CHAPTER 3

ĀNANDAVARDHANA’S VIEWS ON THE
READING PROCESS

3.1. Ānandavardhana’s reconstruction of Sanskrit poetics

The composition of Dhvanyāloka, by Ānandavardhana in the ninth century, is seen as a turning point in the history of Sanskrit poetics. The development of Sanskrit poetics is often divided as pre-dhvani, dhvani and post-dhvani periods. In the pre-dhvani period, Sanskrit poetics mainly concentrated on giving instructions to the poets on the art of composing poems. They were concerned about elements like alaṅkāra, guṇa, rīti etc. that enhanced the beauty of kāvya-s. They gave guidelines to the poets to avoid the occurrence of blemishes in the poems. The reader was not given much preference. But it should be noted that Nāṭyaśāstra, the oldest text extant on dramaturgy, contained many views that pertained to the spectator and the process of his aesthetic enjoyment. The concept of rasa found in Nāṭyaśāstra became an unparalleled concept in the field of aesthetics. Rasa later became the pivot around which the entire Sanskrit poetics revolved. The qualities of the spectator mentioned in Nāṭyaśāstra can also be applied to a reader as far as literature is concerned. But these concepts mentioned in Nāṭyaśāstra somehow came to be confined to the field of drama. Sanskrit poetic works of the pre-dhvani period, that are available today, confine themselves to śravyakāvya-s and consider dramas to lie outside their realm. The focus of
Sanskrit poetics underwent a dramatic change during the dhvani period. It was in Dhvanyāloka that a comprehensive approach encompassing both drśya and śravyakāvyas was adopted. Ānandavardhana incorporated the concept of rasa to śravyakāvyas too. He focused on the essence of literature that made it different from all worldly objects. He went beyond the paraphernalia of literature and upheld the prominence of the emotional aspect involved in the reading of literary works. The aesthetic and emotive dimensions of literary works were brought to the fore by Ānandavardhana.

Ānandavardhana successfully placed the concept of rasa mentioned by Bharata as the essence of literature as well as his literary criticism. Ānandavardhana ascertained the fact that rasa cannot be conveyed directly through words using the power of denotation. Words like śrīgāra, karuṇa etc. do not make the reader relish those particular emotions. Thus Ānandavardhana said that rasa can be manifested only through the process of suggestion or vyañjanā. He considered rasa to be a kind of suggested meaning. He says:

sa hyartho vācyasāmarthyaṅkṣipta
vastumātrakāṁkārasādayaścetvantaka prabhedaṃprabhinno
darśayiṣate...sarveṣu ca teṣu prakāreṣu tasya vācyād
anyatvam...tṛṭīyastu rasādilakaṣaṇaḥ prabhedaḥ vācyasāmarthyaṅkṣiptaḥ
prakāsate, na tu sākṣāccchadbavyāpāraviṣaya iti vācyād vibhinna eva.

sa hyartho vācyasāmarthyaṅkṣipta
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prakāsate, na tu sākṣāccchadbavyāpāraviṣaya iti vācyād vibhinna eva.
He considered *rasadhvani* to be the most prominent of the three kinds of suggested meaning i.e; *vastu*, *alaṅkāra* and *rasa*. He points to the importance of *rasadhvani* in the following words:

\[
kāvyasyātmā sa evārthastathā cādikaveḥ purā/
krauṅcadvandvāvyoṭhā ṣokāḥ ślokatvam āgataḥ//
\]

Here Abhinavagupta comments that Ānandavardhana, through this *kārikā*, actually indicates *rasadhvani* to be the soul of poetry by presenting the example of Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyaṇa*. The other types of suggested meanings stand to nourish the main *rasa* of a literary work.\(^1\) Ānandavardhana illustrated that every literary work contains an *aṅgirasa* and all other elements of the work stand to nourish it. Thus Ānandavardhana by giving prominence to *rasadhvani* needed to redefine the position of the poetic elements accepted by the earlier rhetoricians. Thus he redefined the concepts of *guṇa*, *alaṅkāra* etc.

He says:

\[
tam artham avalambante ye’ṅginaṃ te guṇāḥ smṛtāḥ/
aṅgāśritāstvalaṅkārā mantavyāḥ kaṭakādivat//
\]

Ānandavardhana considered *guṇa*-s to be the attributes or *dharma* of the *rasa*-s and accepted only three *guṇa*-s namely *mādhurya*, *ojas* and *prasāda*. Figures of speech were considered similar to ornaments like bangles, earrings etc worn by men. Thus figures of speech enhanced the external beauty of the *kāvyā*-s. Ānandavardhana gave attention to the proper incorporation of

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\(^1\) *Dhvanyāloka*, p.86. (All references to *Dhvanyāloka* edited by Jagannath Pathak, 2009).
figures of speech in literary works. He elaborately illustrated the ways through which the figures of speech could be employed to nourish the main *rasa* of a literary work. In this manner, Ṛnandavardhana totally revamped the traditional concepts that prevailed in Sanskrit poetics and presented a fresh approach to literature.

The earlier rhetoricians had ardently tried to classify the literary works into various genres. They tried to define and sketch the main features of each literary genre. But Ṛnandavardhana did not spend his time on classifying the numerous literary genres. Instead he approached all the literary genres with an open mind. He considered literary works of all genres with equal importance and attention. According to him, it was not the genre that decided the merit of a literary work, but the element of *rasa*. Thus he considered the *muktaka*-s of Amaruka to be like *prabandha*-s as they brim with Śṛṅgārarasa.² As a result of this attitude of Ṛnandavardhana, several Prakrit verses, *muktaka*-s, verses from dramas, lyric poems, epic poems, epics etc. find a place in his criticism. Moreover he adopted an integral approach in evaluating the literary works. This is seen in the fourth *Udyota* of *Dhvanyāloka* where Ṛnandavardhana evaluates the main *rasa* of the epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* as a whole.

Ṛnandavardhana’s thoughts on poetic meaning triggered discussions on the powers of words in Sanskrit poetics. Ṛnandavardhana came up with a third power of *śabda* named *vyañjanā* and the meaning conveyed by it as

² *ibid*, p.355
vyāñgya. The introduction of the power of vyāñjanā, through which words manifested the suggested meaning, gave a new dimension to the poetic language. Ānandavardhana said that it was the suggested meaning that was more charming than the literal meaning and considered dhvani or suggestion to be the soul of poetry. He pointed out that not everyone can understand this meaning. He named the reader with the capacity to enjoy this poetic meaning as sahṛdaya. Thus the sahṛdaya came to adorn an esteemed position in Sanskrit poetics and the monopoly of the poet was broken. On the whole, Ānandavardhana’s new approach to literature and literary criticism led to the birth of new streams of thoughts in Sanskrit poetics.

3.2. Ānandavardhana’s views on the literary language

Śābdabodha or comprehension of meaning from language is an important branch of knowledge in Sanskrit. It began with attempts in Mīmāṃsā philosophy to interpret the Vedic sentences. Vyākaraṇa, Nyāya as well as Buddhist philosophy developed their own theories of language comprehension. Numerous discussions on the various aspects of the theories of language comprehension were raised by these śāstras. All these śāstras accepted some basic concepts related to śābdabodha. But there were serious differences regarding the main linguistic element that helped an individual grasp meaning from a sentence.

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3 Powers of words like abhidhā and laksanā were accepted by them. But the nature of these functions was defined in different ways by them.

4 For instance, grammarians considered the verb to be the most important element in a sentence, while the Nyāya philosophy considered the subject to be the most important element. This led to differences in the pattern of comprehending meaning of a sentence in the two streams of knowledge.
Unlike the Western linguistic philosophies, Indian philosophies like Mīmāṃśā, Vyākaraṇa and Nyāya accepted certain powers of word that helped in language comprehension. Abhidhā and lakṣaṇā were accepted as the powers of word by almost all the śāstra-s. Some of them later came to accept another power named tātparya. Abhidhā or the power of denotation is that function of word which conveyed the primary meanings. These primary meanings are grasped by the readers when they have already understood their denotation with the help of conventions. Usage, words of old men, grammatical derivation, lexicons etc help a person to understand the primary meaning of a word. Some words have more than one primary meaning. In that case, factors like context, presence of another word, time etc. restrict the primary meaning and only one meaning will be grasped. If the primary meaning of a word used in a sentence is incompatible with the sentence meaning or it seems to be of no purpose in the sentence, then a secondary meaning which is related to the primary meaning is grasped. This function of word which conveys the secondary meaning came to be called as lakṣaṇā or the secondary power. Tātparya is the power through which the meaning of a sentence was conveyed.

5 śaktigrahaṁ vyākaraṇopamāṇakośāptavākyādyvayaharataśca vākyasyaśeṣādvivṛttervadantisaṁnidhyataḥ siddhapadasya vṛddhāḥ.
6 saṁyogo viprayogaśca sāhacaryanā virodhitā arthah prakaraṇaṁ liṅgaṁ sābdasyānyasyasannidhiḥ sāmarthyamaucitī deśaḥ kālo vyaktiḥ svarādayaḥ śabdārthasyānavechchede viśeṣasṃṛṭihetavaḥ
7 There are various doubts regarding the acceptance of this power. Tātparya is first found to be mentioned as a vṛtti in Jayantabhaṭṭa’s Nyāyamañjarī. Ānandavardhana does not mention about tātparyavṛtti.
Sanskrit poetics was mostly silent on the concepts of language comprehension till the time of Ānandavardhana. In *Dhvanyāloka*, Ānandavardhana established the existence of another power of word named *vyañjanā* (power of suggestion) and called the meaning conveyed by this power as *vyañgya* (suggested meaning). Ānandavardhana has not defined the power of *vyañjanā* in *Dhvanyāloka*. But he has showed the nature of suggested meaning to be entirely different from the primary and secondary meanings. It was this suggested meaning that lent beauty to literature. Ānandavardhana gets into a detailed discussion on the concept of suggestion in the third Udyota of *Dhvanyāloka*. There he demonstrates that the realm of the power of suggestion lies beyond the realm of the denotative and secondary powers. Ānandavardhana differentiates *vyañjakatva* (suggestive power) from *vāca katva* (denotation) and *guṇavṛtti* (secondary function) in order to prove the existence of such a power. He says that denotative power (*vāca katva*) resides in word alone. Words convey the primary meaning which has been attached to them by constant usage. But suggestive power (*vyañjakatva*) depends on both word and meaning. It can arise from the power of the word or its meaning. Moreover there is a fixed relation between words and their primary meanings. But there is no such fixed relation between the word and the suggested meaning. The latter may change when factors like speaker, listener, context, intonation etc. alter. In the first Udyota, Ānandavardhana gives examples to show how far the suggested meanings

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8 *Dhvanyāloka*, p.463.
can be different from the primary meaning. The suggested meaning may even be exactly opposite to the primary meaning.

As far as the secondary power or lakṣaṇa is concerned, it comes into play under certain circumstances only.\(^9\) Incompatibility of primary meaning, relation with the primary meaning and popularity by usage or existence of some motive element are those conditions. But no such conditions are required for the operation of the suggestive power. Elements like rasa and bhāva can never be expressed through primary or secondary powers. Words like śṛṅgāra, karuṇa etc. cannot lead to the relishing of rasa. Secondary power of lakṣaṇa too is incapable of suggesting rasa as it operates under certain circumstances alone which are not necessary for the relishing of rasa. Thus suggestion alone is capable of rendering the experience of rasa. It has to be noted that suggestion is not an attribute which belongs to word alone. Meaning, glances, gestures, music etc. possess this power. Ānandavardhana accepts this fact. But he says that abhidhā and lakṣaṇa are accepted as the denotative and secondary powers of word and if suggestion is seen as a function/ power, then it can be seen as a power of śabda.\(^10\)

Ānandavardhana applies the concept of suggestion to literary language. When the suggested meaning in a literary work predominates over the primary meaning and is more charming than the primary meaning, then

\(^9\) ibid, pp.31-32.

\(^{10}\) yadi ca vācakatvalakṣaṇādīnāḥ śabdaprakāravilakṣaṇatve’pi vyaṅjakatvaṁ prakāratvena parikalpyate tacchabdasyaiva prakāratvena kasmānna parikalpyate.
such a literary work is called as \textit{dhvanikāvya}. Ānandavardhana defines it in the following way:

\textit{yatrārthāḥ śabdo vā tam artham upasarjaniñkṛtasvārthau/}

\textit{vyaṅktaḥ kāvyaviśeṣaḥ sa dhvaniriti sūribhīḥ kathitaḥ//}

(A literary work where word subordinates its primary meaning and where primary meaning subordinates itself to manifest another meaning, then such a piece of literature is called as \textit{dhvani} by ancient scholars.)

As mentioned earlier, Ānandavardhana considered suggested meaning to be the soul of literature. He says that there is no literary work which does not have a touch of suggested meaning. But all those works do not become \textit{dhvanikāvya}-s. It is the charm of the suggested meaning that decides whether a poem is \textit{dhvanikāvya} or not. Ānandavardhana leaves this decision to the \textit{sahādaya}-s. Unlike the primary and secondary meanings, the meaning conveyed by the power of suggestion cannot be understood by all men alike. Ānandavardhana said that knowledge of grammar was not sufficient for a person to understand the suggested meaning. Men with literary taste could only understand it. This brought out the prominence of the reader in the

\textsuperscript{11} Abhinavagupta explains the term \textit{dhvani} in five different senses in \textit{Locana}. It is used to indicate the suggestive elements (both \textit{śabda} and \textit{artha}), process of suggestion (\textit{vyañjanā}), suggested meaning (\textit{vyaṅgya}) and poem with dominant and charming suggested meaning (\textit{dhvanikāvya}).

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{saṃsvā tānāty eva sahādayahṛdayahārīṇāḥ kāvyasya sa prakāro yatra na pratīyamānārthasaṃsparśena saubhāgyam.}

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{śabdārthaśāsanajñānamātṛenaiva na vedyate vedyate sa tu kāvyārthatattvajñāreva kevalam}
literary world because a reader with keen literary taste could only grasp the suggested meaning found in literary works. This led to discussions on the process by which readers grasped meaning from the kāvyas. Discussions on the process of comprehension of meaning from language were already current in other śāstra-s like Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya and Vyākaraṇa. But they were concerned about understanding the language used in everyday life. The rhetoricians were concerned about the language found in the kāvyas. Both are different. Thus Ānandavardhana focussed his attention on literary language. Thus he pondered upon the process through which sahṛdaya-s read a poem and grasped its meaning. In this chapter an attempt is made to analyse Ānandavardhana’s views on the reader and the reading process.

What is Ānandavardhana’s concept of sahṛdaya? Is the sahṛdaya an ordinary reader who recognises the hints left by the author and strives to understand the authorial intention? Is he just a passive perceiver of the meanings conveyed by the powers of the words? Does Ānandavardhana’s theory give the readers unrestricted freedom to interact with the text? Did Ānandavardhana regard reading as a process of mutual exchange between the reader and the text? Or is it just an exploration by the reader to understand the suggested meaning of the texts postulated by the author? Did Ānandavardhana postulate an interpretive community by putting forth certain strategies of interpretation? These are some of the questions that are to be answered while looking into Ānandavardhana’s views on the reader and the reading process in the light of the modern reader-oriented theories.
3.3. The concept of *sahṛdaya* in *Dhvanyāloka*

Ānandavardhana initially states that the notion of *dhvani* is being explained for the pleasure of the *sahṛdaya*-s. He stresses the fact that the suggested meaning can be grasped by *sahṛdaya*-s alone. Ānandavardhana recognised the role of the *sahṛdaya* in the literary world. Thus he attributed certain qualities to the *sahṛdaya*. *Sahṛdaya* is also called as *sumedhas*, *sacetās*, *sumanas* etc. in *Dhvanyāloka*. Ānandavardhana makes certain observations that shed light on the qualities of a *sahṛdaya*.

3.3.1. *Sahṛdayatva* as *rasajñatā*

In third *Udyota* of *Dhvanyāloka*, Ānandavardhana tries to define the concept of *sahṛdayatva*. He puts forth two views. The first view is that *sahṛdayatva* is the capacity to understand a *kāvya* by grasping the primary meaning of words without having the knowledge of *rasa*, *bhāva* etc. The second view is that it is the ability to understand the *rasa* and *bhāva* in a poem. In the first case, the readers limit themselves to the understanding of the mere denotations of the words, while in the latter, they comprehend the *rasa* evoked by the *kāvya*. Ānandavardhana dismisses the first view and accepts the latter. He calls *sahṛdayatva* as ‘*rasajñatā*’ or the capacity to relish *rasa*.

Ānandavardhana introduces the above discussion to substantiate the fact that the *sahṛdaya*-s alone recognise the *vyānjaka*-s or the linguistic

\[\text{14} \text{ Dhvanyāloka, p.394.}\]
elements which act as agents of suggestion. Thus by the term *rasajñatā*, Ānandavardhana seems to hint at the ability to identify the linguistic elements that manifest rasa in the text. Here Ānandavardhana does not explicitly portray *sahṛdaya*’s subjective experience of relishing rasa. *Sahṛdaya* is just presented as one who identifies the linguistic elements in the text that evoke rasa and relishes rasa. The process of relishing rasa by the *sahṛdaya* is left unexplained by Ānandavardhana.

Ānandavardhana, at one instance, presents a view that compares the perception of *rasa* to the understanding of the class or quality of gems by an expert. All people cannot understand the quality of gems.\(^\text{15}\) Similarly the ability of *rasa* differs according to the difference in the nature of the perceiver. Ānandavardhana presents this view as *pūrvakāśa* to substantiate the sequential perception of *rasa* after the comprehension of the primary meaning. It actually hints at the difference among the readers’ sensibility to relish *rasa*. He considers the process of reading poetry as one leading to the realisation of *rasa*. This sheds light on the ability of the *sahṛdaya* to perceive the essence of a literary text by comprehending the *rasa* found in it. This brings into prominence the emotional aspect of the reading process.

### 3.3.2. *Sahṛdaya* as *vācyārthavimukhātmā*

Ānandavardhana uses the term *vācyārthavimukhātmā* to portray the nature of *sahṛdaya*.\(^\text{16}\) The word actually means one who is averse to the

\(^{15}\) *ibid*, p.444.

\(^{16}\) *ibid*, p.102.
surface level meaning or the directly expressed primary meaning. Abhinavagupta explains the term \( \text{vācyārthavimukhātmā} \) as:

\[
\text{vācye’rthe vimukho viśrāntinibandhanaḥ paritoṣam alabhamāna ātmā hṛdayaṁ yeṣām ityanena sacetasām ityasyaivārtho’bhivyaktaḥ.}
\]

17

The mind of \( \text{sahṛdaya} \) does not get pleased by the surface level meaning and he enjoys aesthetic delight only after relishing the suggested meaning that is manifested before such a mind alone. Ānandavardhana reiterates this point when he says:

\[
\text{anapekṣitārthavīśeṣākṣararacanaiva bandhacchāyeti nedam nedīyaḥ sahṛdayānām iti.}
\]

18

It means that beautiful arrangements of words without meaning fail to please the \( \text{sahṛdaya’s} \) mind. Abhinavagupta explains the word \( \text{nedīyaḥ} \) as ‘\( \text{nikaṭataram hṛdayānupraveṣī} \)’ ie; one which pierces through and fills the heart. Thus according to Ānandavardhana, \( \text{sahṛdaya} \) does not fall for the external charm of the words. His reading of literary works does not stop with the comprehension of the primary meaning; instead they are intent upon relishing the suggested meaning or \( \text{vyaṅgyārtha} \). This view of Ānandavardhana indicates the fact that reading is not just the understanding of the primary meaning or the identification of an explicit figure of speech or recognising the beauty of sounds, but it is a process of exploration that leads
the *sahṛdaya* to the comprehension of the suggested meaning which lies implicit in the literary works. Thus the *sahṛdaya* explores the literary works so as to relish the essence of literature.

Ānandavardhana says that the *sahṛdaya* with keen appreciative faculty has the capacity to grasp the suggested meaning quickly. They do not need any lengthy explanations to understand the suggested meaning and a small example is enough for the *sahṛdaya*-s to grasp a notion in its entirety.

Ānandavardhana through his definition of *sahṛdaya* as *rasajña* brings out the emotive aspect of the reading process. The concept of *sahṛdaya* envisions an ideal reader who identifies and relishes the essence of literature. Though Ānandavardhana constantly holds on to the concept of *sahṛdaya* throughout the text, he gives more attention to the suggestive power of words. He portrays *sahṛdaya* as one who identifies the cues left by the author and uses them to perceive the suggested meaning.

### 3.4. Ānandavardhana’s views on the reading process

The analysis of *dhvani* reveals that Ānandavardhana explained the tenets of poetics and literary analysis from the viewpoint of the readers. Ānandavardhana clearly mentions that he is composing the text for the pleasure of *sahṛdaya*-s. He also states that the knowledge of *dhvani* helps

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19 `tadvatsacetasāṁ so’ṛtho vācyārthavimukhātmanāṁ buddhau tatvārthadarśinyāṁ jhaṭityevavabhasate
20 diṁmātraṁ tūcyate yena vyutpāmānāṁ sacetasāṁ buddhir āśāditālokā sarvatraiva bhaviṣyati.
21 ...tena brūmaḥ sahṛdayamanahpritaye tatsvarūpam/
not only the poets but also those who read good poetry. Änandavardhana clearly states that the essence of literature is not its literal meaning, but it is the suggested meaning that lies beyond the surface level. He portrayed sahṛdaya to be the reader who comprehends this essence of literature. He gave an important role to the sahṛdaya in reading and understanding the essence of poetry. But Änandavardhana makes only a few explicit statements regarding the reading process through which a sahṛdaya interacts with the text. Dhvanyāloka contains some hints about the process of reading literary works at certain places. On the basis of these clues found in the text, an attempt is made to construct Änandavardhana’s views on the reading process.

3.4.1. Reading as progression from the primary to the suggested meaning

Änandavardhana says that there are no literary works that do not contain even a touch of suggestion in them. The poets do not express everything explicitly in literature. It is the unexpressed meaning that lends beauty to the literary works. Änandavardhana says:

\[
\text{sārabhūto hyarthaḥ svaśabdānabhidheyatvena prakāśitaḥ sutarām eva śobhām āvahati. prasiddhiśceyam astyeva vidagdhavidvatpariṣatsu yad abhimatataram vastu vyaṅgayatvena prakāśyate na sākṣācchabdavācacyatvena.}^{23}
\]

Thus reading is a process of moving from the surface level of primary

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22 ityuktalakṣāpo yo dhvanirvivecyaḥ prayatnataḥ sadbhīḥ/ satkāvyam kartum vā jñātum vā samyagabhiyuktaiḥ/

23 Dhvanyāloka, pp. 576-577.
meaning to the comprehension of the implicit suggested meaning. Modern reader-response theorists like Roman Jakobson, Wolfgang Iser etc. too mention about the things left unsaid in literature. Roman Jakobson says that there are indeterminacies in all literary works and it is the reader who concretises these indeterminacies to complete the text. Wolfgang Iser too says that no author would present a complete work before the readers. This would render boredom to the readers. The literary works have gaps in them which are to be filled by the reader using his imagination. Iser quotes Laurence Stern’s words to substantiate this view.\textsuperscript{24} Similarly Ānandavardhana too believes that everything is not stated explicitly in literary texts and the essence of literature is always suggested. This suggested meaning is comprehended and relished by sahṛdaya-s.

Ānandavardhana views the process of reading as a progression from the surface level constituted by the expressed primary meaning to the deeper level of the implicit suggested meaning leading up to the relishing of rasa. He points out and reiterates the fact that there is an order/sequence in the comprehension of the primary and the suggested meaning.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{24} David Lodge (Ed.), \textit{Modern Criticism and Theory}, pp.189-190.

“Laurence Stern remarks in \textit{Tristam Shandy}: no author, who understands the just boundaries of decorum and good breeding, would presume to think all: The truest respect which you can pay to the reader’s understanding, is to halve this matter amicably, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself. For my own part, I am eternally paying him compliments of this kind, and do all that lies in my power to keep his imagination as busy as my own.”

\textsuperscript{25} tasmādabhidhānābhidhayapratītyoriva
vācyavāyaṇgyapratītyomimīttamīttibhāvānīyamabhāvī kramāḥ.
In the first *Udyota*, Ānandavardhana says:

\[ yathā\text{ }padārthadvāreṇa\text{ }vākyārthaḥ\text{ }sampratīyate/ \\
\text{vācyārthapūrvikā tadvatpratipattasya vastunaḥ//} \]

Ānandavardhana uses the analogy of word meaning and sentence meaning to demonstrate the process of understanding the suggested meaning. The meaning of a sentence is understood after comprehending the meaning of its constituent words. Similarly the reader first perceives the primary meaning and later grasps the suggested meaning. Thus the perception of suggested meaning is always preceded by the comprehension of the primary meaning. But the pace with which different readers grasp the suggested meaning would be different. Ānandavardhana then goes on to say what happens when the suggested meaning is perceived by the reader:

\[ svasāmarthyavaśeniava\text{ }vākyārtham\text{ }pratipādayan/ \\
yathāvyāpāranispattau padārtho na vibhāvyate// \]

Once the perceiver grasps the meaning of a sentence, the meanings of constituent words do not stand out separately from the sentence meaning. Similarly, the knowledge of the primary meaning would not stand out separately once the suggested meaning is grasped by the *sahṛdaya*. Thus the comprehension of the primary meaning is viewed as the initial step in the process of understanding the suggested meaning.

Ānandavardhana is seen to make a seemingly contrary statement on the relationship between the primary and the suggested meaning. He says:
Here Ānandavardhana stresses on the fact that the knowledge of primary meaning is not completely erased once the suggested meaning is grasped. The understanding of the primary meaning does not cease to exist (remains) even after the comprehension of the suggested meaning. This may seem to be contradictory to Ānandavardhana’s earlier statement in the first *Udyota*. Ānandavardhana tries to solve the seeming contradiction by saying that the purpose of the statements in the first *Udyota* was just to show the primary meaning as a tool/instrument to grasp the suggested meaning.\(^27\)

Abhinavagupta foresees this seeming contradiction and comments:

\[^{26}\text{Dhvanyāloka, pp. 460-462}\]
\[^{27}\text{idem}\]
Thus Ānandavardhana mentions that the readers grasp the primary meaning before understanding the suggested meaning. Even though the primary meaning would not stand out separately after the comprehension of suggested meaning, the understanding of the primary meaning does not cease to exist. The knowledge of the primary meaning remains. Ānandavardhana explains this by using the analogy of the lamp and the pot made visible by the lamp. The light of the lamp makes a pot kept in darkness visible. The lamp shines and shows itself, while making the objects around it also visible.

Ānandavardhana points this progression from primary meaning to the suggested one while referring to sahṛdaya as vacyārthavimukhātmā. Sahṛdaya is one who does not stop with the understanding of the primary meaning. He is not interested in primary meaning, instead he goes after the suggested meaning which is the essence of literature. This progression towards the suggested meaning continues till he relishes rasa, the ultimate suggested meaning. Thus a basic structure of reading process can be summarised as: Comprehension of primary meaning---- Comprehension of suggested meaning---- relishing of rasa.

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28 Dhvanyāloka, p. 102.
3.4.2. Varieties of dhvani and the reading process

Ānandavardhana’s classification of the varieties of dhvani also gives clues on the process through which readers grasp the meaning of literary works. Here is a brief sketch of the varieties of dhvani as described by Ānandavardhana.

a. Psychical resistance in avivakṣitavācyadhvani

In avivakṣitavācyadhvani, as the name indicates the primary meaning is not intended by the author. The following process can be observed in the comprehension of this variety of dhvani:

1. The reader first grasps the denoted meaning.
2. He finds the denoted meaning to be incompatible with the context. The denoted meaning may not seem to have any relevance in the verse or it may obstruct the proper comprehension of meaning from the verse. The denoted meaning is *avivākṣita* or unintended in the context.

3. The reader goes on to accept another meaning related to the denoted meaning which would solve the difficulty in comprehension. In this process, the denoted meaning of the word (*atyantatiraskṛta*) may be completely rejected or the attribute which stands as the referent of the word may be changed and another attribute would be focused (*arthāntarasamkramita*).

4. The reader would surely try to seek the motive behind the use of the literally unfit word by the poet. This purpose is termed as the suggested meaning. Ānandavardhana says that it is the power of suggestion possessed by the word which conveys the motive element and it is grasped by a *sahṛdaya* alone.

Wolfgang Iser also mentions about the obstacles in the comprehension of a text which leads the reader to different dimensions. He says:

> Even in the simplest story there is bound to be some kind of blockage, if only for the fact that no tale can ever be told in its entirety...Thus whenever the flow is interrupted and we are led off in unexpected directions, the opportunity is given to us to bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections- for filling in the gaps left by the text itself.\(^{29}\)

\(^{29}\) David Lodge (Ed.), *op.cit*, p.193
Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja refers to the production of a ‘psychical resistance’ in the readers when the readers encounter metaphorical usages in the text which produce a break in the flow of reading. He says:

Sometimes a word is used to denote a referent other than its normal one. Such metaphorical usage is common in all languages. If we take the word as denoting its normal primary meaning, the sentence may become nonsensical in the context. This produces a psychic resistance in the flow. It excites attention and requires interpretation for understanding the purport. The actual referent of the word has to be taken as different from its normal one, but in some way connected with it either through similarity or through some other relation.30

When the reader encounters obstacles in the comprehension of meaning, he certainly uses his imagination to interpret it and establish connections to understand the meaning. This is seen in the above explanation of the comprehension of avivakṣitavācyadhvani. In the above category of dhvani, the initial obstruction in the reading process is caused by the presence of some metaphorical usage. This creates a break in the flow and stimulates the reader to think about possible interpretations. His mind then ponders over the motive behind the metaphorical usage. The motive is conveyed only through the power of suggestion.

Ānandavardhana says that all metaphorical usages do not evoke such a break in the flow of reading. Faded or dead metaphors act like denotative words. Ānandavardhana is critical about the use of age-old faded metaphors that have become cliches in literature. He says that words like lāvaṇya have

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been used in a metaphorical sense different from the primary meaning for a long time. This has made their secondary meaning look like the denoted meaning to the readers. Use of such cliches in literatures does not interest the readers. When there is no freshness or novelty in the metaphorical usages, it does not create any charm.\footnote{Dhvanyāloka, pp.150 & 156.} Modern thinkers also classify metaphors into two: live and dead metaphors.\footnote{Vide Andrew Ortony (Ed.), Metaphor and Thought.} They say that dead metaphors serve just as literal meanings. Ānandavardhana is successful in analysing the charm of live metaphors in literature and he boldly rejects the dead metaphors that have lost their novelty and have been used by poets for a long time. He says that mere use of metaphors does not produce beauty in literary works. Only those metaphors lend beauty to literature which are used with certain motive and where the motive supersedes the charm of literal meaning. Thus Ānandavardhana makes a remarkable analysis of the use of metaphor in literature and its effect on the reading process. His observations indicate that an obstruction in the reading process generates semantic possibilities for the reader to explore.

b. **Vivakṣitānyaparavācyadhvani**

In the case of *vivakṣitānyaparavācyadhvani*, the readers grasp the primary meaning. The primary meaning of the words in the verse does not pose any problem of incompatibility. But the primary meaning seems to stand for suggesting some other meaning. Thus the primary meanings, though comprehended without obstruction (*vivakṣita*), seem to suggest another
meaning (anyapara), which cannot be conveyed by the power of denotation.
The reader grasps the other meaning ie; suggested meaning either gradually or very quickly. The sentences in literature are usually considered to convey a meaning other than the literal one. Wolfgang Iser remarks about this nature of literature:

When Ingarden speaks of intentional sentence correlative in literature, the statements made, or information conveyed in the sentence are already in a certain sense qualified: the sentence does not consist solely of a statement- which after all, would be absurd, as one can only make statements about things that exist- but aims at something beyond what it actually says. This is true of all sentences in literary works, and it is through the interaction of these sentences that their common aim is fulfilled.33

Ānandavardhana further classifies this variety as śabdaśaktyudbhavadhvani, and arthaśaktyudbhavadhvani. Here his classification is based on the main linguistic element that helps the reader in grasping the suggested meaning inherent in the verse. The reader may grasp the suggested meaning with the help of a word or a meaning. In arthaśaktyudbhavadhvani, it is the meaning which serves as the agent of suggestion. Ānandavardhana gives the following verse to illustrate this variety of dhvani:

\[
\text{evam vādini devaṇau pārśve pituradhomukhī} \\
\text{līlākamalapatrāṇī gaṇayāmāsa pārvatī}
\]

33 op.cit, p.191.
Here Ānandavardhana is seen to reveal a step by step process of relishing the suggested meaning. The reader first grasps the primary meaning. Once he grasps the primary meaning, he tries to recollect the past events connected to the context. Then he understands the first layer of suggested meaning. Here the first layer of suggested meaning conveys the shyness of Pārvatī. After comprehending this layer of suggested meaning, the reader goes on to comprehend Pārvatī’s love for Śiva. Thus the relishing of śṛṅgāra forms the second layer of suggested meaning. Here a step by step progression from primary meaning to a suggested meaning, suggested meaning to another suggested meaning is found. Ānandavardhana also mentions that this progression occurs slowly and not spontaneously.

Jagannātha Paṇḍita disagrees with Ānandavardhana’s exposition of reading the above verse. He says that the relishing of śṛṅgārarasa occurs quite quickly in the above verse and it does not happen gradually as propounded by Ānandavardhana. Jagannātha Paṇḍita mentions that the relishing of rasa always happens quickly without interruptions. In the case of interruptions in the process of relishing rasa, then it ceases to be called as rasa and becomes a mere fact which gets suggested. If the verse is relished in the way mentioned by Ānandavardhana, then the meaning that the reader relishes is only a fact and not śṛṅgārarasa. The spontaneity in the relishing is

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34 Rasagaṅgādhara (Vol 1), pp. 394-396.
pointed out by Mahimabhaṭṭa also. He remarks that the lack of spontaneity in the relishing rasa makes it a mere praheḷikā (riddle).\(^{35}\)

Thus it can be seen that Ānandavardhana follows the sequential process of comprehending the poetic meaning while presenting the varieties of dhvani. These varieties open up the different ways through which readers grasp the literary meaning. It can be seen that Ānandavardhana assumes the existence of kavivivakṣita or the intention of the author. He portrays the reader as one who strives to comprehend the author’s intention. Different words used by the poet serve as hints that help readers move through the poetic passageway and reach the end of aesthetic delight. But Ānandavardhana is silent on many aspects where the reader’s role seems to be vague. For instance in vivakṣitānyaparāvācyadhvani, Ānandavardhana does not mention the factors that make the reader understand that the primary meaning is intent upon suggesting another meaning. It is not clear whether this understanding involves some sort of inference by the reader. Several questions can be posed in connection with this matter. Does the primary meaning without any motivating factor convey the suggested meaning to the readers? What role does the reader play in understanding the suggested meaning? What factors determine the readers’ path to the comprehension of the suggested meaning? Thus analysis of dhvanikāvya and its varieties presents only a general sketch of the reading process.

\(^{35}\) tadiyamupāyaparaṃparoparohanissahā na rasāsvādāntikam upagantum alam iti praheḷikāprāyam etat kāvyam ityativāptih.(Vyaktiviveka, p.18)
3.4.3. Influence of author in the process of reading

Normally neither the Sanskrit poets nor the rhetoricians make references to the authors of the literary works. Works were studied as independent entities. Elements like author, the period of composition etc. were never taken into consideration in the evaluation of the literary works. The literariness of the works was studied by the rhetoricians. Similar to the structuralist view, Sanskrit rhetoricians too viewed literary works to have independent existence free from the hold of the author and his period. Sanskrit literary works contain very few facts about their authors. But it is a pertinent question whether the knowledge about the author of a literary work helps in the comprehension of the meaning of the work. Sanskrit rhetoricians are never seen to bother about the author’s identity and his biography to decide the meaning of a work. But Ānandavardhana is seen to utilise the knowledge about the author to analyse a particular verse quoted in the third Udyota of Dhvanyāloka. The verse is as follows:

\[
\text{āvavāyadrāvīṇavyayo na gaṇītaḥ kleśo mahān svīkṛtaḥ}
\]
\[
\text{svacchandasya sukham janasya vasataścintānalo dīpitaḥ/}
\]
\[
\text{eṣāpi svayam eva tulyaramāṇābhāvād varākī āhatā}
\]
\[
\text{ko’ṛthaścetasi vedhasā vinihitast anvāstanaṃ bibhratā//}
\]

Ānandavardhana here tries to refute a particular interpretation of the above verse which describes that the verse contains the figure of speech, vyājastuti. Ānandavardhana does not agree with this view. He tries to establish that the verse contains aprastutapraśaṃsā. For this, he first tries to guess the nature of
the speaker of the verse. He says that the verse cannot be the words of a person immersed in worldly pleasures (rāgi) because such a man would not belittle himself by saying that there was no one suitable to marry the woman created by Lord Brahma. He would not include himself among the list of persons unsuitable for her. The speaker would also not be a detached person who has relinquished all desires because such thoughts would not rise in his mind. After these observations, Ānandavardhana attempts to analyse the context. He says that the meaning of the verse can also not be derived with the help of context since the context of the verse is not known. He then puts forth the view that the figure of speech in the verse is aprastutapraśāpsā. According to him, these are the words of a person who is proud of his beauty and capabilities. The person expresses his disappointment that no one recognises his capabilities. He also does not find anyone else competent enough to match his abilities. Ānandavardhana comes to this conclusion by employing a different technique of reading. He says that the authorship of this verse is generally attributed to the Buddhist philosopher, Dharmakīrti. Ānandavardhana quotes another verse of Dharmakīrti\textsuperscript{36} which expresses the author’s disappointment on the inability of even the scholars to learn and appreciate his philosophy. Dharmakīrti says that his philosophy would get old in itself without being recognised just as the waters of the seas as they too

\textsuperscript{36} anadhyavasitāvagāhanam analpadhiśaktinā
apyadṛśṭaparamārthatatvam adhikābhīyogair api/
mataṁ mama jagatyalabdha sadṛṣapratiṁparamaṁ
prayāsyati payonidheḥ paya iva svadehe jārāṁ//
become aged within the sea itself. This verse is quoted by Anandavardhana to defend his interpretation of the former verse. Here he tries to find similarity between the thoughts of the speakers as both verses have been written by the same author. The author’s expression of his disappointment of not being recognised is seen to recur in both verses. This way of reading and interpreting the verse opens a new path. These explanations of Anandavardhana actually reveal the various possibilities that go through reader’s mind while reading a verse.

Here Anandavardhana is seen to proceed through a particular process of reading which can be generalised in the following way:

a. When a person reads a stray verse, the reader tries to get an idea of the nature of the speaker of the verse. In this particular verse, Anandavardhana first tries to understand the meaning of the verse according to the nature of the speaker. He is seen to consider the possible speakers (whether the speaker is a worldly man or a detached person).

b. The reader tries to imagine the context in which the verse would have been uttered. Anandavardhana here attempts to imagine a context to derive at the meaning of the verse.

c. As far as a stray verse is concerned, there may not be enough hints to determine the context and the speaker. In the above verse too, the reader is unable to determine the nature of the speaker as well as the context. The factors ie; speaker and context do not give Anandavardhana a definite answer.
d. The reader tries to find another element that would help him in understanding the verse. Here Ānandavardhana uses another element, the nature of the poet, to understand the verse. Most of the poets have some characteristic traits exclusive to them. Meaning of the verse composed by them could be deciphered by understanding these traits. The poems of a single poet would have some features common to them.

e. The reader would then try to find out other verses by the same author to understand the attitude of the poet found in them. Here Ānandavardhana finds another verse written by the same author and he tries to grasp the poet’s attitude from that verse. In the second verse, the poet expresses the futility of his philosophy because its depth and relevance is not understood even by the scholars. This attitude of the poet is grasped by Ānandavardhana and applied to the former verse.

f. The reader takes cues from other verses of the same author and utilises them to interpret the present verse. In the above example, Ānandavardhana also takes cues from another verse of the same author. He then assumes that the speaker is a person who is disappointed at the fact that nobody duly recognises his abilities. In this way he comes to a conclusion on the meaning, speaker and figure of speech in the verse.

If a situation arises where there are doubts regarding the speaker, context and its poet, then it is difficult to choose the criterion through which the meaning of the text can be derived. Ānandavardhana’s attempt to interpret the above verse in a particular way by refuting other viewpoints
his assumption of the existence of a fixed meaning or an authorial intention. He tries to establish the authenticity of his interpretation by ascertaining it to be the author’s intended meaning. A reader who is ignorant of the speaker, context or poet of a verse, may take a particular verse to be a stray verse and he would derive at a meaning of the verse in his own way. His interpretation may be different, but it cannot be termed faulty. When a reader reads the works of the same poet, he would grasp the poet’s style. When he reads another verse of the same poet, he would have expectations in his mind. He would be able to guess the general nature of the verse using his previous experiences. Anandavardhana seems to have employed this technique to decipher the figure of speech in the above example. He establishes his interpretation and refuses to accept the other interpretations.

3.4.4. Imagination of the reader

Anandavardhana reiterates about the power of words to convey the suggested meanings. Thus it needs to be examined whether the imagination of saḥṛdaya has any role in the revelation of the suggested meaning. When the saḥṛdaya grasps a meaning different from the primary meaning, with the help of the power of word, he automatically tries to find out some relation between the two meanings, ie; the primary meaning and the suggested meaning. This relation may come in different forms like similarity, contradiction, contrast etc. The reader does not need any kind of indicators

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37 Dhvanyāloka, p.263
like *iva* to make this connection. This is expressed by Ānandavardhana while explaining *utprekṣādhvani* ³⁸.

\[
\text{trāsākulaḥ paripatan parito niketān}
\]

\[
\text{pumbhir na kaiścid api dhanvibhir anvabandhi/}
\]

\[
\text{tasthau tathāpi na mṛgaḥ kvacid aṅganābhir}
\]

\[
\text{ākarṇapūrṇanayaneṣuḥatekṣaṇaśrīḥ//}
\]

In this verse, the deer runs around in distress and anxiety seeing the beautiful eyes of the maidens. The charming, sharp and long eyes of the maidens struck the deer as arrows and this made the deer to run around in fear. Deers are renowned for their pretty eyes. The poet imagines that the more beautiful eyes of the maidens pierced the deer like an arrow. This imagination is not denoted directly by the use of words like *iva*. It is left for the reader to grasp it using his imagination. Ānandavardhana says that *sahṛdaya*-s have the capacity to understand it without direct denotation.

In *śabdaśaktimūladhvani* (suggestion arising from word), the words in the verse may lead to two meanings (contextual and non-contextual). The reader understands both the senses and tries to find some relation between the meanings using his imagination. The relation between them would be that of similarity, contrast etc. This connection is not established with the help of the power of words ³⁹, instead it is the reader’s imagination that establishes such a relation. In the following example from *Harṣacarita*,

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³⁸ *ibid*, pp.292-293.
³⁹ *ibid*, pp.452-453.
The verse describes that the long period of summer season which puts an end to the spring season and comes with laughter that is white due to the white blossoms. The sahṛdaya grasps the second sense of the word Mahākāla ie; Śiva using his imagination and traces the similarity between the two. Similar is the case of contrast. For instance,

\[
\text{sarvaikāśaraṇamākṣayamadhīśaṃ dhiyāṇ hariṇ kṛṣṇam/}
\text{caturātmānaṃ niśkriyamarimathanaṃ namata cakradharam//}
\]

The meaning of the verse is: Bow before that lord who is the donor of refuge, who cannot be destroyed, who is the master of all, who reigns over intellect, who is called Hari, who has dark complexion, who has four-fold nature, passive, who is a destroyer of foes and who bears a wheel. The words in the verse are capable of conveying other meanings. For instance, the word sarvaikāśaraṇam means one who gives shelter, while the next word akṣayam, can mean one who does not have a shelter or a home. These two meanings present a contradiction. This contradiction or virodha is manifested through suggestion when the reader grasps the two meanings and then goes on to think about the contradictions presented by these senses.

The poets often use pronouns which are capable of suggesting the contrast, then the readers grasp this suggestiveness of pronouns and they

\[\text{40 Kṣaya means shelter or home. Amarakośa says: nilayāpacayau kṣayau.}\]
easily understand the contrast that is suggested.

\[ \text{tadgehaṃ natabhitti mandiram idaṃ labdhāvagāhaṃ divaḥ} \]
\[ \text{sā dhenurjaratī caranti kariṇām etā ghanābhā ghaṭāḥ}/ \]
\[ \text{sa kṣudro musaladhvaniḥ kaḷam idaṃ saṅgītakaṃ yoṣitā-} \]
\[ \text{māścaryaṃ divisairdvijo ’yamiyatīṃ bhūmiṃ samāropitaḥ}// \]

The verse describes the scene where Sudāmā’s hut gets transformed into a palace. The poor cows are replaced by magnificent elephants, the sound of musala is changed into the sweet voice of maidens. It is quite a wonder to see all these transformations occur in the Brahmin’s house within a few days. The situations like the old house and its pathetic condition are not stated directly. The pronouns \text{tad} and \text{sā} are enough to convey the old condition. Those pronouns make the reader think about the poor condition of the old hut.

Ānandavardhana says that there is no need to convey the idea of contrast or difference with words like \text{kva} etc.\textsuperscript{41} \text{Sahṛdaya}-s grasp the contrast without direct denotation. They do not merely grasp the primary meanings of the words in a literary work. They use their imagination to spot the various possibilities of meanings put forth by the words. They grasp these possibilities and try to establish some sort of relation between the various meanings. Factors like context, speaker etc. help the \text{sahṛdaya} in this process.

\textsuperscript{41} \text{atra sarvanāmnāṃ eva vyaṅjakatvaṃ hṛdi vyavasthāpya kavinā kvetyādiśabdaprayogo na kṛtaḥ.}
All these examples show how the imagination of the reader plays a major role in the process of reading. Ānandavardhana says that the poet need not use even a single word which would directly denote the charming meaning of the kāvya. He takes into confidence the ability of the reader to take cues from the verses and grasp the suggested meaning existing in them using his imagination. A sahṛdaya’s mind surely goes beyond the sphere of primary meanings. The use of words which may in some way denote the implicit meaning would hamper the beauty of the verse. This finds echo in Wolfang Iser’s view that not everything should be stated in a literary work, something should be left by the author for the reader to grasp using his imagination. Iser says that to bring a literary work to fruition, the literary text needs the reader’s imagination, which gives shape to the interaction of correlatives foreshadowed in structure by the sequence of the sentences. Then only the reader would find the process of meaning vibrant and interesting.

In arthaśaktyuddhavadhvani (suggestion arising from meaning), Ānandavardhana says,

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42 David Lodge (Ed.), op.cit, p.190. If the reader were given the whole story, and there were nothing left for him to do, then his imagination would never enter the field, the result would be boredom which arises when everything is laid out cut and dried before us. A literary text must therefore be conceived in such a way that it will engage reader’s imagination in the task of working things out for himself, for reading is a pleasure when it is active and creative.
43 ibid, p.191.
Here Ānandavardhana says that in this category, suggested sense arises from the denoted meaning without the function of word. Here meaning serves as the tool of suggestion i.e; vyañjaka. Here the sahṛdaya initially grasps the primary meaning. Then, he relishes the suggested meaning with the help of the primary meaning. Later he establishes connections between the two meanings. Thus the reader here tries to integrate two schema of primary and suggested meanings through some connections. In order to clear any doubt whether such a process of connecting the meanings occur during reading process, Ānandavardhana remarks: sabdārthavyavahāre ca prasidhireva pramāṇam. The familiar experience of sahṛdaya-s itself proves this beyond doubt. There is no need of any other evidence to accept this fact.

3.4.5. Oscillation between the past and the present

The context, recollection of past events, the speaker etc help the reader to grasp the suggested meaning. The readers recollect the events that happened before as they progress in the process of reading the literary works. Wolfgang Iser presents this aspect of the reading process in the following manner:

In whatever way, and under whatever circumstances, the reader may link the different phases of the text together, it will always be the process of anticipation and retrospection that leads to the

44 Dhvanyāloka, p.294.
formation of the virtual dimension, which in turn transforms the text into an experience for the reader.\textsuperscript{45}

It is normal for the reader to recollect the happy moments that happened earlier while reading the sorrowful events. Some kāvyā-s contain references to these happy moments while describing tragic situations. When the reader is reading a part which is filled with sorrow, such references make the reader remember the joyous moments. This intensifies the emotion of grief in the reader’s mind. This is shown by Ānandavardhana in the following verse:

\begin{align*}
\text{ayaṁ sa raśanotkarśi pīnastanavimardanaḥ} / \\
\text{nābhyyūrujaghasparśi nīvīvīraṁsanaḥ karaḥ} / \\
\end{align*}

Here the wives lament the loss of their husband, Bhūriśravas, in the battlefield. When they see the hands of their husband who is lying dead, they remember how his hand untied their girdles, pressed their breasts and touched their navel, thighs and loins and untied the knot of their skirts. While reading this, the reader too recollects the happy amorous moments shared by the king and his wives. This recollection in the light of the context of the king’s death intensifies the emotion of grief in the readers too.

The readers do not always require direct description of past events to understand them. The following example shows that there is no need of any direct reference to past events for the reader to remember them. Sometimes a pronoun would be enough to remind the reader of the past. For instance,

\textsuperscript{45} David Lodge (Ed.), \textit{op.cit}, p.194.
Here king Udayana describes how fire consumed his wife, Vāsadatta. While she was burnt by the cruel fire, her clothes would have fallen down. She would have moved her eyes in all directions in fear. Here the pronoun *te*, used as an adjective of her eyes, is adequate to make the reader think about the joys of the past. The pronoun denotes the meaning, ‘*those eyes*’. The reader thinks about *those eyes* of Vāsadatta which expressed her love for Udayana. Thus a single pronoun makes the readers recollect the beautiful past shared by Udayana and Vāsadatta. All these examples show that the reader constantly moves between the past and the present events in the process of reading and he constantly tries to connect both of them. Present events are better understood and enjoyed when viewed in the light of past happenings. This makes the process of reading more enjoyable and meaningful.

3.4.6. Recognition and recollection of suggestive words

Ānandavardhana discusses about the suggestive power of words in a poem. He says that the words in a poem do not stand to convey denoted meanings, but they act as reminders of other meanings. The words in a literary work remind the readers of meanings other than the denoted meaning.

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46 *Dhvanyāloka*, pp.325-326.
Thus it is recommended that the use of words like *pelava* etc. should be avoided in literary works as they remind the readers of some indecent meanings connected with them.\textsuperscript{47} The readers are seen to move beyond the comprehension of the denoted meaning as the words act as reminders of other meanings.

When a *sahṛdaya* reads a piece of literature, he recognises those words that were beautiful by their suggestiveness in other literary works (which the readers have already read). On seeing these words again in another work, the *sahṛdaya* remembers these words and their suggestiveness, even when out of context. Thus the perception of these words carries with it the recollection of its suggestiveness found in other literary works in the minds of the readers. Ānandavardhana makes it clear in the following lines:

\begin{quote}
*yatrāpi tatsamprati na pratibhāsate tatrāpi vyañjake racanāntare yad
dṛṣṭaṁ sauṣṭhavaṁ teṣāṁ pravāhapitānāṁ tadevaḥbhyaśād
apoddhṛtāṁ apyavabhāsāta ityavagantavyam.\textsuperscript{48}
\end{quote}

It means that the *sahṛdaya*-s carry in their minds (remember) the suggestiveness of words that are frequently seen in literary works. When they perceive those words in other literary works, they recognise the words and easily recollect their suggestiveness. Thus the readers retain in their memory suggestive words which strike them as charming. When they read other

\textsuperscript{47} Vāmana also discusses about the blemishes that occur due to the use of words which remind the readers of some indecent meanings. Vide *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtrāṇi* 2.1.

\textsuperscript{48} *ibid*, p.393.
literary works, on seeing those words, they recollect their suggestiveness and use it in the comprehension of the present literary work.

3.4.7. The credibility of the plot

Readers do not blindly accept what the poets describe. They think about the credibility of the story presented in the kāvya-s. The readers find it impossible and absurd to visualise an ordinary human being performing superhuman actions. If a poem presents an ordinary character to cross seven seas without any help, the reader would find it hard to believe. If the character was portrayed as a superhuman, then the reader would accept such actions. Thus the reader gets involved in the story only after it appears credible to them. The readers would surely reject such notions which seem quite impossible and senseless to them. Abhinavagupta mentions this as one of the rasavigha-s in Abhinavabhārati. Thus the proper presentation of the background and the appropriate portrayal of the character influence the reading process. In Locana, Abhinavagupta supports Ānandavardhana’s view by quoting some instances. He says that the readers would not believe the description of a normal human being crossing seven seas in one step. But if the same is described in the context of characters whose extra-ordinary powers are well-known, the reader would find such an action credible.

The reader uses the initial background information presented in the kāvya to make assessments and enjoy the subsequent events in the plot of the

49 ibid, p.362.
50 Acarya Madhusudan Sastri (Ed.), Nāṭyaśāstra (Vol I), pp. 658-659.
poem. The reader would create an image about the characters in his mind using the hints given by the initial descriptions. If the subsequent events in the plot contradict the initial descriptions, it would hinder the reader’s process of reading and enjoying the poem. Thus drawbacks in proper characterisation and corresponding development of plot disrupt the reading process. The reader’s sensibility would certainly question such improprieties.

It is to be noted that the sahṛdaya does not also go behind the truth or falsity of things portrayed in literature. The element of fiction is accepted by him. If someone does such an inquiry, it would make him a butt of joke.\(^51\)

This is regarded as one of the aesthetic conventions that guide the reading process. Schmidt says,

> Readers should proceed beyond the usual criteria of true/false and useful/useless and be guided by aesthetically relevant categories.\(^52\)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge too had talked about the necessity of ‘suspension of disbelief’ while reading literature. Ānandavardhana too supports this view to a certain extent as everything shown in literature cannot be certified by the truths of the world. But he says that unbelievable and illogical descriptions that stand out of the realm of readers’ sensibility ought to be avoided.

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\(^51\) Dhvanyāloka, p.489.
\(^52\) Quoted by Rolf A Zwaan in Aspects of Literary Comprehension: A Cognitive Approach, p.11.
Ānandavardhana uses the concept of suggestion to explain the falsity of worldly sentences. It is to be noted that Mīmāṃsā philosophy differentiates between the Vedic and ordinary sentences on the basis of its authenticity only. According to them, Vedic sentences, being apauruṣeya (non-human origin), can never be fallacious, while ordinary sentences can be false or valid. But Mīmāṃsā philosophy accepts the theory of eternal relationship between word and meaning. If the eternal relation of word and meaning is accepted, then the falsity of ordinary sentences cannot be proved. In order to prove the falsity of many worldly sentences, Ānandavardhana says that they would have to accept the power of suggestion. Otherwise, like the Vedic sentences, the ordinary sentences would also be always valid. The falsity of ordinary sentences occurs due to various reasons like untrustworthy speaker. Thus the falsity of ordinary sentences can be proved with the help of suggestion only. Unlike denoted meaning, the suggested meaning does not have a permanent relation with word. It depends on various factors like circumstances, speaker etc.

3.4.8. Deciphering multiple meanings

Ānandavardhana says that the viṣaya or the domain of word can be classified into two: anumeya (inferential) and pratipādyā (expressed).\(^{53}\) He says that the speaker’s wish to convey an opinion is inferential in nature. This includes his wish to utter words and convey a meaning through words. The expressed or pratipādyā refers to the meaning which the speaker wishes to

\(^{53}\) Dhvanyāloka, p.486.
convey. This is of two kinds: primary (vācyā) and suggested (vyaṅgya).

When the speaker conveys the meaning directly through words, then it is called primary or denoted (vācyā), when he does it indirectly it is called suggested (vyaṅgya). As far as worldly sentences are concerned, the speaker utters a sentence to convey a certain idea. Here the Nyāya concept of liṅga and liṅgin may be accepted. According to Nyāya philosophy, a liṅga can lead to the inference of only one kārya. Otherwise the liṅga would be fallacious.

Thus if the words spoken and the meaning conveyed by it are considered to have liṅga-liṅgi relation, then the words of a speaker can only lead to the inference of the idea conveyed by him. But this concept cannot be applied to the sentences in a piece of literary work. A sentence may act as the source of numerous meanings in a literary work. The reader tries to grasp the varied suggestions using his imagination and appreciative genius.

Ānandavardhana unravels those linguistic elements with the help of which the sahṛdaya understands the suggested meaning. The readers are influenced by even the minute linguistic elements like suffix, prefix, noun, verbs etc. The readers explore various facets of meaning by understanding the suggestiveness of these linguistic elements. The third udyota of Dhvanyāloka cites numerous examples where readers find innumerable possibilities of suggestion arising out of various linguistic elements. Each word plays its part in the reading process. The readers are influenced, not only by the meanings of the words, but also by the sound of the words. For instance, the letters like ša, sa, ra, ṭa, da etc. generate a feeling of discomfort when a reader is beginning to relish the sentiment of love. But letters like
tha, dha etc help to nourish the reader’s enjoyment of raudra and vīrārasa. All these elements influence the reading process and thus have a role in the process of aesthetic enjoyment. In the West, the influence of syntax and grammar on the process of reading was not studied seriously in the field of linguistics. But recently several experiments have been conducted that proves the impact of syntax, position of words etc. on the reading process. Ānandavardhana explores this influence in the third Udyota. In the third Udyota, Ānandavardhana actually shows the syntactic and semantic cues provided by the author in the text. These cues function as indicators that guide the readers through the path to perceive the suggested meaning.

The concept of suggestion opens up opportunities to interpret literature in different ways according to the nature of the speaker, listener, context etc. But these factors put certain limits to this freedom of interpretation. Ānandavardhana tries to bring about uniformity in interpretations by putting forth certain literary conventions. The existence of suggestion in literature, the suggestive power of words, identification of vyañjaka-s etc. were some of the conventions on which Ānandavardhana developed the interpretive strategies. This laid down a specific strategy of interpreting literature and thus helped in bringing in uniformity between the interpretations.

Analysis of Ānandavardhana’s exposition of dhvani reveals the fact that he accepts the possibility of the existence of multiple meanings which are different from the primary meaning. This does not mean that a reader can

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54 ibid, p.328.
interpret a verse in any way he likes. Ānandavardhana’s interpretations show that factors like context, speaker, poet and linguistic elements found in the verse act not only as agents of suggestion, but they also set limits for the imagination of the reader. Ānandavardhana pre-supposes a meaning which the poet intends to suggest through the literary work. This meaning is not directly expressed through words, thus it is the task of the readers to find out the meaning that is suggested. The reader takes the help of factors like context, speaker etc to understand it. He does not encourage the readers to make wild interpretations using their imagination. The author leaves ample clues for the sahṛdaya to arrive at the suggested meaning. The sahṛdaya has to identify these cues and arrive at the suggested meaning using his imagination. The identification of these elements requires not just the knowledge of the language, but a literary taste that goes beyond the primary meanings. The reader traverses through different levels of meaning using the above factors as aids to get to the suggested meaning and enjoy the aesthetic delight.

Ānandavardhana also leaves to the reader the task of evaluating the charm of different meanings of the kāvya. He reiterates the fact that the final say on the evaluation of a kāvya’s literary merit lies in the reader. The

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55 Ravinder Gargesh, *Linguistic Perspectives of Literary Style*, p. 80. “Roman Ingarden had remarked that the concretisation of the gaps/indeterminacies found in the text is done with the help of the clues contained in the text itself... ‘It can be said that readers fill in the gaps in a text through appropriate contexts of reading within range of contextual indeterminacy of the text.’”

56 *Dhvanyāloka*, p. 97.
reader’s experience alone is the main criterion to decide whether a poem is a *dhvanikāvyā* or not.

Ānandavardhana classifies literature into two categories based on the prominence of suggested meaning. The first category is *dhvanikāvyā*. As mentioned earlier, here the suggested meaning is more charming than the primary meaning. The second is *gunābhūtavyāṅga* where the suggested meaning is subordinate to the primary meaning. Here suggested meaning enhances the charm of the primary meaning. Ānandavardhana also mentions about *citram* which does not fall into any of the above categories. Here it is the primary meaning or the words that remain charming and dominant. There is only a namesake existence of suggested meaning. The criterion of classification used by Ānandavardhana may pose a question as to who has the authority to decide which meaning is dominant. The meaning which is more charming is the dominant meaning. Thus Ānandavardhana says:

\[
\text{cārutmotkarṣanibandhanā hi vācyavyāṅgyayoḥ prādhānyavivakṣā}
\]

Ānandavardhana assigns the task of recognising the charming meaning to the *sahṛdaya*-s. The meaning that the *sahṛdaya* finds to be more beautiful and charming is considered to be dominant in a poem. Thus it is for the *sahṛdaya* to determine the category to which each literary work falls into, on the basis of his reading experience.

In third *Udyota*, Ānandavardhana presents various combinations of *dhvani* with its sub-varieties, subordinate suggestion and figures of speech.
He unfolds the various paths which the reader takes while reading the verses. The reader may be impressed by the suggestiveness of a word or he may be enchanted by the rasa evoked by the entire verse. He may also be carried away by the beauty of the expressed or suggested figure of speech. The prominence of these aspects is left to the sensibility of the reader.

3.4.9. Process of comprehension of verses - Some examples

The process of comprehension of verses can be understood from Ānandavardhana’s analysis of some verses. He presents the following verse as an example of the proper use of a figure of speech to give way for another so as to nourish the rasa:

```
raktastvaṁ navapallavair aham api ślāghyaiḥ priyāyā guṇai
stvāmāyānti śīlīmukhāḥ smaradhanur muktāstathā mām api/
kāntāpādatalāhatistava mude tadvanmamāpyāvayoḥ
sarvaṁ tulyam aśoka kevalam ahaṁ dhātrā saśokaḥ kṛtaḥ//
```

In this verse, śleṣa and upamā which are found in the first three lines give way to vyatireka in the last line. Ānandavardhana says that this pattern of the use of figures of speech helps in the nourishment of the rasa. Here he begins a discussion whether śleṣopamā and vyatireka found in the verse are comprehended as two different figures or as fused with one another. Ānandavardhana says that the two figures of speech stand as separate figures. The readers first comprehend the pun in the words used in the verse. Through this pun, they understand the similarity between the hero and the Aśoka tree.
After this, the readers grasp the difference between the two. Thus the comprehension of the meaning of the verse is in the following way: śleṣa --- upamā---vyatireka.

The words like raktaḥ, śilīmukhaḥ, kāntāpādatālāhatiḥ etc. lead to the denotation of śleṣa. Śleṣa conveys the meanings of such words as related to both Aśoka tree and the lover. Once both the meanings are grasped through śleṣa, the similarity between Aśoka tree and the lover is grasped by the reader. Comprehension of pun leads to the comprehension of similarity. After this, the words saśoka and aśoka denote the contrast or vyatireka. Ānandavardhana says that vyatireka is beautified by the presence of pun and similarity in the first three pāda-s of the verse. But these figures stand distinctly. Thus it is an example of saṃśrṣṭi.

The opponents say that śleṣopamā stands fused with vyatireka because contrast gets its charm through the assistance of śleṣopamā. The charm and identity of vyatireka would wane away without śleṣopamā. Thus they comprehend them as fused figures of speech (saṅkara).

Ānandavardhana disagrees with the above view by putting forth two examples. In the first example, vyatireka is seen to exist without the explicit presence of upamā. Then he gives another example where upamā exists.

\[\text{no kalpāpāyavayoradayarayadalatksmādharasyāpi śamyā gādhodgīrṇojvalaśrīrahani na rahitāno tama kajjalema/ prāptotpattiḥ pataṅgānna punarupagatā moṣamuṣpatviṣo vo vartiḥ saivānyarūpā sukhayatu nikhiladvipādipasya dīptiḥ//}\]
Thus contrast is seen to exist without the help of *upamā* and *śleṣa*. In this way, Ānandavardhana tries to show that comprehension of contrast does not necessarily require prior-comprehension of either pun or similarity. Thus contrast can be comprehended independently. The arguments raised by Ānandavardhana are not so convincing and they seem to be *vacātopa* or a play with words. Still this discussion helps in analysing the way in which the elements of a verse are comprehended. It sheds light on the mutual relationship of the elements present in the verses that influence the reading process.

Ānandavardhana quotes the following verse from *Śīśupālavadha* to illustrate the pun that is suggested:

\[
\text{ramyā iti prāptavatī patākāḥ rāgaḥ viviktā iti vardhayantīḥ/} \\
yasyām asevanta namadvalīkāḥ samaṃ vadhūbhir valabhīr yuvānāḥ//
\]

The prose order of the verse is

\[
\text{ramyāḥ iti patākāḥ prāptavatīḥ viviktāḥ iti rāgaḥ vardhayantīḥ} \\
\text{namadvalīkāḥ valabhīḥ vadhūbhiḥ samaṃ yuvānāḥ yasyām asevanta}
\]

The terraces which are adorned with flags famous for their beauty, not crowded by people, thus increasing the desire for sexual pleasure and having curved edges, were enjoyed by the young men with their wives. The

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58 ākrandāḥ stanitairvilocanajalānyaśrāntadhārāmbhubhis 
tadvicchedabhuvāsca śokaśikhinastulyāśtaśadvihramaiḥ/ 
antarme dayitāmukhaṃ tava šāśi vyttīḥ samaivāvayos 
tatkiṃ māmanīṣaṃ sakhe jaladhara tvam dagdhumevodyataḥ//
meanings of the adjectives in the verse also correspond to the wives of the young men. The women are famous for their beauty, their ornamented body increase passion in their husbands. They have curved lines in their waist. This relation of meanings is not conveyed through denotation because the cases of the adjectives are similar to the case of the word *valabhiḥ* and not to the word *vadhūbhiḥ*. Thus the reader’s mind automatically links the adjectives to the word *valabhiḥ* and not *vadhūbhiḥ*. Hence the pun in the words is not directly conveyed, but through suggestion. The suggested pun leads to the perception of similarity of the terraces and the wives. Ānandavardhana describes the whole process of comprehending the verse in the following line.

\[
\text{atra vadhūbhiḥ saha valabhiḥ rasevanteti vākyārtha-pratīteranantaranaṃ vadhva iva valabhyā iti}
\]

\[
\text{Śleṣapratītīraśabdāpyarthasāmarthyānmukhyatvena vartate.}
\]

The comprehension of the sentence meaning that the young men enjoyed the terraces along with their wives is followed by the understanding that the wives are like the terraces. This understanding arises from the pun which is not directly expressed through words. The suggested pun, which is prominent, conveys the idea of similarity. The commentators of this verse have different opinions on the meaning of the word *samam* in the verse.\(^{59}\) The *vṛtti* of Ānandavardhana shows that he took the word *samam* to mean ‘together with’. The young men enjoyed the terraces together with their

\(^{59}\) Vallabhadeva takes the word in the sense of together with. But Mallinātha considers its meaning as equal or similar.
wives. But *samam* also has the meaning of equal or similar. If this meaning is taken, then the similarity would be directly denoted. Ñanandavardhana does not read the verse in this way. His way of interpreting the verse becomes clearer through Abhinavagupta’s commentary. Abhinavagupta says that use of the word *samāḥ* would have denoted similarity. The word would then directly connect the terraces with the wives and the similarity will be denoted. But the word *samam* is connected to the verb alone and through the verb, it is connected to *vadhūbhiḥ*. The adjectives of *valabhīḥ* help in the suggestion of pun and the suggested pun conveys the idea of similarity. Here the reader grasps the sentence meaning after understanding the prose order. This is the meaning expressed at the surface level. The denoted meaning is complete and appropriate even without the comprehension of pun. Once the process of denotation ceases and the sentence meaning is understood, then the pun gets suggested through the power of the words in the verse. In this manner, Ñanandavardhana’s analysis of this verse opens up the process of comprehending the verse. Abhinavagupta is seen to dwell on this matter in greater detail in his commentary.

### 3.4.10. Interpretive communities

In the Western literary world, Reader-response theories proclaimed that the literariness of the text was not based on the textual properties. They considered the reader to have a prime role in the constitution of meaning. But this put forth the problem of anarchy in literary world as readers could interpret a text in any way they like. As a solution to this problem, the
concept of conventions of interpretations developed. These conventions helped in bringing about similarity in interpretations. Stanley Fish was a radical supporter of the notion of conventions. He introduced the concept of interpretive communities. Each interpretive community possessed certain conventions on the basis of which their interpretive strategies are developed. Through these common interpretive strategies found in an interpretive community, the readers come to an agreement with each other. Readers belonging to each interpretive community produced similar readings.

Even though Sanskrit poetics presented different approaches to the reading process, there were surely similarities between the readings. Some lines in *Dhvanyāloka* seem to shed light on the existence of such interpretive communities who shared common strategies of reading and understanding. The three groups of scholars who opposed the theory of *dhvani* indicate the different approaches to literature. Moreover some of the statements in *Dhvanyāloka* seem to hint about such interpretive communities. For instance,

- *na ca tatsamayāntahpātinaḥ saḥrdayān kāṃścitrīparikalpya
tatprasiddhyā dhvanau kāvyavyapadeśaḥ pravartito’pi
sakalavidvanmanogrāhītāṁ avalambante.*

- *prasiddhiśceyam astyeva vidagdhavidvatpariśatsu yad abhimatataram
vastu vyaṅgyatvena prakāśyate na sākṣācchabdavācyatvena.*
The verse attributed to Manoratha, quoted by Ānandavardhana also portrays different approaches to literature. While concluding the views of the opposition, Ānandavardhana makes an interesting statement where the followers of dhvani who form an interpretive community are portrayed as readers who falsely claim themselves to be sahṛdaya-s. All these indicate the existence of various interpretive communities who shared common strategies to interpret literature and produced similar readings and interpretations.

3.4.11. Propriety (aucitya) and the reading process

Ānandavardhana sees the process of reading from a holistic viewpoint. The discussions on the concept of propriety (aucitya) in Dhvanyāloka take into account the psychological state of the reader while reading a piece of literature. According to the concept of Sanskrit poetics, a work of literature has a prominent rasa that runs through the whole work and all other emotions that are evoked become subordinate to the prominent rasa. The subordinate rasa-s nourish the prominent rasa. Thus the reader, who starts reading a kāvya, begins to relish the prominent rasa once the vibhāva-s, anubhāva-s etc. are portrayed by the poet. The process of reading will be enjoyable only when there is an uninterrupted relishing of rasa.

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\[\text{yasminnasti na vastu kiñcana manaḥ prahādī sālaṅkṛti vyutpannāḥ racitam ca naiva vacanairvakrokiśūnyam ca yat/ kāvyaṃ taddhvaninā samanvitamīti pṛityā praśaṃśaṅjaḍo no vidno ’bhiddadhāti kim sumatinā pṛṣṭhaḥ svarūpam dhvaneḥ/}\\]

\[\text{Dhvanyāloka, p. 27....alīkasahṛdayatvabhāvanāmukulitalocanair nṛtyate.}\\]
Ānandavardhana emphasises on maintaining the propriety of rasa throughout the literary work. The focus on the element of rasa helps in maintaining the emotive appeal in the readers. He also points out that readers would not tolerate any sort of distraction in the enjoyment of rasa which is the essence of kāvya. For instance, while reading Veṣṇīśaṁhāra, the reader begins to relish vīrarasa. But suddenly the emotion of śṛṅgāra pops up with the introduction of the scene with Bhānumatī and Duryodhana. This distracts the reader. The induction of inappropriate emotions in the middle of kāvya-s creates hindrances in the process of reading. The repeated portrayal of an emotion, even after it is once clearly expressed, distracts the reader. This would surely irritate the reader making him feel some sort of disinterest.

Ānandavardhana clearly mentions that strict adherence to the rules set down by Bharata does not always give rise to propriety; it may lead to adverse effects too. All these clearly indicate that Ānandavardhana was concerned about maintaining the smooth flow of reading which enabled the reader to fully relish the aesthetic delight without distractions. This proves that besides logic, the aspect of emotive appeal too has a prominent role in the process of reading.

Ālaṅkārasamīkṣā, mentioned in Dhvanyāloka, discusses propriety that is to be maintained while adding figures of speech in kāvya-s. It is actually a set of guidelines given to the poet that would help the reader make the process of reading more effective and enjoyable. While reading a kāvya, the

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62 ibid, p. 362.
63 ibid, pp. 236-237.
reader would start relishing the rasa contained in it. The poets have to incorporate figures of speech which would nourish the dominant rasa. When an unwanted figure of speech comes in, it disrupts the process of reading just as ditches and mounds in a road hinder smooth driving. The process of reading is often hindered by the repeated use of figures of speech like anuprāsa (alliteration), especially when the kāvyā evokes subtle emotions like vipralambhaśṛṅgāra, karuṇa etc. Ānandavardhana insists that the figures of speech should not be artificially added into a kāvyā by a poet using extra effort. Poets should incorporate only those figures of speech which would come to them naturally. The sahṛdaya-s would easily notice the artificiality brought about by unwanted figures of speech. This would obviously obstruct the whole process of reading. Thus Ānandavardhana is seen to give guidelines to maintain propriety in literary works keeping in mind the psychology of the reader. He wants the literary works to maintain the flow of reading process leading to the ultimate end of aesthetic relish.

3.5. Reading an entire work

Interpretations of a text are often classified into two kinds: local interpretation and global interpretation. The former refers to the interpretation of sentences and the establishment of coherence between successive sentences in a text. The latter helps the reader to understand the theme/ gist of a passage/ whole text. Global interpretation often becomes a prerequisite of the former. Sanskrit rhetoricians are normally seen to be engaged in local interpretation. But Ānandavardhana has dealt with both of them.
Ānandavardhana has in turn used the interpretation of some key sentences to reveal the gist of a whole text. Thus he has utilised local interpretation as a tool of global interpretation.

Ānandavardhana was the first Sanskrit rhetorician to analyse the main rasa (sentiment) of an entire work. He gave utmost prominence to the emotional element of literary works. According to him, the relishing of rasa was the ultimate end of the process of reading literary works. He made attempts to figure out the main rasa of the two epics. He explained that karuṇa and śānta are the main rasa of the two epics, Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata respectively. Here it would be interesting to analyse the factors or strategies that were used by Ānandavardhana, as a reader, to analyse the main sentiment of both the epics.

Ānandavardhana analyses Mahābhārata to establish śānta as its main rasa. Mahābhārata tells the tale of the battle between the Pāṇḍava-s and the Kaurava-s. It is true that no part of the text explicitly states śānta as the main sentiment of the epic. But the epic does not intend to just portray the great battle of Kurukṣetra. The beginning and end of the epic give hints to the readers about the meaning suggested by the whole epic. Ānandavardhana quotes the following line from the Anukramaṇīparva in Ādiparva of Mahābhārata which acts as a cue to the reader at the beginning:

\[
\text{bhagavān vāsudevaśca kīrtaye 'tra sanātanaḥ/} \\
[sa hi satyamṛtaṁ caiva pavitram puṇyam eva ca/]
\]
The *Anukramaṇīparva* of the *Mahābhārata* summarises the main theme and events of the epic. But nowhere does it mention about *mokṣa* being the main *puruṣārtha* upheld by the text or *śānta* as the main *rasa*. Ānandavardhana says that the above line, found at the beginning of the text, indicates that the epic actually suggests the greatness of the Ultimate or the Eternal which is hailed as Lord Vāsudeva in the text. Not only the above verse, but some of the succeeding verses too praise the eternal nature of Lord Vāsudeva. The above verse suggests that Lord Vāsudeva alone is the eternal being and all other things in the world are bound to perish. Besides this verse, the *Anukramaṇīparva* contains verses which praise the Ultimate. Moreover, it also contains verses which depict this *parva* as the main body of the epic.\(^\text{64}\) The tale of the Pāṇḍava-s and the Kaurava-s are told to show the futility and impermanent nature of human life. The main sentiment suggested by the epic is again nourished in the text through several other verses. Ānandavardhana quotes the following verse from the *Mokṣaparva* of the epic:

\[
yathā yathā viparyeti [ca paryeti] lokatantramārasāvat/
tathā tathā virāgo’tra jāyate nātra saṃśayaḥ//\(^\text{65}\)
\]

Here Bhīṣma tells Yudhiṣṭhīra about the futility of human life. The above lines help the reader to understand what the epic intends to suggest. It shows

\(^\text{64}\) *Mahābhārata* 12.168.
that the epic really has its focus on Lord Vāsudeva who is a personification of the Ultimate. The epic uses the story of Pāṇḍava-s and Kaurava-s as a tool to suggest śānta as the main rasa and mokṣa as the main puruṣārtha. The epic also ends with the defeat of the Kaurava-s in the battle. Pāṇḍava-s, though victorious, lose their kith and kin. At the end, they too relinquish everything and proceed to the svarga. This again indicates the impermanent nature of the entire human life. Moreover Sage Vyāsa has incorporated the Harivaṃśa as the concluding part of the epic. Here he narrates the lineage of the Vṛṣṇi-s which too meets with decline and also praises the greatness of Lord Vāsudeva. Harivaṃśa thus beautifully upholds the eternity of Lord Vāsudeva and suggests that all actions of human life are paths to worship Lord Vāsudeva and become one with Him. Thus mokṣa is seen to be the main puruṣārtha and śānta to be the main rasa suggested by Mahābhārata.

Ānandavardhana’s analysis of śāntarasa in Mahābhārata presents his aesthetic enjoyment of the epic poem as a whole. His analysis sheds light on his way of reading the epic poem. In this context, he is concerned with the whole poem rather than minute linguistic elements. A study points out the crux of Ānandavardhana’s analysis of the epic:

In accordance with his dhvani-understanding, Ānanda points out the key-evoker in the MBh (bhagavān vāsudevaś ca...cf. no.1.2.2) which evokes the main message of the kāvya. He brings all his exegetic skills to explain the richness of this vyāñjaka. The meaning of Vāsudeva (cf.no. 1.2.7), the significance of ca, the adjective sanātana in the essence are
brought out with the support of the works like the Gītā and the Rāmāyaṇa and of the grammarians.  

Ānandavardhana picks up key sentences from the epic which act as agents of suggestion. He chooses a key sentence from the beginning of the epic ie; the anukramaśparva. Ānandavardhana remarks:

\[ 
\text{tadevam anukramaṁ inirdiśtena vākyena bhagavadvyatirekīnāḥ} \\
\text{sarvasyānyasyānityatāṁ prakāśayatā mokṣalakṣaṇāḥ evaikaḥ paraḥ} \\
\text{puruśārthaḥ śāstranaye kāvyanaye ca} \\
\text{tṛṣṇākṣayasukhaparipoṣalakṣaṇāḥ śānto raso} \\
\text{mahābhāratasyāṅgitvenaiva vivakṣita iti supratipāditam.}  
\]

The discovery of such a key sentence guides the reader in the reading of the entire text. Thus Ānandavardhana reads and analyses the whole text in the light of this key sentence. He again points out certain key sentences from the middle of the text which again act as cue to the main rasa. The last portion of the epic further helps in cementing the gist of the epic suggested by the key sentences. Thus factors like the discovery of some key sentences, reading the text in the light of these key sentences which strengthen the theme suggested at the beginning and nourished in the text help the readers in grasping the essence of the text. The failure to identify such key agents of suggestion would make the readers incapable of relishing the main sentiment of the epic.

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67 *Dhvanyāloka*, p.576.
In the case of *Rāmāyaṇa*, Ānandavardhana identifies the cue at the beginning itself. Poet Kālidāsa has beautifully depicted this cue in his words *śokaḥ ślokatvamāgataḥ*.\(^{68}\) The first part of the text itself depicts the sentiment of pathos to be the crux of the story.\(^{69}\) The epic in turn ends with the permanent separation of Sītā from Rāma. Thus Sage Vālmīki has been successful in maintaining and nourishing the sentiment of pathos, which is suggested at the beginning, till the end of the epic.

Discovering some key sentences from the text is a prominent factor that helps the reader to understand the main sentiment of the text. The reader may grasp this cue from the beginning of the text itself which would help them in their reading of the text. The events of the story and the concluding part also stand to nourish the sentiment suggested by the key sentence. Once the reader grasps this cue, then the whole story of the epic seems to achieve new dimensions and the reader would be able to relish the main sentiment of the text. Moreover, it is also important that the poet is able to nourish the main sentiment from the beginning till the end of the text.

Thus Ānandavardhana’s analysis of the epics describes how a reader relishes the sentiment suggested through the entire work, i.e., the prominent *rasa* which the poet nourishes throughout the poem without directly expressing it. It gives an account of the way a reader connects various elements of the poem and finally comes to realise the main purport of the poem. The mind of the *saṅgītadaya* goes beyond the primary meanings and tries

\(^{68}\) *Raghuvaṃśa*, XIV.70.
\(^{69}\) *Rāmāyaṇa*, 1.2.15.
to figure out the overall sentiment or message conveyed by the poem. He tries to figure out his reading experience in totality. Ānandavardhana’s analysis of *Mahābhārata* is a classic example of the use of local interpretation as an instrument of global interpretation. Here the interpretation of some sentences from the beginning as well as the middle of the text is used to unravel the suggested meaning of the entire text.

Various factors beginning with minute linguistic elements to propriety of the figures of speech, portrayal of characters etc. help the reader in the process of aesthetic enjoyment. All efforts of the *sahādaya* is to reach that peak of aesthetic enjoyment where he loses his own individuality. Here Ānandavardhana seems to indicate that as a whole, the process of reading a complete literary work is the experience of relishing the *rasa* that is dominant in the *kāvya*. Thus Ānandavardhana gave importance to the element of emotion in literature more than any other element. He approached the literary works from an aesthetic viewpoint which freed literature from the rigid clutches of elements like alliteration, figures of speech, descriptions etc. Ānandavardhana proclaimed that it is always the emotional content that reigns supreme in a literary work. Here he has tried to unite a literary text semantically and thus revealed how readers come to relish the essence of an entire text.

**3.6. Analysis**

Ānandavardhana’s views led to the rise of a new approach in literary criticism. He approached literature with tools which had an aesthetic
dimension unseen in earlier poetic works. This gave rise to major changes in the basic concepts of Sanskrit poetics. It can be seen that Ānandavardhana, keeping in tune with other Indian philosophies, attributed certain powers to words. *Abhidhā* and *lakṣaṇā* were accepted by almost all philosophies. Ānandavardhana added one more power known as *vyañjanā* which was indispensable as far as literary language was concerned. He also expounded *abhidhā* and *lakṣaṇā* as the basis of the two varieties of suggested meaning. Even though the suggested meaning was comprehended only after the comprehension of either the primary or the secondary meaning, the power of suggestion rested with the word. Indian rhetoricians as well as philosophers associated the primary, secondary and suggested meanings with verbal powers. But unlike the Indian concept of verbal powers, modern linguistics does not attribute such power to words. The word considered as *signifier* has an arbitrary relation with the *signified* or the object denoted by it.

Jacques Lacan, a French thinker, put forth some ideas that showed the ability of language to express more than what it explicitly said. He brought about immense changes to ideas propounded by Sigmund Freud and Ferdinand de Saussure. The main observation of Lacan was that the unconscious was structured like a language. He said that a sign did not represent the unity between a signifier and a signified. The signified always slipped under a signifier and thus each signifier led to another signifier. This was an open-ended process. The relation between the signifier (S) and the signified (s) was represented by him as $S/s$. This led Lacan to say that
language always stood to mean something else. Interestingly he refers to the Dhvani theory when he refers to this nature of language. Lacan also quotes the Prākrit verse ‘Bhamma dhammia...’ and also passages from Upaniṣads-s to demonstrate the nature of language to mean something else. He also says: “For the function language in speech is not to inform but to evoke”. This seems to be similar to the suggestive power of word mentioned by Ānandavardhana. According to him the words in a literary work help in evoking rasa. Lacan also upholds the view that neither the author nor the reader has full control over the meaning of the text. Lacan considered language to belong to the realm of the Symbolic Order where an infant acquires a sense of separate self and assimilates the social and cultural codes. From this stage, the individual desires and strives for completeness, but never achieves it. Completeness always slips away just as the signified slips under the signifier. M.H. Abrams summarises Lacan’s view in this way:

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70 David Lodge (Ed.), *op. cit*, pp.61-72.
   Lacan actually attributes the dhvani theory to Abhinavagupta and not Ānandavardhana.
72 *ibid*, p.247.
73 Jacques Lacan conceives three stages namely the Imaginary order, the Symbolic order and the Real. In the first stage, the infant does not conceive himself as a separate self. He views himself to be an integral part of the mother and the world around him. Once he recognises himself in a mirror he comes to recognise his separate self. At this stage, he experiences a sense of lack and desires to achieve the completeness that he views in the mirror image (which he considers to be the ideal-I). This stage is a realm of language that is representative of the social and cultural codes which act upon him. The third stage of the Real is beyond language.
And according to Lacan, all processes of linguistic expression and interpretation, driven by “desire” for a lost and unachievable object, move incessantly along a chain of unstable signifiers, without any possibility of coming to rest on a fixed signified, or presence. 

Thus reading is never a process that ends at a fixed meaning. These views of Lacan give an impetus to the dhvani theory which too advocates the ability of language to convey something else and evoke sentiments in the reader.

Linguists bring all meanings other than the sentence or word meaning under the purview of metaphor. Modern linguists do not include metaphor in the field of linguistic studies since metaphor does not have any verbal association. They consider metaphor to be speaker’s utterance meaning which is different from the sentence meaning. But attempts have been made to analyse the nature and working of metaphors from different viewpoints. Psychological, sociological, pragmatic, historic and linguistic approaches have been used to analyse metaphors. From the point of view of modern linguistics, the suggested meaning propounded by Anandavardhana also comes under the category of metaphor. Some of the modern thinkers opine that both semantically anomalous sentences and literally meaningful sentences serve as signals of metaphorical use. Moreover these studies are not much concerned about the purpose for which the metaphor has been used. Jerry L Morgan, one of thinkers, points this out as a drawback of modern studies on metaphors. He says,

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75 Andrew Ortony (Ed.), op. cit, p.93.
76 ibid, pp.177-178.
Searle apparently assumes that the fundamental questions of metaphor can be dealt with and understood without worrying about its purpose. I am suspicious of this assumption...There is something special about metaphor and its purpose that goes beyond the purpose of other kinds of indirect speech...Until we get at the question of why metaphor is used, I doubt that we will ever understand what it is.\footnote{ibid, pp.146-147.}

The linguist, Roman Jakobson had recognised \textit{metaphor} and \textit{metonymy} as the two aspects of all discourses. He says that the development of a discourse may take place along two different semantic lines: one topic may lead to another either through their similarity or through their contiguity. The metaphoric way would be the most appropriate term for the first case and the metonymic way for the second, since they find their most condensed expression in metaphor and metonymy respectively.\footnote{David Lodge (Ed.), \textit{op.cit}, p.56.} He also says that in poetry there are various motives that determine the use of metaphor and metonymy.\footnote{ibid, p.57.} It can be seen that both these concepts of metaphor and metonymy can be brought under the category of \textit{lakṣaṇā}. Sanskrit rhetoricians give more emphasis on the element of motive or purpose of metaphorical usage. They considered that this purpose or motive of metaphorical usage is conveyed through the power of suggestion. Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja too mentions about this emphasis on the motive element by Sanskrit rhetoricians. He says
...even later writers belonging to other schools of thought are not interested in the motive element in lakṣaṇā; it is only the literary critics who give great prominence to it.

But in modern linguistics all of them come under the single category of metaphor. Ānandavardhana’s view that rasa can never be directly denoted through words was another breakthrough. Such a view was presented by T.S. Eliot too. His concept of objective correlative also advocates this view of Ānandavardhana. 80

Ānandavardhana’s innovations can be summarised as:

i. His conception of dhvani or suggested meaning and the prominence of rasa as the ultimate suggested meaning reshaped the basic norms of Sanskrit poetics. This led to the redefining of concepts like guṇa, alaṅkāra etc.

ii. Ānandavardhana defined kāvyā as saḥṛdayaḥṛdayāḥlāḍisabdāṛthamayatvam eva kāvyalakṣaṇam. Thus literature was conceived as the combination of word and meaning which rendered pleasure to the saḥṛdaya. He was obvious that it was the charm of suggested meaning that rendered beauty to literature. He established that literary works contained beautiful implicit meanings which were to be deciphered by the readers. Thus literary works contained layers of unexpressed meaning beyond the surface level of expressed meanings.

iii. Ānandavardhana brought to the fore the concept of sahṛdaya who was capable of grasping and relishing the essence of literature. Thus sahṛdaya came to the limelight as the capable reader who evaluated the charm of suggested meaning.

iv. Ānandavardhana presented a method of reading an entire text through his analysis of the two epics. He discovered a key sentence at the beginning of the text and used it in understanding the essence of all the events in the text. Thus the beginning and end of the text is linked in the light of the key sentence and the essence of the entire text is grasped by the readers.

Ānandavardhana’s ideas on the reader and the reading process have to be examined carefully in the light of modern reader-oriented theories. The following analysis can be made in this regard.

- He extended the process of reading from mere understanding of the expressed sense to the relishing of the suggested meaning of literature. Thus reading process involved a progression from the surface level of primary meaning to the deeper suggested meaning gradually moving on the relishing of the main rasa of the literary work.

- The pace of this progression differed according to the nature of the reader as well as the type of meaning suggested. Ānandavardhana also depicts the difference in the pace at
which suggested meaning is perceived based on the nature of suggested meaning. He calls them *samlaksyakramavayaṅgya* and *asamlaksyakramavayaṅgya*. The modern scholars of inferential knowledge talk about the pace at which readers make connections. They say: Thus, as it seems, we have (at least) two categories of missing links: one kind is automatically activated without requiring additional processing time; the other, instead, is not automatic, but the result of a bridging inference, and so requires additional processing time.⁸¹

> Anandavardhana discouraged the use of faded metaphors in *kāvya*-s. Fresh metaphors that intend to serve a purpose can only create obstacles in the reading process. Such obstacles provide opportunity for the reader to explore the semantic possibilities. Thus a literally difficulty makes way for reader’s creative involvement in the reading process.

> The suggested meaning cannot be understood by anyone who is efficient in the language, instead the reader needs to be a *sahṛdaya* to understand it. All these observations of Anandavardhana cemented the concept of a *sahṛdaya* who has the requisite creative faculties needed to relish the poetic meaning. Thus all readers do not become *sahṛdaya*.

> Anandavardhana portrays *sahṛdaya* as an ideal reader who is capable of going beyond the level of primary meaning. But he does not specify the

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⁸¹Mauricio Iza and Jesus Ezquerro, ‘Elaborative inferences’, *anales de psicologia*, p. 229.
kind of knowledge to be possessed by the reader to become a sahṛdaya, neither does he talk about the attributes to be possessed by the sahṛdaya.

- Through the portrayal of sahṛdaya as rasajña, Ānandavardhana hints at the importance of the emotive aspect of literature. Reading is a complex process that involves the interplay of various elements. The above view marks the prominence of the emotional aspect involved in the reading process.

- Sahṛdaya is more or less presented as an ideal reader who can identify the cues left by the author. He is the reader who can comprehend the authorial intention and reach the peak of aesthetic relish. His imagination is given due regard in the execution of this process.

- Sahṛdaya is not given the power to interpret the literary works according to his whims and fancies. He needs to take into consideration factors like speaker, context, poet etc. This needs to be followed in the interpretation of stray verses too.

- The syntactic and other linguistic elements pointed by Ānandavardhana as means of suggestion actually act as a set of linguistic cues that channelize the reader’s imagination. Thus they help in bringing about certain amount of uniformity among the interpretations.

- Ānandavardhana, through his theory of dhvani, sets a framework of conventions to interpret literary works. Thus the interpretive strategies envisaged by him led to the formation of an interpretive community.
which analysed literature from a particular point of view. Rhetoricians like Mammaṭa, Viśvanātha, Jagannātha etc. pertained to these conventions with minor deviations.

The modern reception theorists like Wolfgang Iser and Roman Jakobson also describe the process of filling the gaps found in the literary texts by the reader using his imagination. They conceive reading as an interactive process involving the reader and the text. But similar to the conventions put forth by Ānandavardhana, they also mention about the restriction imposed on the reader by the text. Iser says:

> The ‘stars’ in a literary text are fixed; the lines that join them are variable. The author of the text may, of course, exert plenty of influence on the reader’s imagination— he has the whole panoply of the narrative techniques at his disposal— but no author worth his salt will ever attempt to set the whole picture before his reader’s eyes. If he does, he will very quickly lose his reader, for it is only by activating the reader’s imagination that the author can hope to involve him and so realize the intentions of the text.  

82 The propagators of reader-oriented theories recognised the active role of the reader in completing the meaning of the texts. They pointed out that each reader interacted with a text in his own way and thus reconstruction of the text by each reader differed. But they were not ready to accept anarchy in the interpretation of texts. Some of them like Wolfgang Iser, Roman Jakobson accepted the existence of writer’s control on the reader through the narrative techniques in the text. They also accepted the existence of some kind of

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82 David Lodge (Ed.), *op.cit.*, p.195.
authorial intention. Some others like Stanley Fish brought out the concept of interpretive communities and conventions that generated similarities in interpretations. Thus even the reader-oriented theories did not give the readers a free run in the interpretations. The author was not truly dead in these theories. There were some kinds of restrictions on the imagination of the readers.

When Ānandavardhana is evaluated/ studied from the perspective of modern reader-oriented theories, it can be seen that readers were not given the full freedom to reconstruct a text in their own way. The concept of dhvani and vyañjanā put forth by Ānandavardhana unravelled various possibilities for the reader to explore numerous vistas of interpretation. It put together the various elements of the kāvya that contributed to the reading experience of the sahṛdaya. It took into confidence the sensibility of the reader to move from the level of primary meaning and relish the realm of suggested meaning. Ānandavardhana is seen to believe in the existence of an authorial meaning (kavivivakṣita) which is obviously different from the surface level meaning. This authorial intention is suggested. The poet leaves many clues in the work which help the reader who sets out to decipher this hidden suggested meaning. Ānandavardhana did not portray sahṛdaya as an ordinary reader, instead he had certain attributes that made him capable of perceiving suggested meanings. He envisaged sahṛdaya to be a reader who is equipped with imagination and appreciative abilities in order to traverse the multiple layers of meaning found in literature. But sahṛdaya did not make meanings according to his will, instead he recognised the suggested elements and
traversed the path set by the poet to the ultimate poetic meaning. Factors like context, linguistic elements like adjectives, verbs, suffices, syntax etc. limited and guided the reader’s imagination. Ānandavardhana leaves the task of evaluating the charm of suggested meaning to the sahṛdaya. But he does not explain the factors that make the suggested meaning appear more charming than the primary meaning.

Thus Ānandavardhana did not conceive literature as an open book that revealed itself to the reader, but it was a complex entity containing multiple layers of meaning to be explored by an able reader. The readers use their imagination, knowledge and sensibility to traverse the realm of denoted meaning to higher levels until they derive aesthetic pleasure from the suggested meaning. Thus reading is a process of interaction between the text and the reader. The text puts forth various possibilities of interpretations as well as restrictions on the readers. The readers with literary taste, imagination and genius utilise these possibilities to decipher the suggested meanings.

3.7. A critique on Ānandavardhana’s views on the reader

It is true that Ānandavardhana emphasised the existence of a reader with aesthetic sensibility alone was capable of relishing the essence of literature. This gave sahṛdaya-s a position equivalent to the poet in the literary world. But even while accepting the prominence of the sahṛdaya-s, Ānandavardhana considered the manifestation of suggested meaning to be a function of the word (śabdavṛtti). It was the literary language which possessed the power of manifesting the suggested meaning. The suggested
meaning manifested by language was relished by a reader with aesthetic sensibility. But Ānandavardhana’s text does not offer any hint of the way the sahṛdaya-s interact with the text and relish the suggested meaning. Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy too had raised this point. He says:

Abhinavagupta is our authority on aesthetic psychology and on the state of the reader during rasāsvāda. But Ānandavardhana spares us from any account of these. By the term rasa he refers not only to the reader’s aesthetic response and to the poet’s creative afflatus which are both subjective, but to the permanent status or sthāyībhāva-s objectively embodied in the poem through characters and plot.83

It was mentioned earlier that Ānandavardhana considered sahṛdayatva as rasajñatā. He puts forth the concept that the literary texts evoke rasa with the help of the suggestive power of the literary language. Sahṛdaya-s identify this suggestive power and comprehend the meaning suggested by the text. Rasa is considered to be the ultimate poetic meaning suggested by literary works. Ānandavardhana’s sahṛdaya is portrayed as one who is capable of comprehending this meaning by identifying the linguistic elements that evoke rasa. But unlike the later rhetoricians he does not show the sahṛdaya to be the locus of rasa. He also does not try to explain the process through which sahṛdaya comprehends the rasa evoked by the text. This aspect of reading gains prominence in the later texts of Sanskrit poetics.

The theory of suggestion put forth by Ānandavardhana does not elaborate the role played by the reader in perceiving and enjoying the

83 Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy, Studies in Indian Aesthetics and Criticism, p. 172.
aesthetic meaning, instead it focuses on the features of the text that help in manifesting the suggested meaning. If the suggested meaning is just manifested by the words before a sahādaya, then it raises a question as to what active role does the sahādaya have in the process of reading and relishing of suggested meaning. If suggestion is solely the power of word, then sahādaya becomes a passive perceiver of the suggested meaning. He ceases to have an active role in the relishing of the essence of literature.