation is intended to be the most prominent of all human values, it is also true that this has been conveyed in a suggestive way through the sentence—

*Herein, forsooth, will be glorified
Lord Vāsudeva too, the Eternal.*

The idea implied in this sentence is that all the other subjects described in the *Mahābhārata* such as the exploits of the Pāṇḍavas end only in tragedy and belong only to the realm of ignorance while the only eternal and truly abiding subject glorified here is Lord Vāsudeva. Therefore (suggests Vyāsa), ‘be devoted in heart only to that supreme Lord; don’t remain attached to empty pleasures and don’t be too intent upon excellences even like statesmanship, modesty, and valour just for their own sakes’! It is to suggest the utter futility of worldly existence indeed that *ca* (‘too’) figures last in that sentence. The verses that immediately follow, viz., ‘He alone is Real’, are also imbued with this very significance.

By appending *Harivamśa* at the end of the *Mahābhārata*, the great Poet-Creator Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana has made this inner and beautiful significance abundantly clear. By propagating the cause of whole-hearted devotion in that Absolute Reality beyond the realm of worldly existence, he appears definitely to have regarded the entire activities of worldly existence to be of the nature of a *prima facie* case (deserving refutation). He indulges in lengthy descriptions of the greatness of deities, sacred spots, asceticism, etc., only because they serve, in his opinion, as the channels of realising that Supreme Reality; other particular gods also are glorified only as so many manifestations of His Supreme glory. The description of the exploits of Pāṇḍavas etc. is also meant to produce a sense of renunciation; renunciation, in its turn, is the very basic instrument of final emancipation; and final emancipation itself has been shown in the *Bhagavadgītā* and other works to be a sure means towards the attainment of the Supreme Reality. Thus, indirectly, even the description of the exploits of Pāṇḍavas etc., might be regarded as a means towards the attainment of the Supreme Reality. Instead of referring to the Supreme Reality by the very word Supreme Reality, Vyāsa uses a synonym, viz. Vāsudeva. By this word Vāsudeva we should consider as intended the meaning of Supreme Reality only, which is the abode of boundless power, because in several contexts like the *Gītā*, this word has been widely used

to convey the meaning of Supreme Reality itself. It should not be understood to mean only the human form born as son of Vāsudeva in Mathurā but wholly the Supreme Reality itself imitating in every way the nature of such a human being born in Mathurā; because, the word under consideration, viz., Vāsudeva, is qualified by the adjective, viz., Eternal. And in other works like the Rāmāyaṇa, we find this word used as a proper name for other incarnations also of the Supreme Lord. This fact has indeed been established even by grammarians themselves.

Hence we are quite justified in saying that the purport implied by the sage for the sentence in question of the Introductory chapter is the perishable nature of everything with the single exception of the Supreme Lord and that the *Mahābhārata* as a whole is intended by him to convey the highest human value, viz., final emancipation, when the work is regarded as a scripture, and to delineate the sentiment of Quietude—whose nature is of heightened tranquillity and happiness at the cessation of desire—as the predominant sentiment in the work when it is regarded as a poem. As this purport happens to be the most essential one, it has not been stated expressly but conveyed by way of suggestion. An intrinsically essential idea acquires beauty only when it is revealed in a way other than the expressed. In polished literary circles it has indeed become a convention of wits to communicate their best ideas only through suggestion and not at all by express words.

Therefore, the conclusion is irresistible that novelty in poetic theme as well as great beauty of construction is achieved by adopting a single sentiment as predominant in any poem as a whole. That is why compositions containing only themes in keeping with sentiment are often seen to hold out abundant charm although they may be lacking in different figures of speech. For instance—

*‘Victory to that sage, the foremost of ascetics,
The mighty soul who was pitcher-horn;
For he could behold both the divine Fish and Tortoise
In the hollow of his single hand’.*

and such others might be cited. The idea that, in the hollow of a single hand, one could see both the divine Fish and Tortoise heightens the sentiment of Wonderment. Further, though the idea of the whole ocean being comprised in the hollow of the sage’s hand is traditional, the idea that both the divine forms of the Lord, viz., the Fish and the Tortoise were seen by him

there at the same time, is most original and it heightens the sentiment mentioned, all the more. An idea which is already familiar due to wide currency among people will not cause surprise, though it might embody an element of wonder.

An original poetic theme conforms not only to the sentiment of wonder but also to the other sentiments as In the following example:—

*That part of her body
Which touched the end of your balance
As you passed her along the street
Still sweats, horripilates and trembles;
O, thou handsome youth!*

The sentiment apprehended by contemplating upon the verse as it is, will never be had by any express statement to the effect, ‘By your touch, she sweats, horripilates and trembles’.

Thus we have demonstrated how poetic themes are rendered new by the contact of one or another major variety of *Dhvani* or principal suggestion. In the same way, the element of subordinated suggestion too which is threefold from the point of view of the suggested content will ensure novelty to poetic themes if adopted in the work. But we have refrained from illustrating it here in detail for fear of making the work unduly prolix. Refined critics should fancy it for themselves.