CHAPTER 3
DHVANI : THE UNDERTONES OF SUGGESTION

The concept of dhvani has such aesthetic dimensions that it can be seen as operative in literary art when fullness of thought or feeling cannot be expressed.

From its literal meaning of sound, echo, noise, to its metaphorical meaning of resonance or essential meaning in works of art, it has been assigned a high position in Indian aesthetic theories. It is identified as the power of suggestion which a work of art has necessarily to possess. This power has to be achieved through the medium of language, and then dhvani is present when the literal meaning or even the metaphorical meaning is made subordinate to the suggested meaning. The term dhvani itself in this context is an excellent example of what it stands for.

Dhvani as a term in linguistics refers to the final sound in a word, which, when apprehended, suggests or reveals a phonological identity of the whole word. Anandavardhana sees in this implication the very beauty of literary art and claims for this term the highest place in poetry and literary art. He calls it "meaning revealed in a flash" and also hints at the potential of the term to describe the poetic effort as also the experience on the part of the reader.
Ānandavardhana and his followers agree that poetic vision is instantaneous or timeless. They are agreed that the past and the present appear as one integral whole in the poet's vision. Stories like the Rāmāyana, it is believed, appeared instantaneously in one flash of insight. The whole saga of the Rāmāyana was revealed to sage Vālmiki at the moment when he witnessed the sorrow of the krauncha bird at the loss of its mate. To sage Vālmiki it was like a berry placed in the palm, pānavāmalakam. This could be that aspect of ḍhvani which has been equated with imagination or pratibhā when the poet is able to grasp his work in full even at a pre-nascent stage. For the ideal reader it becomes the discovery of the same.

Ānandavardhana’s monumental work, the Dhavanyālōka synthesises the different concepts of dhvani which had been in vogue among his learned predecessors. Ānandavardhana approached this concept with the critical acumen of a sensitive reader and the imaginative apprehension of a creative writer. Abhinavagupta, another important figure in Sanskrit literary criticism, gave final shape to the crucial concepts of both rasa and dhvani. His two books, Abhinavabhārati and Dhvanyālōkalōcana, discuss in detail the concepts of rasa and dhvani respectively. Raniero Gnoli observes:

After Abhinavagupta, the study of aesthetics continued in India up to the present day but without receiving much creative stimulus.
Anandavardhana, Bhattanāyaka, Bhatta Tōta and Abhinavagupta are still the most characteristic exponents of this subject, and their thought, although at times uncertain and ingenuous, reaches, with Abhinavagupta, conclusions which are still valid today and even relatively novel to Western thought.¹

The place of rasa as the essence of kāvyā has been granted by many Sanskrit scholars. But rasa to be communicable has to be evoked in the reader, which can be done only through the power of suggestion contained in the words. As it is impossible to communicate feelings and emotions directly through propositional statements, Anandavardhana states that rasa can be evoked with the power of dhvani.

The union or oneness of sound and word and meaning is the distinguishing feature of poetic language. "A marriage of sound and sense is poetry" (śabdārthau sahihau kāvyam), is the famous sutra of Bhāmaha: the inseparableness of the word and its meaning, grasped in all its entirety makes for poetic utterance.

In Ānandavardhana’s concept of dhvani there is a move from rational discussions on poetics to what may be called the beginnings of literary criticism of Sanskrit. Like the transcendental dhvani of Bhartrhari (the famous

¹ Gnoli, p. lii.
grammarian-philosopher who flourished around 5th century A.D.), Ānandavardhana’s concept covers even the smallest element of beauty in poetry through structural analysis. For Bhartrhari, all sentence-units are revealers (vyanjaka) of total meaning intended by speakers. The sphōta theory of Bhartrhari speaks of revelation of meaning by meaningful sentence units which are partless and indivisible. Ānandavardhana’s dhvani implies "illumination in a flash" as in Bhartrhari’s philosophy of grammar.

In his treatise, Dhvanyāloka, Ānandavardhana fixes his attention on the three-fold function of language where the suggestive power of words over and above the literal and metaphorical meanings assumes the central status. Dhvani is classified into three types, vastu dhvani, alāṅkāra dhvani and rasa dhvani. The first signifies the suggestion of an object or idea, the second a metaphoric suggestion and the third emotive suggestion.

It is believed that the charm and soul of poetry rests on the suppressed elements, which are instrumental in creating a certain degree of interest in readers. This element of suppression may be enhanced, intensified or improved upon in many ways. There is room for exploring the gaps through what is not explicitly stated. Another name given to this concept of suggestion is vyanjana, which points towards the extraordinary significative power of literary art. Kuppuswamy Sastri claims that there is always
a degree of suppression in all speech utterances and it is more marked in the field of literary art. Vyanjana is also present in philosophy, logic and language. He quotes Otto Jespersen's three-fold definition of speech: "suggestion is impression through suppression." Expression, impression and suppression are implied in the statement.²

Poetic art is superior art, and in this art, this principle is employed to a very large extent and the acceptance of this principle renders possible the synthesis between law and liberty.³

Poetic expression mediates between the poet and the reader, through the element of suggestion. Speaking of law and liberty as the two polarities which have to be reconciled by the creative artist, Kuppuswamy Sastri attributes to suggestion the power to harmonise the attitude of the poet with that of the critic. He sees vyanjana as an artistic process which goes beyond the literal and indicative meanings of poetic expression to the realms of inference or anumāna. Vyanjana has the power to create a delicate impression through artistic thrill. This artistic process can lead the true student to the ultimate in literary criticism and enable him to take the right view of poetic art as organic expression.

³ Ibid., p. 21.
Anandavardhana had shown how *vyanjana* helps in preserving the unity of literary art. If *vyanjana* is made the leading principle of art criticism and adopted as the source of literary charm, it could serve as a magic wand. In the modern context too, much emphasis is laid on the strategies of language and narrations that are sub-surface, oblique and inexplicit. Literariness can be seen as present in the suggested meaning, what is unstated, multiple, highly interpretable and emotive and is the opposite of what is conveyed directly, referentially and propositionally. 4

Using the term *dhvani* in its widest possible sense, K.Krishnamoorthy argues that Anandavardhana has spelt out a comprehensive definition of the concept which includes all the earlier ideas prevalent in those times. *Dhvani* to him is the underlying philosophy of all the concepts, like *riti*, *alamkāra*, *guna*, *dośa*, *auchitya*, *rasa* and *vakrōkti*. By recognising the value of *dhvani* in poetry and literary art, Anandavardhana raises the issue to the realm of feeling and to the inexpressible qualities of a good literary work. The essence of poetry consists not in its representational powers, but in the essential mood a poem evokes. He draws attention to the fact that it is not the outward or formal construction of a work that lends it beauty, but an intangible, inexpressible quality given to it by the

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suggestive power of words. Beneath an emotive situation are embedded deep meanings which can be realised by the imaginative reader. This imaginative "something" is not a further dimension of verbal meaning, much less an alternative to it, because the words themselves have not conveyed it. Even otherwise words cannot and do not say every thing. There is always something left to the imagination, something to be inferred. Words are only signs and cannot touch the essential nature of things. Meanings spread inwards in the reader's minds to the full range of their significance. As the Chinese saying goes, "The sound stops short, the sense flows on." This can be compared with A.C. Bradley's notion of poetry as a unity of sound and sense; the latter he calls "resonant meaning."

A similar idea is given by George Santayana when he talks about the fused associations which cling in the form of a suggestion to the art work. It is compared to the aura or powerful fragrance which pervades the atmosphere entirely with its presence. Dhvani is literally the resonance or reverberation: it seems to cling to a work even after the performance or recital is over. "To tell the truth, although the song is ended I seem to hear it as I walk"

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It is similar to Wordsworth's famous lines from The Solitary Reaper:

The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more.

True poetry, according to Ānandavardhana, is that in which the unspoken part dominates. The feeling or sentiment, rasa, belongs to what is suggested, to the resonance. Dhyani leads us to the unexplored realms of thought and feeling through suggestion.

The Rg Vedic poet is conscious of the mystery of language and the full possibilities of vāk or speech. A careful reading of the sukta of Brhaspati Āṅgīrasa (x.71) is very illuminating as well as inspiring. The main purpose of language is to bestow names and to disclose the hidden essence of things. The wise have created this speech with the purest of thought and language that is brilliant and clean.

Mere seeing or mere hearing does not put one in possession and full command of language, a richly significant institution that it is. It is to the knower only that speech reveals her full beauty just as a woman does to her lord (Rg Vēda, x.71.4).

Great poets select their words winnowing away the chaff from the grain and only men of equal

7 Gnoli, p. 97.
scholarship and literary taste can fully appreciate the poem (Rg Veda, x.71.5).  

Strictly speaking the theory of dhvani is only an extension of the rasa theory. Bharata has claimed that the main object of a dramatic work is to rouse rasa or aesthetic relish in the audience through suggestion.

K. Krishnamoorthy explains the vast spectrum of meaning attached to the word dhvani in Indian poetics:

When it refers to rasa in the singular, as what is suggested by a poem (vyanjana), it means aesthetic joy or value of the sensitive reader. When it refers to rasas or rasādis in the plural, it means the emotional feeling content in the poem. When it refers to the suggestive items (vyañjaka) in a stanza like syllable, word, affix, sentence, passage, whole work, it invites us to shift attention from the suggested to the suggestive element. Again the surface meaning (vācyā) of a poem may itself in its turn become suggestive of another. This possibility makes vyañjaka two-fold, as of sound and sense. Dhvani can also mean the process of vyāpāra, of suggestion evidenced in all good poetry. Finally, the poem itself can be termed dhvani which then signifies that it is the poem of the highest order of excellence. These multiple significances of the word dhvani are all basic to a proper understanding of poetry both

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There is no conflict between the two concepts. If dhavani stresses the method of treatment, rasa deals with the ultimate effect. Dhvani is the 'how' of the meaning and rasa, the 'what' of it. Suggestion by itself is not enough in drama or poetry. What is suggested must be charming and this charm can come through rasa or emotion which in turn can be expressed only through suggestion.

Ānandavardhana synthesises the different streams of thought on the beauties of a literary work and structures a new theory of poetry which is at once integral, penetrative and perceptive. This integrated theory he calls dhvani which opens the royal path of literary appreciation. All great poetry (kāvyas) has dhvani as the raison d'etre of beauty. The conclusions is kāvyasya ātmā dhvaniḥ that is, the soul of poetry is dhvani. This theory is a sound aesthetic principle to explain not only beauty in poetry, but also in other arts like music and painting.

Poetic utterance suggests or evokes emotions and this power is referred to in the ambiguous and elusive term dhvani. Poetic meaning is different from logical meaning. At a definite moment, poetic meaning breaks off from the conventional symbolism of words and reveals a completely new sense.

9 Krishnamoorthy, Literary Theories, p. 196.
Earlier it has been seen that the oneness of sound and sense is an indispensable feature of language. The word artha means more than meaning or sense. It is a kind of natural and inherent relationship, a necessary meaning of sabda and not any arbitrary connection. Sāhitya which refers to literature implies a togetherness and inseparability of the two, as in the concept of Ardhanarīśvarā which symbolises the union of Shiva and Pārvatī in a single form. Poetry uses language in an affective way; that is, it works through images, feelings, tones, affective notes and associations. When all these are fused together they give rise to a unique kind of meaning not given by the individual words in their normal usage.

For a better understanding of poetry, then, the words have first to be understood in their referential meanings. But this gets submerged when the suggestive meaning is intuitively grasped.

Dhvani is that evocation which combines all factors present and yet gives a totally new sense not given by any single element referential, emotive or imagistic, but by all of them together. It rises above like an organic entity over and above the separate elements of the poem, usurping the entire field of consciousness. Ānandavardhana compares it to the beauty in a woman which transcends all the separate parts.
Sneh Pandit feels that 'suggestion' as the meaning of *dhvani* is totally inadequate to express the full significance of the term.

Suggestion implies a measure of subjectivity and indicates a sense of obscurity which is alien to the kind of suggestion that occurs in poetry. Here, suggestion is rather in the nature of the audio-visual effect or illusion, which is not a private phenomenon, but an impersonal and objective one. It presupposes the power of visualisation with which the spectator is endowed, and which is aroused by the stimulus provided by the external media of words.\(^{10}\)

Sneh Pandit compares this concept with that of illusion or semblance with which Susanne Langer explains the nature of the total effect created by the art work as whole.

All the separate elements of which the work is composed merge inexplicably into an organic whole. . . . the work is abstracted from its mundane surroundings. Its main quality as a work of art lies in its "otherness" from reality, which quality has been variously described as "strangeness," "semblance," "illusion," "transparence," "autonomy" or "self-sufficiency."\(^{11}\)

In Susanne Langer's words the idea of art as virtual image is very clear.

It is an image created for the first time out of things that are not imaginal, but quite realistic,

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\(^{10}\) Sneh Pandit, *An Approach to Indian Theory of Art and Aesthetics*, p. 82.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. 83
What we see in this way becomes simply a thing of vision, a form, an image. It detaches itself from its actual setting and acquires a different context.\(^{12}\)

Using words and images and the suggestive power of words, poetic art presents a form or image of reality. This aspect of literary art is precisely what the *dhvani* theory explains. Similar ideas have been echoed by many modern critics. John Hospers, I.A. Richards and Empson have been concerned with the meaning of meaning, especially in poetic and literary art. Hospers has discussed the problem of identifying the meaning and truth in arts:

> A skillful poet can evoke in a sensitive reader images and emotions of the greatest intensity and complexity by juxtaposing words of great evocative and associative power, and can evoke certain calculated effects more precisely than he could ever do if he tried by using language descriptively. The words of the poem are the objective correlative of the evocata.\(^{13}\)

Ronald Hepburn emphasises the deviant nature of literary language. The poet has to ever strive against "cliches and stale idioms that would wrest the distinctiveness from his thought."

To study a literary work is to see language functioning at the highest pitch of its power to

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\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 83.

connect subtly discriminable and often mutually remote, endlessly numerous, areas of experience.\textsuperscript{14}

Richards, Empson, Olsen and Eliot have all been preoccupied with the ways in which a literary work can communicate to the reader. The complexity behind a literary work calls for an interpretation that arises from an integration of images and metaphors with higher realities to present a single over-arching view. This is very close to the Indian \textit{rasa-dhvani} theory.

Krishna Rayan has been concerned with the idea of using the theory of suggestion as a universal critical strategy. He has tried to discuss some works from British literature in the light of the theory of suggestion, in his book \textit{Text and Subtext}. In a later book \textit{The Burning Bush} he tries the practical application of some texts from Indian languages, including Sanskrit and English and a Sinhala play. He draws from the \textit{rasa-dhvani} theory, French Symbolism and New Criticism, in trying to explain the nature of the poetic of suggestion. In his earlier book, \textit{Suggestion and Statement in Poetry}, he had emphasised the

\begin{itemize}
  \item importance in literature of what is not stated,
  \item the levels of poetic meaning, the alogical nature of all apprehension of unstated meaning in poetry
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{14} Ronald Hepburn, \textit{The New Pelican Guide to English Literature}, p. 496.
and the method of objectification as the only means of presenting emotion in poetry. He claims that the exponents of the theory of suggestion in modern times and the exponents of the dhvani theory were talking the same language and the affinities between the two cannot be missed. This is how he explains dhvani:

The literal meaning of dhvani is "sound". (It is interesting that the concept of suggestion is expressed in English at times by means of sonic terms like resonance, reverberation, overtones and undertones.) Dhvani was originally a term in linguistics where it referred to the final sound in word, which, when apprehended, suggested or revealed the phonological identity of the whole word. Borrowing the word and making it stand for the suggestion of meaning, Sanskrit semasiology and poetics had evolved, by about the middle of the ninth century, a theory of poetic meaning constructed round the notion that suggestion is a distinct feature of poetic language and indeed the highest kind of poetry, and had offered, in Anandavardhana's Dhvânyalôka a complete formulation of the theory. The theory grew out of a very different body of poetry from the output of the nineteenth century romanticism. ...  

Krishna Rayan adds that if the dhvani theory is not influential in the west, it is because it has not been rendered in sufficiently comprehensible terms.

Rayan's first book is devoted to the discussion of British poetry and its use of suggestive elements; while the second book *Text and Subtext* concentrates on "the contrasted procedures of suggestion by nebulous evocation and suggestion through verbal particularity and subtlety; and second, minimalism or micro-suggestion which achieves richness and density of meaning by means of a diminutive text."\(^{17}\)

While the earlier book is a synchronic study of suggestion in poetry, the latter examines the statement-suggestion dichotomy through a diachronic sample survey of British drama and fiction. Rayan also claims that the poetic of suggestion compels the attention equally to form and content and with novels and plays it is the organisation of characters and situation which takes the place of local textural effects in poetry. These function as suggestors of levels of meaning and also as formal constituents of the work, producing its total identity.

On consolidating the various studies and analyses, a wide canvas presents itself in charting dhvani with its different interpretations as applicable to Indian writing in English. Interpreted as the poetic of suggestion, dhvani provides an interesting avenue to explore the many ways in which its presence is felt. Taking the novels as suggestive

\(^{17}\) Krishna Rayan, *Text and Subtext*, pp. ix-x.
of a view of life, dhvani's interpretation as a metaphor of life presented by the novels, leads to another. Another aspect of dhvani the method story-telling adopted by the novelists, especially, the 'stream of consciousness' technique is found to have intriguing applications. Even devices like the use of imagery, symbol and myth which contribute to the total suggestive element of the novel, present the application of dhvani to the novels covered by Indian writing in English quite challenging and throw light on how individual writers have effectively used them in their novels. In Chapter 2, it was shown that characters and atmosphere or settings are used as devices to suggest the emotions in the work of art. Here, these features of ālambana-vibhāva and uddīpana-vibhāva are studied in their role as suggestors of meanings beyond their function in the novels, providing yet another opportunity of applying dhvani to the Indian novels.

Likewise, the other aspect of dhvani, which is its power to function through language, is identified as the style or language of the novels, considering how each individual writer has fashioned a style to suit his vision of life. The difficulties in expressing an Indian sensibility in a foreign language which Indian writers in English have faced and overcome are examined in depth. The nuances of language which give the novel the necessary depth have also been analysed.
R.K. Narayan’s *A Tiger for Malgudi*\(^{18}\) lends itself admirably as a touchstone for establishing the credibility and effectiveness of the Indian concepts, especially dhvani, for evaluating a work of art. Many of the varied aspects of dhvani can be effectively applied, analysed and confirmed by the following study. This has been made possible due to the capability of the author, even though the novel, written late in his life (1983), has met with dubious praise from many readers and critics who have labelled it as one of Narayan’s lesser achievements. M.K. Naik has commented on the fact that a decadence had already set in R.K. Narayan’s work from the *Painter of Signs* (1977).\(^{19}\)

The novel is about a tiger named Raja. He has led a carefree life in the jungle until he is lured into captivity by his own greed. Then follows his career as a circus performer and even as a film star, which ends with the Captain’s death at the tiger’s hands. All the same, the tiger gets the reputation of a man-eater and in the interim period when he waits to see the Master he observes human beings from a different angle. The Master has an enduring influence on the tiger to the extent of the latter becoming


a follower of the former. Behind the facade of a simple tale is a moving comment on humanity at large.

The poetic vision of the artist, the essence of dhvani, is clear enough. It is to comment on human and animal nature from an ironic standpoint. How this is suggested in fictional terms is discussed subsequently.

First of all, the author has made a daring attempt in relating the story (parts of it) through the consciousness of the tiger. The hypothetical narration by the tiger is itself the technique aspect of dhvani, which intensifies the suggestiveness. The tiger chooses to tell its own story, but in so doing has to include human beings with whom it has to live. It appears to merely report on human behaviour withholding overt comments on certain aspects of human behaviour, which, no doubt, come piercing through the unspoken parts. Consider the self-introduction by the tiger fairly early in the story:

You are not likely to understand that I am different from the tiger next door, that I possess a soul within this forbidding exterior. I can think, analyse, judge, remember and do everything that you do, perhaps with greater subtlety and sense. I lack only the faculty of speech (p. 12).

Narayan postulates an animal almost on an equal footing with the human being sans the power of speech, which leads to
interpretations through the unsaid gaps. The striking similarity with the human beings is projected thus:

We, the denizens of the jungle can communicate, without words, exactly as human beings do. We are capable of expressing to each other sympathy, warning, abuse, irony, insult, love, and hatred exactly in the manner of human beings, but only when necessary unlike human beings who talk all their waking hours, and even in sleep (p. 14).

And again,

I have often felt guilty at reminiscing, but my master who reads my mind, has said that there is nothing wrong in it, and advises me not to curb it — it being also part of my life, indispensable and unshakable although I have come a long way from it (p. 15).

Its reign as lord of the jungle, terrifying other creatures, is described in detail. Narayan makes intelligible certain aspects of atmosphere and setting, the support pillars of the fictional dhvani, in the animal world of the novel. An authentic picture of the jungle life is drawn. The jungle superstition about how the tiger got its stripes marring the beautiful golden coat, may not be true but it is an intelligent attempt to create an authentic picture. Similarly, a little later, after the tiger has befriended its mate, it says:

We have no reckoning of time in the manner of human beings. But by the time the scars on our backs were dry a litter of four was added to our
family, climbing and jumping over us all the time (p. 21).

Narayan’s keen sense of observation comes to his aid. Like Joy Adamson’s account of the animal life in general, and her love and affection for Elsa, the lion, in particular, in her novel Born Free, Narayan’s portrayal of the animal life in this novel is very authentic. Even the eating habits of the tiger are given in detail to inform lay readers about jungle life.

Slowly the tiger invades human territory which it describes as a wrong move, with hindsight, of course:

Stepping into human territory was a thoughtless act. Instead of living the rest of my life majestically as an honest-to-god tiger going in and out of his cave, eating and sleeping, performing no act except what he wished, lord of the jungles before whom other creatures from a squirrel to a bear quaked in fear, I had let myself in for ultimate slavery (p. 28).

Then follows his comments on human beings based on his experience:

A human being may look small without prominent teeth and claws but he is endowed with some strange power which can manoeuvre a tiger or an elephant as if they were toys (p. 28).

The picture of jungle life is realistically drawn. One is bound to ask what is suggestive about such a realistic portrayal. Narayan’s strategy of presentation is through the tiger’s consciousness and so life in the jungle is rendered
as a lived experience on the part of the animal. It is more than a photographic account: fine shades of animal behaviour, their methods of communicating, mating and eating and their way of life are all suggested by Narayan. The parallel between animal and human nature becomes very clear as one reads the novel. Dhvani as the view of life is nowhere better illustrated by the author.

The picture of the human world is largely through the tiger's consciousness. The zoo-keeper, the circus master, the film-maker and the swami whom the tiger refers to as Master, are all drawn from the tiger's viewpoint. Though rendered in the form of reportage, the ambivalent focus on the animal and the human world is constantly suggested. Features like man's instinctive fear of animals, his cunning and force which gain mastery over wild animals, his aspirations for money and power are all satirised by the author. Satire, as a tool, helps the author in applying dhvani principles to his work of art.

He had extended the time for shooting by several weeks since Madan had agreed to pay heavily for the extension and the Captain felt it was a sound way of making money during the interval of two camps. . . . Now a certain degree of greed was overcoming him, a gradual corruption through contact with the film world (p. 109).

The Captain's relationship with the tiger is drawn on mutual trust. The tiger-Captain relationship begins on a suspicious note, but gradually develops into one of mutual
trust and respect. The tiger is tamed into submission by the experienced Captain who has understood animal behaviour better than many human beings, having lived and moved with animals all through his career. The steps by which the Captain trains the tiger from one feat to another is proof of the tenacity of the Captain to make his circus a success.

Captain was not such a monster after all. I began to respect him — a sort of worshipful attitude was developing in me. I began to admire him for his capabilities. I had thought in the jungle that I was supreme. Now that was gone. I was the defeated king, and Captain was the unquestioned suzerain (p. 53).

As Rita, the Captain’s wife says, though in a mood of jealousy combined with friendly banter, "Your horoscope and the tiger’s seem to be better matched" (p. 68). She somehow thinks the tiger to be a rival to her in her husband’s affections. She confesses, "I’ve always hated the brute. . . . seems undependable . . . I feel uneasy when you are out with him" (p. 79). This seems to be ominous as later the Captain falls a prey to the tiger’s claws in a moment of despair. The goat episode is also a kind of warning about the unpredictable nature of animals.

Deep in the consciousness of the tiger there seems to be a justification of both the acts. The goat meal during the crucial circus show is explained by the tiger as due to it having reached a breaking point. The Captain too has
reached a point of impatience which provokes the tiger to act so.

The tiger-swami relationship is totally on a different plane. Here both the animal and the man have reached a stage of serenity, a calm after a life of activity where all passions have been spent. It is akin to the śānta rasa, discussed earlier in Chapter 2. The swami’s past life is revealed by the swami himself:

I was a man of the world, busy and active, living by the clock, scrutinising my bank book, greeting and smiling at all and sundry because I was anxious to be treated as a respectable man in society. . . . I abruptly shed everything . . . and fled from wife, children, home, possessions, all of which seemed intolerable. . . . I achieved complete anonymity, and shed purpose of every kind, never having to ask what next. And so I am here, that’s all you need to know (pp. 161-62).

A lot of guessing goes on about who the tiger tamer is, after the successful way in which he has led the tiger away from the school through the streets of Malgudi to the jungle. Certain people like Jayaraj (the man who has been framing pictures in Malgudi for nearly a life-time) are able to identify the swami as an earlier inhabitant of Malgudi. Jayaraj’s account of the swami’s participation in the Independence Movement and his later life as a dandy having a motor car is probably to supplement the swami’s own account. Another strategy which also corroborates this view is the rendering of the conversation between the swami and his wife
in the jungle to which the tiger is the only witness. All these pictures try to create a past and a present for the swami, whose future is also indicated by the approaching stage of *samādhi*. That he believes in another world is indicated in the last lines of the book with which he bids good-bye to the tiger.

Both of us will shed our forms and soon perhaps we could meet again, who knows? So goodbye for the present (p. 176).

*Dhvani* as the poetic of suggestion directs the readers to meanings beyond the text, to the layer behind the verbal medium where the unstated has to be grasped. The gap from the tangible to the intangible is possible only through this mode. *A Tiger For Malgudi*, while also qualifying itself on grounds of a tale well told, despite its strange animal hero, can be read as Narayan’s objective presentation of the oxymoron of the animal-in-man or man-in-animal concept. The ambivalent nature in human beings as well as in animals is suggested. Through the simple tiger motif, certain philosophical truths are posed. Is man after all superior to other creatures of God’s creation? Despite the dichotomy that exists between the two worlds, in more planes than one, is there a possible meeting ground between them? Apart from the circus or the zoo or even the jungle, where possibly the two meet in a kind of distant harmony, Narayan envisages a deeper dialogue between the two in this story. The story is more than an allegory where human follies are satirised
through animal behaviour which is the method adopted by the *Panchatantra* stories. Narayan gives artistic expression to these ideas in this novel, to which the yardstick of the *dhvani* concept can be applied successfully.

The conflict between man and animal is viewed by the author with a breadth of vision which is striking. When the two are pitted against each other in the battlefield of human existence, the author chooses a vantage point of presentation wherein the baser and the finer aspects of the two are best focussed. The tiger's entry into the human world is seen from the human angle as well as the subjective viewpoint of the tiger. All the human might in the form of sheer power cannot stand a chance against the ferocious animal power. But through the exercise of cunning and authority, the tiger is made to bow in submission to the human strength. As a contrast, towards the end of the novel, the tiger of its own accord is seen acknowledging another form of human power, which is a kind of spiritual power. This strength, though not as tangible as physical power, is in fact more powerful than physical strength. This strange human power leads the tiger finally to voluntary submission.

Myth as associated with *dhvani* finds delineation in the author's work, in a positive manner. The copresence of the animal-man concept is a recurring theme in human history. Ancient Greek, Roman and Indian mythology speak of Gods and Goddesses who combine in them the best in human and
animal natures for specific purposes. Sometimes they express the fantastic aspect of human nature as opposed to the rational nature. In those combinations where animal and man in their finer aspects form a divine godhood, the two are treated not as antithetical but as complementary.

It is interesting to note how this concept is central in Indian mythology. Of the supposed ten avatārs of Lord Vishnu the earlier three are fully animal, namely, the fish, matsya, the tortoise, kūrma, and the boar, varāha. In each of these avatars God had to utilise the special powers of the respective animals to save the world from the impending calamities. The lion-man synthesis named Nṛśimha was a special avatar to bring about the end of the rākshas or demon Hiranyakashipu. In a form which is neither man nor animal but which combined the intellectual superiority of man and the physical strength of the animal, using the claws and no other weapon, the Lord brings about the fall of the wicked demon. It is also believed that when Lord Vishnu, had to save the Vēdas which Brahma had lost, he incarnated as Lord Hayagreeva, a combination of man with a horse’s head, and retaught them to Brahma.

Garuda, the powerful bird, prides itself in the fact that it is the vehicle for Lord Vishnu himself. Garuda symbolises in himself the strength of the god, the devotion of a man and the natural flight of a bird. Similarly Hanuman
the famous messenger of Lord Rama to Ravana’s court, is almost a human being in the form of a monkey. He is endowed with the fine intelligence of the most learned, can speak with subtlest felicity, and also has formidable strength to supplement Rama’s powers, especially in crossing the ocean and achieving other feats not within human reach.

Narayan is probably giving expression to the possibility of fusing the best of these two worlds in a fine synthesis. To quote Narayan himself,

. . . the “Tiger-Hermit” employs his powers to save the tiger and transform it inwardly—working on the basis that deep within, the core of personality is the same in spite of differing appearances and categories, and with the right approach you could expect the same response from a tiger as from any normal human being (pp. 9-10).

The elements of everyday life are used in the novel as suggestor. The aesthetic effect is essentially different from its components. This effect leads the reader away from its natural setting into a realm apart. This sense of leading away is what is meant by the term vyarnana which also makes dhvani possible.

Narayan has no doubt excellent story-telling power. But he has also used modern methods in his stories. This he justifies through the swami who is supposed to have tamed the tiger’s animal nature and instilled in it even spiritual feelings, especially serenity or calmness. Once this state
of calm is reached, it is possible to detach oneself from the restless quest and view the activities from an ironic stance. It is then that suggestion as dhvani aspect comes into play. At one level it is the story of the tiger's life when the language of the writer functions at the abhidā level, that is the denotative level. But when the implied meanings are to be grasped beyond the verbal structure, through the different aspects of the novel, namely, the characters, plot and style together to give the novel an integrated meaning, then the story functions at the level of inference (lakshanā). Only when this is grasped, when the reader is able to appreciate the story in the context of its suggestive import, taking into account the different aspects of the story-telling devices available to the contemporary novelists, does the dhvani, the beauty of the suggestive element in the novel, is revealed.

The omniscient narrator has to present certain portions of the story which take place away from the tiger's vision. Narayan himself reveals the Captain's earlier life and his incidental apprenticeship with Dadhaji's circus which had enabled him to learn his trade very well indeed. All this is revealed in the form of "showing" rather than in the form of "telling," as Norman Friedman puts it, "from
exposition to presentation, from narrative to drama, from explicit to implicit, from idea to image."\textsuperscript{20}

The author has the choice to intervene, as Narayan does, to give continuity to the story. The deal with the film-maker Madan, and some of the Captain's conversations with his wife are not related through the tiger. But however the way the Captain is transformed when he trains the tiger for the film is told by the tiger:

It was unbelievable that he (the Captain) should be taking orders from others. I could not understand what had come over him. . . . Captain was losing grip over himself and his self-respect. . . . Between the two (Madan and the cameraman) they seemed to have enslaved the Captain (p. 119).

To render a story which includes action, speech representation and description, in other words to render through words "an imitation of an action" is not a simple process but is rather problematic. Writers have tried to solve this problem in their own ways. Narayan has certainly mingled the advantages of the first and third person narrative modes in all his stories. But he has shown a preference for directly and dramatically exhibiting events and conversations. He tries to distance himself from them.

through his ironic comments which help to suggest the intended dhvani.

William Walsh could not have summed up Narayan’s art better:

How nimbly, how deftly, but with what forging kindness Narayan unravels this universal riddle of mankind. . . .21

Narayan’s art suggests in general ‘the substantial human nature’ and communicates ‘a sense of human limitation’ and human achievement at once. This is the broad canvas of Narayan’s art. D.W. Atkinson claims

How wrong those critics are who claim that Narayan lacks a comprehensive vision . . . a philosophy of life embracing the whole universe.22

The presence of dhvani is prominent in a novel when it is possible to interpret it as a metaphor of life itself. The mimetic theory also affirms this role of literature. The novel is seen to be the closest to life because of its apparent formlessness too. When an interpretation of the novel tries to reduce it to a metaphor of life, it is also an application of the suggestive method of dhvani.


The novelist’s vision of life cannot be expressed in straightforward terms and he needs to resort to oblique suggestion. Certain aspects of life can be rendered only through metaphor, and these can be realised by the reader again only through suggestion. The full import and the significance can be rendered artistically and experienced only through suggestion, and metaphor is one such device.

Many modern novels are written and expected to be read as metaphors of life. Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, James Joyce, Proust, Kafka, Saul Bellow and Chinua Achebe are great novelists who have created novels of epic dimensions which are subtle metaphors of life, according to their individual poetic visions. The Indian novel in English too stands in comparison with these international giants in stature, structure and theme. The dhvani principle, so crucial to literary appreciation, directs the critic to go deep into the verbal medium and be fully conversant with the semantic density of the language. In a novel it urges the reader to apprehend the form and structure of the novel and through them the themes and finally to comprehend the total beauty of the artefact.

Everyday language and literature have given metaphor a place of prime importance because of its appeal and utility in many respects. It is more than a decorative device and is a fundamental form of figurative speech. It is also at the root of poetic symbol and myth. It is based on
the pattern of semantic transference involved in some other figures of speech like simile, personification, allegory, synecdoche, metonymy and conceit.

It is common in Indian poetics to distinguish between the two facets of a work of art, namely, the structure which is the outcome of words and meanings, and the soul or its essence which accrues through the medium of the structure. The integration of the two is often compared to the interdependence of body and soul where a deep cohesion is involved. Such a cohesion is also envisaged in art between the structure and effects of poetry. In this analogy the concepts rasa and dhvani get merged into a single entity each complementing the other.

Applying another facet of the dhvani principle, The Serpent and the Rope\textsuperscript{23} can be read as the metaphor of the traditional Indian mind trying to probe the depths of a reality which is seen to be present beyond the reality of the living world. Raja Rao’s metaphysical outlook on life gets artistic presentation in this novel. The famous analogy of the serpent and the rope sums up the author’s interpretation of life and reality:

The world is either unreal or real - the serpent or the rope. There is no in-between the two - and

all that is in between is poetry, is sainthood. . .
you see only with the serpent’s eyes. . . . But in
ture fact, with whatever eyes you see there was no
serpent, there never was a serpent, . . . Once —
the Guru — brings you the lantern; the road is
seen. . . It’s only the rope. He shows it to you
(pp. 335-36).

C.D. Narasimhaiah says of Raja Rao:
What he portrays is not faith or freedom in the
usual sense, but an introspective way of life, a
monistic vision anchored in a central mythic
structure; to comprehend it fully, one needs to
belong, to be part of that evocative tradition.24

A similar intermingling of fiction and reality is
also fundamentally present in The Cat and Shakespeare. At
every stage of the novel, the fictional reality is a
metaphor of the unreality of life itself. The transcending
nature of life over and above the physical plane, the needs
and difficulties which man has to face to transcend the
failures and disappointments which are inevitable, are all
suggested metaphorically. The philosophy of self-surrender
and acceptance of the world as a necessary step towards
metaphysical identification are the metaphors of life
rendered artistically in this novel.

Irony is in many ways a synonym for dhvani. Ironic
literature exploits the paradoxical nature of reality, or

24 C.D. Narasimhaiah, Raja Rao, (New Delhi: Arnold
the contrast between the ideal and the actual situation or a set of circumstances. In *In Custody* Anita Desai views the whole paradox of appearance and reality, pragmatism and fantasy, expectations and disappointments, and poetry and reality as a fictional metaphor of life. Interpreted as Devan’s attempts to interview the great poet Nur, the expectations of Devan are contrasted with the actual experiences. The gap in every individual’s life between aspirations and actualities is the implied metaphor.

The poet Nur on the other hand belongs to the larger metaphor of apparent proximity and real gap between poetry, the poet and life. The dichotomy between Nur’s poetic expressions and the actual quality of his living experience in debauchery and penury is also another metaphor of life. Nur may be destined for posthumous honour which in no way is going to alleviate his present poverty and debts. But the power and effects of poetry to move and inspire the readers are emphasised. Though the poetry springs from Nur, a poet steeped in poverty, his poetry can raise many ordinary people like Devan to great heights. Poetic experience has a softening influence in life and this is suggested very subtly through Nur, the poet, his poetry and his reader, Devan.

The metaphor couched in the title is also a fine sentiment which every individual encounters in everyday
life. Anita Desai herself acknowledges it in her interview with Ketaki Seth.

The title is somewhat misleading. It is about an emotional prison, a spiritual prison, not a physical one. It is a word with a double meaning - custody means guardianship, safekeeping as well as imprisonment. So it is a play on the word.\textsuperscript{25}

The poetic experience of Devan leads him to meet Nur and try to interview him. The meeting has other effects, for Devan is expected to serve other ends for the poet. If Devan wants to be a custodian of Nur's poetry, Nur expects a return from Devan. Every relationship is a binding one on both sides, a mutual bond which the title suggests metaphorically.

A frustrating and fascinating aspect of complex works of literature is their resistance to a single interpretation. Works of fiction are able to suggest hypotheses about human behaviour, motivations, actions and social structure through the character, setting and planning of events. They do not verify the hypotheses, which is after all the task of empirical studies. But they can suggest hypotheses which may be empirically fruitful and this is far more difficult than verification.

The study of dhvani is best possible when it is studied from the angle of the effect on the readers. For in

\textsuperscript{25} Ketaki Seth, "It's Fatal to Write with an Audience in Mind," Imprint (June, 1984), p. 55.
dhvani, the element of the reader's subjectivity has to come to play. Narayanaswami discusses the different facets of irony that occur in Narayan's short stories and novels. Rejecting the very general view of irony as "a mode of speech in which the meaning is contrary to the words" (Dr. Johnson) and also the view which sees irony as a "qualification which the various elements in a context receive from the context" (Cleanth Brooks), Narayanaswami places the focus on the reader and approaches the study from the reader's angle, presenting the different shades and hues of Narayan's irony.26

In the same manner it is possible to study the novelists' use of imagery, symbol or myth which help to produce the desired effects on the readers through their own methods of presentation. These are like the shorthand of expression which creates a relationship between these in a work and broader philosophical meanings. They help the writer to achieve a concision offering a depth and density which a literal method of expression certainly lacks. These are sometimes non-rational modes which can work their way into the reader's experience to make the work of art more meaningful.

Dhvani can be seen in the novelist's use of imagery. Imagery is variously defined in literary discussions. Images are mental pictures formed by the action of the imagination. In a novel, the intensity and immediacy of appeal is the result of "an unconsciousness, transformation and fusion of imagery derived from a wide field of references." 27

Novelists resort to the extensive and intensive use of imagery to add beauty to their novels. The use imagery is almost central in Anita Desai's story-telling method. For instance, in Cry. The Peacock different images are fused into the texture of the story. Images of life and death are juxtaposed to emphasise the essential contrast as a principle of life itself. That life itself implies a certainty of death is a constant idea which is reinforced through images. The blooming flowers instead of attracting through their beauty, seem to portend only their impending end by the evening. This Keatsian awareness of imminent death is in keeping with the theme of the novel which is madness and death. The image of belief in fate and prophecy is also illustrated by Maya's tenacious belief in the albino soothsayer's forecast of an untimely end to her marriage. The images of the moon, the peacock, snakes, the caged monkey, rats, bear, iguana and cats, are indicative of the

calamity which confronts the hero and heroine. Even the names, Maya and Gautama, are suggestive of the two aspects of life, namely illusion and reality. The morbidity of some of the images is reflective of the idea of death. The dog's death which preys upon Maya's mind haunts her with the image of the dead body rotting in the sun. It is also indicative of the "incipient rotting of a sensitive mind that is to scuttle itself by accomplishing first murder, and then suicide."28

Maya's mind works in a stream of associative imagery adding to the tone and texture of the novel and development of the theme.

Symbols as suggestive devices are also similarly used by novelists and poets. On the use of symbol in literature, Krishna Rayan comments:

> Once, however, the poet becomes aware that he is using symbols, he cannot use a symbol any more without symbolising (at least for himself) something. The predicament of the symbolist poet is just this: that a consciously used symbol is a contradiction in terms in that it necessarily develops the finiteness of reference that is fatal to a symbol.29

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He says that before symbolism became a faith and a technique, the poet’s symbols could be spontaneously created and unconsciously used and were non-referential and non-rational. Symbolism then is the practice adopted by writers to invest their writings with a symbolic meaning or character.

The very title of Anita Desai’s novel, Bye-Bye Blackbird is symbolic of the Indian as he appears to the Westerner. The novel projects the sense of alienation experienced by men and women divorced from their native environment. Both Dev and Adit are migratory birds who are alternately drawn to and repelled by England. Adit who compromises to the transplanted atmosphere and even marries an English woman, Sarah, decides to come back to India. But his friend Dev, who has always been sarcastic of the British way of life, decides to stay in England, bidding goodbye to the blackbirds. The symbol is worked out in the manner of a simple allegory.

In He who Rides a Tiger, Bhabani Bhattacharya uses the symbol of the ancient saying that he who rides a tiger cannot dismount, and does so at his own peril and risk. But the author makes the tiger rider dismount in quite a new fashion. The story is symbolic of the decision of Kalo to have his revenge on the society which refuses to allow him and his daughter to live in peace. The plot is worked out with skillful use of dramatic irony, while the so-called
caste-ridden society gets cheated temporarily by Kalo's hermit role.

Natural symbols are also used freely to suggest emotions and feelings as evolved in the dhvani principle. As in poetic language where a rose is more than a rose, and can suggest love, beauty, softness and other qualities, natural features like sunrise, sunset, rivers, oceans, mountains, birds and animals can signify certain aspects of life. The cat, to Raja Rao, is symbolic of a whole philosophy of self-surrender to God, called mārlāra-kisōra-nyāya. Shakespeare himself is also used as a symbol with reference to the great dramatist's view of life.

The use of myth as an integral element of literature has enhanced its suggestive effects. Watts defines myth thus:

Myth is to be defined as a complex of stories - some no doubt fact, and some fantasy - which, for various reasons human beings regard as demonstrations of the inner meanings of the universe.30

Mark Schorer says that myth "is fundamental, the dramatic representation of our deepest instinctual life, of a primary awareness of the universe."31 Its universality is the

binding feature. It can transcend time and can unite past and present in a unique way with a brevity of expression. Through the ages certain universal symbols like those of birth or death or regeneration can evoke comparable psychological responses from people in general; then they can be called archetypes. Myths have the flexibility of being used by writers with an astonishing degree of contemporaneity, possessing a fundamental significance and presenting abstract story patterns.\textsuperscript{32}

Indian mythology is almost a way of life for a majority of Indians. The legends and folklore of India have held sway despite foreign influences. The epics and the purānas have influenced Indian life and thought and even directed the intellectual, spiritual and cultural life of the people.

The Rāmāyana, the Radha-Krishna love, the recurring conflict between good and evil, are some of the most common myths which have entered the Indian novel in English. Consciously or unconsciously many novelists use these myths featuring those aspects which may have a modern relevance. English literature is highly allusive of Greek and Roman mythology as well as Christian mythology. Its wide allusiveness has given it rare richness. Indians too have

made abundant use of myths to enrich their works. Raja Rao has used myths consciously to suggest his poetic vision. In *The Cat and Shakespeare*, "even a phrase, an analogy, a dialogue form, an unsuspected rhythm, takes the reader back and forth in an attempt to perceive the hidden pattern."\(^{33}\)

The devices of the fable and parable serve to reinforce the experiential range of the novel, and endeavour to "transmute the conceptual thinking into concrete sensations" such that the facts of the situation acquire by themselves the power and potency of generalisation.\(^{34}\)

The modern Indian novel in English has drawn largely from the older English tradition as well as the recent English and American traditions. Its indebtedness to the West in terms of technical aspects is a fact. Its form is its strength, giving it its aesthetic sense and shape of significance. Being the most flexible of literary forms and a mixed genre drawing from both poetry and drama, it makes greater demands of artistic unity and coherence. As Henry James said:

> The advantage, the luxury, as well as the torment and responsibility of the novelist, is that there is no limit to what he may attempt, as an

\(^{33}\) Narasimhaiah, *Raja Rao*, p. 131.  
executant - no limit to his possible experiments, efforts, discoveries and successes.\textsuperscript{35}

The novel is therefore not a closed form, but an open one. Forster's view that the novel aims at expansion and not completion favours the idea of experimentation, allowing for growth and for being part of a continual process of evolution.\textsuperscript{36}

But the Indian novel has also inherited certain aspects of the Indian tradition. The \textit{kathā} tells a story, real or imagined, and sometimes historical. Or it may draw an analogy from the animal or natural world as do the tales in the \textit{Panchatantra}. So to judge the aesthetic merits of this form it is necessary to correlate the Western and the Eastern theories of art. When one has to take into account the "stream of consciousness" technique, so popular with the twentieth century novelist, the synthesis can be on the level of \textit{dhvani}. In this technique, the story-telling process is shifted to the consciousness in the different characters in the novels. Since the mind of man is capable of traversing time and space easily, the novelist can afford to shift not only the place of action in the novel, but also the time factor. Novelists have realised the aesthetic

\textsuperscript{35} Henry James, \textit{The Art of the Novel} (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1937), p. 158.

advantages of these possibilities and successfully exploited them. As suggestiveness is present in this device, it is studied as an aspect of dhvani. The effective presence of dhvani enhances the quality of fiction be it Indian or Western.

The novelist is free to arrange the chronology of the story even as he can shift the locales. But the apparent freedom also imposes considerable restraint in handling these. The past and the present movements of the story are given alternately or even simultaneously when the narrator or character brings the experience of hindsight into his narration. In Arun Joshi's *The Apprentice*, Ratan Rathor, the hero relates the story of his past life and the kind of experiences he has undergone which makes him conscious of the rampant fraud and deceit in modern society. As the past is recollected, he also supplements the same with comments from his newly gained experience.

In *The Last Labyrinth* the whole story is revealed by Arun Joshi, the author, in the consciousness of Som Bhaskar, the protagonist. He is ill in bed and records his past recollections in the story. But the novelist has to select and organise the events and issues carefully to make it a well-knit novel.

Ramaswamy in *The Serpent and the Rope* can now be in Paris, now in India and now in London, and can mingle his
past life with the present always assessing the events and situations in his mind. The story is his consciousness which is revealed to the readers. Like the technique of the montage where scene after scene flits past in seeming quickness with no apparent link, though each scene's placement ultimately forms the pattern of the novel, this technique helps the novelist to pack the novel with an integrated beauty and cohesion at a subsurface level.

The technique itself is an echo of the stream of life which is ever flowing from birth to death. In the novel, the characters' minds become the stream, where the thoughts flow in seeming incoherence which disguises the artistic structure. Its flexible and dynamic nature in spanning and compressing a wide spectrum of memories also helps to represent the human psyche in fictional terms. The technique thus is able to give a prismatic effect to the novels, if handled with care and ingenuity. To the modern novelist it has become the mode of expression where each artist has exploited it to advantage. The application of the stream of consciousness as analysed confirms the use of dhvani aspect as a mode of evaluation of fictional art.

Novelists have also used the setting or atmosphere for suggesting moods, meanings and effects, the dhvani. At one level, when the novelist is concerned with the fusion of the finite and the infinite into an integrated vision which has to be expressed, he can use the place or setting in the
novel for this purpose. In *The Serpent and the Rope* and *The Last Labyrinth* the city of Benares is described by the two writers, Raja Rao and Arun Joshi respectively in their own styles. But the connotative associations which belong to the city are so strong, that the city carries behind its name a wealth of Indian thought, philosophy and the essence of life itself. Contrast is its way of life. Both the writers have capitalised on the potential of suggestiveness of the city which is used as a setting in their novels. Nowhere else are life and death experienced in such a close proximity. The Ganges with its unceasing flow from time immemorial affirms the idea of life and creation: it also is generous to take within its fold the dead and the ablutions of the living. It is both the womb and the tomb. The transition from the physical to the metaphysical is easier with this city.

The merging of the physical and metaphysical in similar terms as spelt by Tagore, is pointed out by K.K.Sharma:

In our life we have one side which is finite, where we exhaust ourselves at every step, and we have another side where our aspirations and enjoyment and sacrifice are infinite. This infinite side of man must have its revealments in some symbols which have the elements of
immortality. There it naturally seeks perfection.\textsuperscript{37}

It is the case with other places of action or setting. Writers tend to transcend the physical dimensions to reach beyond to a higher level of apprehension. Nature's bounty is always ready to instruct man about the meaning of life. The creative imagination can find "tongues in trees, books in living brooks, sermons in stones and good in everything."

Anita Desai's novels have specific settings which can create the mood or reflect the particular state of mind of her characters. \textit{Fire on the Mountain} uses setting as analogous to the characters. The landscape with its bleakness tries to emphasise the psyche of the characters. It is different from the way Anita Desai has used Bombay or Calcutta in her other novels. The physical realities of the two cities are described in great detail by her in \textit{Where Shall We Go This Summer?} and \textit{Voices In The City} respectively. But the reader is also aware of the "beyondness" of these places. Here is the dhvani or suggestiveness employed by the novelist. While Bombay is symbolic of the reality, harsh and cruel, and the novelist does not mince words about it, the island of Manori is a contrast to this city. This is the

place of Sita's childhood. She has impressions of its quietude and it is built more on Sita's hopes of recreating a lost childhood. Her journey from Bombay to Manori implies her attempt to escape from hell to Eden, without realising that the Paradise has been lost.

She saw the island as a refuge, a protection. It would hold her baby safely, unborn, by magic. Then there would be the sea - it would wash the frenzy out of her, drown it. Perhaps the tide would lull the children too into smoother softer beings (p. 72).

The island which Sita hopes would give her refuge has lost its charm. It is no longer the place of escape. Sita's only alternative, though not forced on her, is to return to Bombay, and reality, and affirm life. She realises the irreversibility of time and the fragility of dreams.

Calcutta is very much present in the lives of the characters in the novel *Voices in the City*. Calcutta merges into the mother image, lending protection and strength to the lonely voices in the city.

Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner* is set in America and India while also retrospectively spanning Kenya, England and parts of Europe. Many other modern novels in English have the cross-cultural theme and so have to be set in the respective countries. Chaman Nahal's *Into Another Dawn* and Shiv K.Kumar's *A Bone's Prayer* have a varied background to represent the effects and tensions of the East and West
encounter. Wider landscapes are suggestive of the complicated nature of the modern world, which has considerably shrunk in size. Internationalism is the trend of the day with many people cross-migrating and settling abroad.

The focus of attention is the un-Indianness of the foreign situation to emphasise the different way of life. Sindi Oberoi recreates the American way of life to show how Babu Khemka met with his death. Babu’s father could not apprehend the vast change that had come over his son due to the new culture. By way of contrast, the alien settings pitted against the Indian serve to encounter these two cultures and its effects on both sides.

Even as the setting or atmosphere can be used for suggestion of certain aspects of life, characters also act as suggestors. Many fictional characters apart from their fictional role also serve as suggestors of the creative writer’s vision. Characters like Anuradha in Arun Joshi’s The Last Labyrinth\(^{38}\) and Daisy in R.K. Narayan’s The Painter of Signs suggest themes and ideas for the readers to discover.

Anuradha appears unfathomable to the hero Som Bhaskar. In fact an aura of mystery surrounds her in the

novel. Other characters who have come into contact with her feel that there is an elusiveness about her past and also her present. Mr. Thapar has this to say of her:

His (Aftab’s) wife is more balanced . . . not much is known of her. She was a film star for a short while (p. 15).

K, the family doctor gives details of her past life when he had occasion to meet her earlier as a friend and a doctor. K also discloses details of her illness which has left pockmarks on her face.

Though Aftab considers her his wife and has a sort of admiration for her, giving the general impression that they are an odd couple, Anuradha herself denies reports of being married to him.

Som Bhaskar’s mind is always restless and his consciousness desires to see beyond the apparent reality. The narration at times seems to suggest more than what the text presents. It is then that the implied reader becomes aware of the implied author who is different from the narrator. Chatman tries to explain the difference:

Unlike the narrator, the implied author can tell us nothing. He or better, it, has no voice, no direct means of communicating. It instructs us through the design of the whole. 39

The written parts of the text are the gaps which the author has to utilise to suggest his ideas.

A third dimension to the fictional characters and setting can be given by making them representative of a wider reality. Characters can rise above their fictional status to a symbolic level. Viewed on this plane, Anuradha can be interpreted as a symbol of the ṣakti or the feminine principle in God's creation. It is believed that the cosmic world is dependent on the ṣakti or power and that even God derives his power from this source. The importance of the feminine principle to this world is symbolically represented in the concept of the Ardhanāreeswara which gives equal importance to the male and the female. But in the novel there is also the warning that the ṣakti has to be approached carefully lest it destroys, as happened in the case of Som Bhaskar.

Daisy in The Painter of Signs suggests meanings far beyond the fictional role assigned to her. She lacks warmth in her relationship with other characters. Her only preoccupation is her vocation in life towards which she seems to expend all her efforts. She is wary of cultivating any kind of relationship with anybody and even with Raman she maintains distance, in the sense that she does not allow any involvement. That is why she refuses to enter into a marriage contract which would have stood in the way of her
two main aims in life - devotion to duty, and detachment, the twin gospels of the Bhagavad-Gītā.

Daisy's earlier life which is narrated in the form of recapitulation throws light on the warmer side of her life. She too had been a girl of aspirations, love and understanding. But certain circumstances had made her shed her natural warmth and adopt this attitude to life. Narayan probably suggests that the teachings of the Bhagavad-Gītā are the only solutions not only for the liberated woman, but to mankind in general. By naming the character Daisy, Narayan has lifted her from particularity and projected her as a symbol of the emancipated woman. She is not affected by worldly ties and turns down Rama's overtures for marriage though she has not hesitated to have a brief affair with him. While comparing her with the other women characters of Narayan, namely Savitri of The Dark Room and Rosie alias Nalini of The Guide, it is seen that the woman character has gained in self-confidence and pride.

The subtle forces of dhvani lead the readers to reach deeper interpretation enhancing the quality of the work of art.

Modern writers refer to gaps in the text which have to be followed carefully by the readers. To name a few gaps, there are the 'prospective,' the 'temporary,' the 'permanent,' the 'hermeneutic,' and 'retrospective' gaps.
These are necessary to unfold the plot of the story and to give information about the progress of the story. But the gaps of suggestiveness in the novels which go beyond the verbal medium and structure can be identified with another facet of dhvani which enriches the aesthetic qualities in the novel.

Meanings in literary art are derived not directly through literal translations but through the suggestive power of words which is dhvani. The words as conventional symbols convey direct meanings and also function suggestively within the structure of the literary work. Indirectly they give rise to images, feelings, affective tones and associations. When all these are merged together they give rise to a unique kind of meaning which is not given by individual words in their normal usage.

This indirect meaning is what the Indian aestheticians call dhvani in order to distinguish it from the ordinary and direct meaning of words. Dhvani taken as extraordinary meaning, however, does not totally forego the symbolic use of words. The vivid imagery of poetic language depends upon a complete understanding of words first in their symbolic and then in their suggestive functions.40

For a proper understanding of the word, the leap is to be made for the suggestive meaning. This happens when the

referential use of words is understood but submerged, when the symbolic meanings do not intrude upon the mind, but slip unobtrusively into the unconscious. There is no question of obscurity, but only addition of extra meaning which subordinates the intellectual meaning through the use of sound, image and emotive and associative values.

In a study of the Indian novel in English, certain other issues are also to be considered because the genre suggests aspects of writing in both Indian and English languages. The English language used by the Indian is coloured by his knowledge of the regional language and necessarily the native idioms and images enter his creative language. The synthesis which has to be brought about is to be faced by the writer. It is a challenge to be experienced by the reader too, whether Indian or foreign.

Mulk Raj Anand, himself a practitioner of the novel in English language, says,

In so far as the novelists of India writing in English were inspired primarily by the modern European and American novel, they have become the metamorphosis of the imported technique, into the racial consciousness inherited by us from the tradition. The factors that shaped the growth of this genre since the mid-nineteenth century, arose as much from the social and political conditions of a colonised country as from several indigenous though attenuated narrative traditions of an ancient culture that survived through constant mutation. While they had roots in the local
landscape of the country they had roots from abroad also. The impact of the European form of art in the Indian context has been strongly felt by many practising writers of the twentieth century. Certainly this had led to a metamorphosis of form and content in the Indian Novel in English.  

Raja Rao has also expressed his concern over the merging of the Indian thought with a foreign language especially in creative writing.

One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. . . . It is the language of our intellectual make-up. . . . Our method of expression has to be therefore a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the American or the Irish.

The problem of synthesis has been felt by creative writers and critics alike. The suggestive power of the language in its own native cultural background is different from its suggestive power in this transplanted atmosphere of the Indian ethos.

In the general context of studies in the language of fiction, there is yet to evolve a method of analysis. The


problem of analysis and interpretation becomes sharper when dealing with the Indian novel in English.

Creativity inevitably leads to extending the latent possibilities in the language, and not merely the passive use of conventional language. Originality in the case of a non-native speaker may mean a native-like proficiency in the use of the adopted language, or creativity in the sense of carrying over, consciously or unconsciously, the linguistic resources of the mother-tongue into the foreign medium.  

V.Y. Kantak also voices a similar view in the issue about the handling of the English language for creative purposes, especially by novelists. He stresses the importance of shedding the marks of "laboured acquisition: everything depends on the intimacy of the adoption, the level reached in the process of naturalisation." In a novel, whether it is description, narration and reflection or dialogue, the Indian novelist writing in English is dealing with modes of thinking, ways of observation, and other instinctive responses of people whose awareness has been conditioned by a language other than English.

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Each successful writer creates a highly individual means of communication, drawing from his own personal linguistic as well as literary upbringing. These two, unique in themselves in word literature, will have to be understood and measured.  

Indian writers chose to write in English because they found it a suitable medium of expression. Each writer has moulded the language of adoption in his own distinctive way to suit his creative needs. Through imaginative and effective expressions various shades of emotions, ideas and thoughts have been conveyed. The English language as used by the creative writer in India is the product of an evolutionary creative process obviously influenced by the Indian languages and not of a derivative one.

Drawing largely from the Indian languages, the Indian writer in English is able to meet the demands of the milieu and its special cultural aspects. If he has been able to fuse the world of sensations and the world of words, he has succeeded. The English used for creative purposes should adequately and truthfully articulate the sensations in a manner that awakens a delighted recognition in the readers. There are various degrees of achievement in this field depending on each individual writer. Sometimes Indian idioms

and expressions get into the creative writers' language, which in their translated form, work at both the literal and metaphorical levels. Mulk Raj Anand's work abounds in literal translations from Urdu or Punjabi into English. Sometimes it may baffle not only the non-Indian reader, but also Indians who may not be familiar with these regional languages. "Yet it is a remarkable achievement in creativity and what it may lose in easy, immediate intelligibility, it gains in convincing realism."46

Anand too tried to experiment with the language as he consciously had to use it creatively in his novels. His attempts to cannibalise the native idiom with the English language can be traced to three distinctive devices: the first is a literal translation of Hindi or Punjabi idiom; then there is the use of Hindi words in English sentences sometimes used indiscriminately either as nouns or as verbs; and thirdly, the spelling of English words is altered to suggest uneducated speech. Meenakshi Mukherjee calls this third device false, because, "the Indian writer writing in English accepts prima facie the unreality of the characters speaking in English, since the characters would not do so in real life."47 She points out the other device of

interpolating Hindi words also as a shortcut to the problem which is essentially more complex.

Raja Rao’s attempts in this field are noteworthy. His language seems to spring from the Indian scene, the Indian manner of gesture and speech, absorbs it, and yet suffers no distortion. *Kanthapura* reveals the influence of the Kannada language and its literary tradition in a very marked manner. Throughout the novel there is an authentic ring of the regional flavour which anyone familiar with the Kannada language can easily recognise. Raja Rao is also able to tap the rich resources of symbolic suggestion in his use of the English language. In Raja Rao’s usage it has shed all traces of foreign acquisition and has asserted itself as an independent idiom. The local colour of Kannada language has been artistically fused into the nuances of English language to bring about the creative metamorphosis. The writer uses English, chaste English, not borrowed and applied, but taking the shape of the new material. The word in the case of Raja Rao has become the perception.

This problem of how to convey an Indian essence through the English language, where the language and subject matter seem to go hand in hand, has to be met by each individual writer at his own creative level. The racy, down-to-earth speech of Mulk Raj Anand’s characters has no resemblance to the no less authentic but more poetic speech
of the characters of Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*. Both kinds of speech are unmistakably Indian, their speakers belong to Indian villages but the Indianness lies in some quality of characterisation and not in some readily identifiable use of the English language.

Narayan's English succeeds in capturing the feel of South Indian life in an alien medium. His English is straight, simple, modest in range, hardly exploring the possibilities of the language he is using. Lacking the academic background which in some writers sits heavily on their language, and gives it an air of artificiality, Narayan's common man's tongue is at once casual and convincing. There are no strange effects even when there are literal translations of the native idiom. Many Western critics of Narayan have praised him for his easy use of the English language. Kantak finds it fitting to quote Walsh:

Narayan uses a pure and limpid English, easy and natural in its run and tone; . . . clear of the palpable suggestiveness, the foggy taste, the complex tang, running through every phase of our English.48

Not every writer can get away with such a simple style which has only simplicity as its strength. Literary language has to be different from ordinary language; in Narayan, the leap is achieved through *dhvani* or suggestiveness which is irony.

48 Kantak, p. 215.
This is made possible because in the first place, Narayan’s stance is that of an ironic artist who views the world around him from an amused and detached angle. It is this vision which colours the otherwise simple language to give it the necessary depth and weight without the touch of frippery and sophistication. In many instances, the situational irony itself gives rise to the nuances of language usage.

Irony in the case of Narayan’s novels is present in the growing differentiation brought about in the four-point relationship between writer, narrator, text and audience. Narayan is distinct from the narrator Raju and the text of The Guide establishes a relationship with the audience where the distance between the author and the text is subtly projected. This device makes the aesthetic function of the narrator more meaningful.

In Narayan, the irony becomes an art of expression where it is capable of generating two or even more levels of meaning. Narayan decides that the pretence of Raju as an impostor should be seen through, and arranges, by the choice of signals, that to be made possible. The reader is aware of Raju’s credentials through and through, and every streak of his fraud and deceit is convincingly narrated. But the villagers are not made to see into Raju’s real nature, and even when apprised of it very frankly do not choose to believe it. They instead consider him an ascetic. Raju
cannot be called a hypocrite because the pretence on his part is not safeguarded against discovery. The ambiguity in Raju's character is exploited by Narayan consciously as part of his ironic intention. He envisages a double audience, one, the villagers, who, hearing Raju's utterances interpret it in one way, and secondly, the readers who are able to look at the same from a different angle and are also aware of the villagers' incomprehension of the situation.

Throughout the novel and all his works Narayan has created a literary language which is simple, limited and even naive. But this language has tremendous suggestive power for two reasons; the first being Narayan's ironic stance as an artist who watches with detachment human follies, and the second on the fact that he hinges his stories on situational irony which gives rise to a kind of suggestiveness of an extraordinary variety without recourse to symbol or myth.

On the otherhand, Kantak sees Balachandra Rajan's attempt at handling the English language as dallying with verbal brilliance, always trying to load the language with significance. Nurtured on a 'highly academical diet' every page speaks of the writer's intention to display the powers of language. "The habit of heightened expression makes it impossible for the author to say a simple thing plainly."49

49 Ibid., p. 232-33.
Raja Rao's style is adapted to the temper of the metaphysics he tries to explore in *The Serpent and The Rope*. Highly evocative, poetic, philosophical and even religious, it adapts itself to the presentation of a totality of human existence. Naik speaks highly of this effort of Raja Rao. As the introductory note to the novel claims:

Raja Rao has written this novel in a style that may well constitute a new literary experience. The Sanskrit language may not be read in a hurry, it must be sounded as well as seen; and its power depends upon its beat, upon rhythms the ear alone can detect. It can have the effect of epic language the world over, rousing the mind to a heightened state of participation in the events described. Something of this Raja Rao has tried to capture in English.\(^{50}\)

The suggestive element or *dhvani* in Anita Desai's use of the English language is present in her reliance on imagery, symbol and myth which are consciously used to provide a depth and intensity to her novels. Anita Desai claims that she took to the English language very naturally, and consequently seems to wield a fluency and a richness which helps her in the creative process. Through the language she is able to express feelings, sensations and psychological traits very convincingly. She exploits the

normal resources of the English language without any overt attempts to make it sound Indian.

She depends upon the striking image as a means of extended meaning. She has an intensely individual style, which she achieves neither through self-conscious attempts of sounding Indian, nor by seeking the anonymous elegance of public school English.51

Anita Desai's first novel, Cry, The Peacock has an extravagant and rich style which abounds in images of life, death, night and day, and draws from the physical world around. The style is suited to describe the sensation of madness in a high-strung woman. The contrast in life itself is made the central theme by the suggestive use of symbols making the novel full of dhvani. The language functions at a highly connotative pitch, and is best suited to present psychological states of mind. This suggestive use of language is an aspect of dhvani which helps the reader to grasp the intention of the writer.

Dhvani interpreted as the style of the individual writer to express his artistic vision shows the distinctive features of language used by each writer. Earlier it has been seen how each writer's theme dictates the style to match it. Sometimes individual perceptions can guide the

style as is evident from the way in which the different writers have approached the same theme. For instance, the theme of untouchability is a contemporary reality in the Indian situation. The Gandhian Movement had triggered in its wake the enormous tensions associated with this stigma in caste-ridden Indian society. The Indian Renaissance sought to cut at the roots of the injustice faced by the untouchables, by jolting the whole society into an awareness of man's equality as a true enough fact. The untouchables themselves could not comprehend the enormity of the changes, having been subjected to these restrictions from time immemorial. How this theme has been used by the three novelists, to present their vision of life in their own characteristically individual style implies dhvani.

Children of God is about those whom God may have made but has forgotten to protect. Written in 1975, almost three decades after Independence, the novel speaks of the mirage of the so-called equality which is yet to arrive on the Indian scene. The method of narration is in the first person. The tender life of Kittu, the beloved son of the narrator, has been swallowed most cruelly by the fires of the blind and foolish people who belong to the higher castes. Kittu's only fault was his desire to offer bananas to the God inside the temple. The novel is the rendering of

the anguish of the mother in a short, crisp and powerful manner. The style is easy, simple, full of grace, sometimes natural, sometimes sarcastic, to bring out the force of the personal tragedy. At times it is raised to greater dimensions to include the plight of the untouchables; their position remains unaltered even after the efforts of Gandhi and the changes wrought in the Indian society in the post-Independence years. The freezing effect of the personal loss is recounted by narrator.

My eyes saw that it was Mada but he seemed not to belong anymore. He, like all things there, seemed not to have any meaning. . . . I stare and stare and I have no tears or grief, no anger, no fear, no passion (p. 5).

The irony behind the efforts of the people to make amends for the loss is evident in the comments and the promises of the political party. The narrator says, "Suddenly we have been raised to a position of importance" (p. 7).

In the recapitulations of her childhood days which the narrator alternates with the present movement of the story, she is able to give authentic accounts of the deep-rooted feelings on this subject and also of the hand-to-mouth existence of those days.

Hunger walked with us through the days of our life. It ruled our thoughts and actions. Through sleeping and waking, from birth to death, it was the thread that held the days of our life together. There was no escape from it save in
death. We were like rats running round and round in the trap of never-ending hunger (p. 19).

The novel does postulate the entry of these low-born into the temple on a later day due to the efforts of an Acharya. The narrator claims that she witnessed an ārī performed to Lord Vēnugōpāla. But the story or legend told by Kantamma about the desire of the Lord to dwell in the pariah quarters envisages a time when God's presence would really be in the temple along with the pariahs and the low-born.

Shanta Rameshwar Rao has given this theme a symbolic and even a metaphysical touch. The sensitive nature of the theme makes her adopt a satirical tone to emphasise certain ideas. For instance, the meaninglessness of the externals of religion is subtly satirised. Kantamma's story (pp. 149-56) works with ambiguity in searching for the dwelling place of God. Did He really live in the idol which the people worshipped? In reality where did He reside? The shades of appearances and reality are beautifully woven into this parable.

To go from this novel to Mulk Raj Anand or even Romen Basu is to encounter a very different approach to this facet of dhvani. Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable (1935) written well before Independence treats this theme in a straightforward and naturalistic manner with great insight and intuition. It is about one day in the life of Bakha, a young and sensitive boy belonging to the untouchable class. Many
critics including Forster are agreed that though Bakha’s job is the cleaning of latrines, he remains strikingly pure and untainted by the environment. The human spirit can rise above circumstances and Bakha is hopeful that the future for himself and his lot will be certainly better considering the changes that are taking place due to the Gandhian movement. Within the realistic framework Anand has worked this theme, while emphasising the social context and realities of India. To many who know India as constituted of the Ganges, the Himalayas, and the philosophy of the Bhagavad-Gītā, Anand’s book opens the other side of the country through the portrayal of untouchability and the harsh realities in the Indian society.

Yet another attempt to capture the recent reality with regard to this issue is Romen Basu’s The Outcast. It appeared nearly ten years after Children of God. Set in the Basuli village in Bengal, it throws light on the prevailing attitude of the high castes to those lower than them. It also delicately draws on the distinctions between the low-born themselves who pride on their respective hierarchies. The antipathy among the lower castes is too strong to die out. Romen Basu tries to show that even society might accept the castelessness; but the different groups themselves cannot accept their inferiors and there is constant enmity among them which is featured in the novel. Romen Basu’s style mingles event with dialogue to emphasise his point of
view about the attitude to untouchability among the untouchables themselves.

Through the style employed, the three writers have tried to convey an experience arising from the particular state of being an untouchable. It could not have been conveyed in a better form than the method adopted by each individual novelist. It is similar to what Mark Schorer calls the "achieved content" of the novel, which incorporates the content or experience with the techniques. The style has a charm of itself, the subtle means by which the sensuous details provide a network in the story, and which also provides the writer and the reader with a refined moral insight. Shanta Rameshwar Rao has managed an adequate technique which not only creates the environment but also the experience. In Mulk Raj Anand the realistic setting is created and makes an impact on the readers. His is more in the fashion of the documentation of social reality, where the writer converges a rich variety of meanings into the theme of untouchability as a social phenomenon. Using a predominantly realistic or naturalistic mode of narrative style, Anand does make use of imagery and also poetic and symbolic strategies to give his novel extraordinary power and beauty. Even the descriptive

passages are highly suggestive. Suggestiveness creeps in unobtrusively in literary art, even in the most realistic and practically committed writer. In Romen Basu, the realism is more marked because of the extensive use of dialogues which give the novel the necessary authenticity.

David Lodge finds it paradoxical that we recall a novel as a system of actions, situations and settings; these are after all communicated through language. Ultimately, language is the only tangible evidence we have for those vast, vague, unreliable qualities which we bandy about in literary criticism: "truth to life," "moral seriousness," "psychological insight," "social consciousness." Each writer is consciously manipulating the language into larger meanings in accordance with his personal vision. A novelist's language can never be a one-stringed instrument.

There is a difference in approach to the theme by each individual writer. Romen Basu's dialogues which cover a fairly large share of the novel serve a two-fold purpose; first they give a kind of intimacy to the situation, when the clan of the outcast seem to speak to the reader even as their dialogues are featured. Secondly, the method of telling and showing gets resolved easily when dialogues are represented. The advantages of the dramatic mode over the

narrative are fully exploited by the artist. It may lack the poetry and imagery of *Children of God* or even the *Untouchable*. Yet it has its own effect in conveying the message in the union of theme and technique.

This chapter has the potential of suggestiveness as an indispensable feature in the novel and shows how this suggestiveness or *dhvani* is employed by novelists and how readers can discover the same in their reading experience. This awareness on the readers' part enhances literary appreciation and directs attention to the aesthetic beauties of the novels. The *dhvani* concept, in fact, covers all aspects of literary art; for by concentrating on the suggestive element, both writer and reader are engaged with the literary beauties which ensue from language usage, and also the use of technical devices in the process of writing a novel. The *dhvani* principle tries to see the novel as an integrated whole, and looks for the *rasa* or emotional content through the process of suggestion. The following chapter discusses another aesthetic concept, *sādhanīkaraṇa* which helps both the author and the reader the process of art creation and art experience respectively, through the distancing factor.