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**Application of *Dhwani* theory on R.K.Narayan's 'Monday Morning'**

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## ABSTRACT

Indian Poetics contains theories like *Rasa*, *Alamkara*, *Riti*, *Dhwani*, *Vakrokti* and *Aucitya*. These theories can be applied on the works of literature. Up till now Indian theories were merely talked about and discussed. Their application on literature can give altogether a new perception to the reader. The work of literature appears with many implied meanings in it. These implied meanings can only be gained with the application of certain theory on the work of literature. The present paper aims to study 'Monday Morning', the first chapter from R.K. Narayan's novel 'Swami and Friends' through the application of *Dhwani* theory.

## Introduction:

The present paper deals with the theory of *Dhwani* and its application on literature. The application of *Dhwani* theory on a piece of literature unfolds various layers of meaning out of the text. Every work of literature is pregnant with implied meanings and suggestions in it. One can get that implied meaning by the application of *Dhwani* theory on the text. Reading the text without the application of *Dhwani* theory can only give only the surface meaning to the text. Every text of literature has something to suggest in it. It depends on the reader that how he comprehends the text. *Dhwani* theory can be applied on any form of literature such as Drama, Novel, Short-story, Essay and Poetry. Every writer knowingly or unknowingly suggests his point of view in his literary work. With the help of *Dhwani* theory the work of literature becomes more enjoyable. In the present paper R.K. Narayan's '*Monday Morning*' from his novel 'Swami and Friends' is selected for the application of *Dhwani* theory. This chapter appears with altogether a new meaning to the reader when discussed from *Dhwani* point of view.

## The Theory of *Dhwani*:

Rajanaka Anandavardhana was a reputed Kashmiri poet, rhetorician and philosopher. He achieved the fame during the period of the 9th C.A.D. Anandavardhana is the author of the works which are both literary and philosophical. He has written many works like *Devishatakam*, *Vishamvklila*, *Arjuncharitam*, *Tatvaloka* and *Dhwanyaloka*. The *Dhwani* theory emerges out from the discussion depicted in *Dhwanyaloka*. The theory of *Dhwani* which came into light in the 9<sup>th</sup> C.A.D. ruled over Indian Poetics from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> C.A.D. Abhinavgupta gave his commentary on the theory of *Dhwani* in his scholarly work of art named *Dhwanyalokalochana*. Abhinavgupta, Acharya Mammata, Vishwanatha and Jagannatha also accepted the principle of *Dhwani* theory given by Anandvardhana.

Anandavardhana's theory of *Dhwani* changed Indian Poetics in its essence. Aestheticians were



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compelled to revive their notions about the older concepts like *Alamkaras*, *Guna*, *Riti*, etc., in the light of the theory of *Dhwani*. Anandavardhana made a great discovery by stating that every part of speech and small factors like case endings and particles can at the touch of imagination becomes pregnant with poetic meaning.

Anandavardhana says that any good poetry is one which contains *Dhwani* or the suggested meaning. He says that the sense of suggestion gives suggested meaning which draws our attention and leads to aesthetic pleasure. If one utters a word 'a flower', the word not only suggests that it is a flower, but also that it is beautiful. Good poetry always conveys emotions. In order to convey emotions, there must be imagination and context. Its meaning is indescribable in words. It deals with the hidden meaning which is very much delicate.

Anandavardhana and his followers clearly mention that they have derived inspiration for the *Dhwanyaloka* from the *Sphotavada* of the grammarians. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine the *Sphotavada* of the *Vaiyakarani*s and their concept of *Sphota* and *Dhwani*. Anandavardhana in his *Dhwanyaloka* hails the *Vaiyakarani*s with great respect. He states:

‘The expression is designated by the learned; the foremost among are grammarians because grammar lies at the root of All studies.’ (V.S. Seturaman, *Indian Aesthetics, an Introduction*, 83.)

The central idea of the theory of *Dhwani* is that words in their capacity of conveying sense, possess a threefold function, and consequently express a threefold sense. The three functions are known as *Abhidha* (Denotation), *Laksana* (Indication) and *Vyanjana* (Suggestion), and correspondingly the three senses conveyed are *Abhidheya* or *Vacya* (Denoted, Primary), *Laksya* (Indicated) and *Vyangya* (Suggested) respectively. Similarly, the three kinds of words that give rise to them are termed *Vacaka* (Denotative), *Laksanika* (Indicative) and *Vyanjanika* (suggestive) respectively.

The Suggested sense is that which is obtainable from a word over and beyond its Denoted or Indicated senses and in addition to them. The function of Suggestion operates when the other two functions- Denotation and Indication have exhausted of their capabilities for expression. As in the case of indicated sense, there is no necessity for the primary sense to be incongruous or inapplicable. The suggested sense is grasped along with the primary sense and further to it. Its realization is also dependent on the capacity of apprehension inherent in the responsive reader (*Sahridaya*), and his imaginative experience. And the possible



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suggested sense from a given usage is not limited to one.

In both the cases of suggestion (*Abhidhamula* or *Laksanamula*), suggested sense is comprehended in addition to the basic sense that helps to generate it. At the time of the realization of the suggested sense, that generative sense too should be clearly perceivable, and should be coherently understood by the reader. Thus suggested is always an additional sense. If the generative sense is a lamp, suggested senses are comparable to objects revealed by it. Dhwanyaloka defines *Dhwani* as follows:

‘That kind of poetry, wherein either the (conventional) meaning, or the (conventional) word renders itself or its meaning secondary (Respectively) and suggests the implied meaning, is designated by The learned as *Dhwani* or ‘suggestive poetry’.’ (G. Vijayvardhana, *Outlines of Sanskrit Poetics*, 106-7.)

In this way *Dhwani* is a type of poetry wherein words and sense lose their primary significance in order to suggest other things. It is also necessary that the suggested content is not too obscure. It should be capable of being grasped easily by the cultured sympathetic reader. It should demand no intellectual exercise for its comprehension.

Anandavardhana demonstrated that emotive and suggestive significance which is the very soul of poetry. By thoroughly explaining the linguistic and logical implications of the theory of *Dhwani* he tried to secure for it a high place of honour in the eyes of appreciators and thinkers alike.

‘It marks the termination of the old school of criticism and heralds the birth of a modern school, modern in style, in theory and in approach.’ (K.Krishnamoorthy, *The Dhwanyaloka and Its Critics*, 105.)

Different critics have looked at Anandavardhana’s principles of *Dhwani* from different perspectives and Anandavardhana also clarifies it in a nice way. Undoubtedly, the theory of *Dhwani* has certainly been the center of attraction right from the time of its emergence.

To Anandavardhana posterity is heavily indebted for enunciation of the principles of literary evaluation, - principles, that are eternal in character and are applicable even to modern literature. Application of these principles for the purpose of making literary evaluation of contemporary specimens of Poetic Art may yield splendid results by presenting to the academic world the striking fact, that these norms have not lost their relevance in contemporary society.



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In the twentieth century, Anandavardhana's theory has found a new lease of life, mainly under the impact of western stylistics and structuralism. Critics like Krishna Rayan and C.D.Narasimhaiah have been very enthusiastic about the practical utility of the *Dhwani* theory in the context of Modern Indian Literature.

We have talked too long (and expended much sentiment in talking) on the supremacy of Indian Poetics but invariably in theoretical terms and in isolation, without reference to actual works of art except for stray passages used as touchstones. The practice has persisted in discussion of Poetics in regional languages too..... The time has come for us to make efforts to test the adequacy of these critical concepts in responding to a given work of art. One is embarrassed to see them dismissed as obsolete in knowledgeable circles, while Aristotle, sharing much the same antiquity, still enjoys an enviable status in Indian literary circles and in discussion of Indian literature too, as if to imply 'Other abide our question/Thou art free.'  
(C.D.Narasimhaiah, Ed. *East West Poetics at Work*, ix.)

### Application of Dhwani Theory on 'Monday Morning'

According to Anandavardhana *Dhwani* means the implied meaning. R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* is a novel running through 179 pages. If one goes through the whole novel one can see many things in the form of implied meaning. This novel is divided into 19 stories. Each story comes as a part of the whole novel. Each story has been given the title. Each story is like a short-story and can stand alone apart from the novel. Each story is linked with the next one in such a way that they have something more to say when they come together. In this way all the stories have something to convey separately as well as jointly. Here the theory of *Dhwani* is applied on the first story i.e. 'Monday Morning'. It is given as under.

It was Monday morning. Swaminathan was reluctant to open his eyes. He considered Monday specially unpleasant in the calendar. After the delicious freedom of Saturday and Sunday, it was difficult to get into the Monday mood of work and discipline. He shuddered at the very thought of school: that dismal yellow building; the fire-eyed Vedanayagam, his class-teacher; and the Head Master with his thin long cane... (R.K.Narayan, *Swami And Friends*, 03.)



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The title of this story is suggestive because the morning which follows the holidays of Saturday and Sunday is very unpleasant for the student of village in general. How the boys like Swami are afraid of the very thought of the school going. R.K.Narayan indirectly criticizes the system of Education in India. R.K.Narayan describes the teachers who are fire-eyed and the Head Master himself with a thin long cane in his hand and the little children like Swami afraid of the very thought of the school. The words *unpleasant* and *shuddered* present *Laksana* or indication of the writer. These two words contain *Dhwani* in them through which the reader is able to get the point of view of the writer.

...He sat on his stool and shut his eyes to recollect what work he had for the day: first of course there was Arithmetic—those five puzzles in Profit and Loss; then there was an English—he had to copy down a page from his Eighth Lesson, and write dictionary meaning of difficult words; and then there was Geography. And only two hours before him to do all this heap of work and get ready for the school! (R.K.Narayan, *Swami And Friends*, 03.)

Swami is just about ten years old and when in the morning he sits on his chair for the homework the reader comes to know about the system of the school in which student are burdened with lots of homework out of their capacity. *All this heap of work* these words present the *Vyanjana* or the suggestion given by the writer. R.K.Narayan describes the scene of out of the school window and suggests indirectly that Swami's school, The Albert Mission School, has the railway station nearby and also one Infant School on the other side. The reader comes to know about the period system in the school in which the subject like Arithmetic, History and the Scriptures were taught.

When Swami presents his homework to Vedanayagam, Swami is pinched by him at the arm and Swami's homework gets the remark "*very bad*" and the notes are flung on his face which indicates the situation of the average student of Indian school who has to survive through many insults during the school life.

His reverie was disturbed. He felt a terrible pain in the soft flesh above his left elbow. The teacher was pinching him with one hand, and with the other, crossing out all the sums. He wrote 'Very Bad' at the bottom of the page, flung the note-book in Swaminathan's face, and drove him back to his seat. (R.K.Narayan, *Swami And Friends*, 04.)



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Mr. D. Pillai a history teacher is liked by all the students because he creates the war like atmosphere in the classroom. He believes that children can learn only if the right atmosphere according to the subject is created. This is the Suggestion that children like to learn with activity and not merely by the lectures.

Next period they had History. The boys looked forward to it eagerly. It was taken by D. Pillai, who had earned a name in the school for kindness and good humour. He was reputed to have never frowned or sworn at the boys at any time. His method of teaching history conformed to no canon of education. He told the boys with a wealth of detail the private histories of Vasco da Gama, Clive, Hastings, and others. When he described the various fights in the History, one heard the clash of arms and the groans of the slain. (R.K.Narayan, *Swami And Friends*, 04-05.)

Mr. D. Pillai's method of teaching conformed to no canon of education and he described the things with a wealth of details. This presents the suggestive meaning to the reader about the effective methods of teaching. The most boring subject like History can be taught effectively if proper methods are applied. This is the *Vyanjana* presented by the writer.

R.K.Narayan shows that in the school the scripture periods were also in the Schedule. In which the religious texts like the Gita, the Bible and other were taught from the beginning to the end The character of the Scripture Master Mr. Ebenezer is quite suggestive. Through him R.K.Narayan depicted those Christian teachers of the time who were fanatic. The teachers like him interested only in teaching the text of their religion only and the text like the *Gita* in their hands served as a weapon against Hinduism.

Ebenezer went on as merrily as ever. He had taken the trouble that day to plod through Baghavad Gita, and this generous piece of writing lends itself to any interpretation. In Ebenezer's hand it served as a weapon against Hinduism. (R.K.Narayan, *Swami And Friends*, 10.)

The author reveals the colonial mind set of the teachers. The fanatic teacher Ebenezer abused lord Krishna and called him arch scoundrel. He also said asked the Hindu God were doing when Mohammed of Gazni attacked on their temple. On the other hand he praised Jesus Christ and said that he is only real God who belongs to Christianity. This shows that at that at that time such teacher did not know what the impact of such things on the children would be. When Swami makes the counter questions that if Jesus Christ was



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real God why were he crucified and why did he eat flesh and fish and drink wine. At this Swami was beaten by that fanatic teacher. This suggests that how the teacher used to behave when they didn't have answer to the students. Such teachers used to behave in a fanatic rage.

...‘Why do worship dirty, lifeless, wooden idols and stone images? Can they talk? No. Can they see? No. Can they bless you? No. Can they take you to heaven? No. Why? Because they have no life. What did your Gods do when Mohammed of Gazni smashed them to pieces, trod upon them, and constructed out of them steps for his lavatory? If those idols and images had life, why did they not parry Mohamadan’s onslaughts?..... ‘Did our Jesus go gadding about with dancing girls like your Krishna? Did our Jesus go about stealing butter like that archscoundrel Krishna? Did our Jesus practice dark tricks on those around him?’ (R.K.Narayan, *Swami And Friends*, 05-06.)

Swami complains about this to his father who gives him a letter of complaint to deliver it to the principal. But the irony is that the principal does not take any action against that fanatic teacher but rebukes Swami that he should come to him first before going to his father. And things go on as they were going on. All these show that how the higher authorities were also helpless before the Christian power at that time. In this story the historical names like Vasco da Gama, Clive, Hastings, and Mohammad of Gazni are mentioned. This is the implied meaning that R.K.Narayan has also a good knowledge about the history of India. Through the depiction of the details about The Bible and The Bhagwat Gita the reader comes to know about R.K.Narayan’s knowledge about scriptures.

The value of friendship is indicated by the writer when Swaminathan comes out from Head Master’s room and does not share anything to anyone except his four friends Somu, Mani, Sankar and Samuel known as the ‘Pea’ on account of his size. Children have their own world apart from the elders. They can see the strangeness and absurdities in everything which the elders are not able to see. The writer indicates the children’s word and makes the reader see what a child can see. Things appear different when they are observed from the child’s perspective.

When Swaminathan came out of the room, the whole school crowded round him and hung on his lips. But he treated inquisitive questions with haughty indifference. He honoured only four persons with his confidence. Those were the four that he liked and admired most in his class. The first was Somu, the



Monitor, who carried himself with such an easy air... Then there was Mani, the mighty Good-For-Nothing... Then there was Sankar, the most brilliant boy of the class... The fourth friend was Samuel known as the 'Pea' on account of his size... The bond between them was laughter. They were able to see together the same absurdities and incongruities in things. The most trivial and unnoticeable thing to others would tickle them to death. (R.K.Narayan, *Swami And Friends*, 07, 08, 09.)

The religion plays an important role in the life of children. When Swaminathan hears the insulting words about Hindu Gods he cannot endure it. The reader gets the implied meaning of the writer that the religion has a special place in the innocent mind too. The child can go against the teacher too if something is said against the religion. Swaminathan's fanatic Christian teacher Ebenezar abuses the Hindu Gods and the reaction of Swaminathan to it is full of *Vyanjana*. It suggests the religious mind set of the children.

Swaminathan's blood boiled. He got up and asked, 'If he did not, why was he crucified?'... 'If he was a God, why did he eat flesh and fish and drink wine?' As a brahmin boy it was inconceivable to him that a God should be a non-vegetarian. (R.K.Narayan, *Swami And Friends*, 06.)

One more incident in this chapter indicates the same thing as above when it comes to Samuel the Pea. He is a Christian boy. When he is asked to give his opinion regarding the act of Ebenezar he is speechless. Being a Christian he cannot go against his teacher Ebenezar who himself is a Christian. R.K.Narayan indicates the impression of the religion on the innocent mind of the children.

Samuel the Pea, found himself in an acutely embarrassing position. On the one hand, he felt constrained to utter some remark. On the other, he was a Christian and saw nothing wrong in Ebenezar's observations, which seemed to be only an amplification of one of the Commandments. He felt that his right place was on Ebenezar's side. (R.K.Narayan, *Swami And Friends*, 10.)

### Conclusion:

In this way R.K.Narayan has suggested the implied meaning throughout the whole story. He has given all the events of the story in a very simple manner but all the events have their suggestive meaning. *Dhwani* prevails throughout the whole story. The novel fits properly in the structure of *Dhwani* theory.



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'Monday Morning' is a story with the meaning which is limited without the application of the theory of *Dhwani*. When this story is studied, keeping the theory of *Dhwani* in mind, it unfolds its meanings in *Abhidha*, *Laksana* and *Vyanjana* forms. *Dhwani* theory when applied on a particular piece of literature, that piece of literature appears with more meanings. If one goes through this story without the theory of *Dhwani*, the story gives the meaning, but in it is limited. Without the tool of the *Dhwani* theory this story cannot be perfectly understood. When this story comes under an umbrella of the *Dhwani*, it has altogether a new and universal meaning. The theory of *Dhwani* is not complete in itself. It is a tool which can be used to interpret a text. *Dhwani* theory is like a touch stone. Any text when given the touch of this theory becomes golden with suggested meaning. It becomes pregnant with another implied meaning. When the text is pregnant with meaning the reader gets it with different taste. Any text becomes enjoyable and with more implied meaning when gets connected with the theory of *Dhwani*. Any Indian text is not complete without its interpretation with the theory of *Dhwani*. This theory amplifies the scope of the given text.



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