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***Animal Farm* Through the Lenses of Anandvardhana's *Dhwani*  
Theory**

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## Abstract:

The ancient Indian Sanskrit literature is today known as Indian Poetics or Sanskrit Poetics which is an immortal encyclopedia of the theories and principles of literature. It is very rich from its root; therefore, it has many fruitful branches. Beginning with Bharatmuni's *Natyasastra*, Indian Poetics includes many other great 'acarya' (aestheticians) like Bhamaha, Kuntak, Anandvardhana, Kshemendra, Dandi and many more. Their contribution in Indian poetics is marked with applause. However, among all these aestheticians Anandvardhana creates his own way by contributing *Dhwanyaloka* in Sanskrit Poetics.

The paper focuses on the application of *Dhwani* theory on George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as well as whether this work is *Uttam kavya*, *Madhyam kavya* or *Adham kavya*. It also focuses on whether this work articulates which kind of meaning and sense: *Abhidha*, *Laksana* or *Vyanjana*.

**Keywords:** Indian Poetics, *kavya*, *Dhwani* theory

## Introduction:

*Animal Farm*, generally considered as a very pleasing story of animals that plan, work, and rule over the Manor Farm which is converted into an animal farm and hence entitled as *Animal Farm*. For the students of literature and scholars it is a political allegory and satire in general as well as parody on the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The central enunciation of the theory of *Dhwani* is that words in their capacity of conveying sense possess the three kinds of meanings and accordingly articulate the three kinds of sense: *Abhidha* (Denotation), *Laksana* (Connotation) and *Vyanjana* (Suggestion). *Abhidha* is the textual or literal meaning, *Laksana* is the targeted or implied meaning while *Vyanjana* is the hidden or over and beyond the meaning of a word. Anandvardhana classifies poetry based on *Dhwani* into three categories: *Uttam kavya*- known as *Dhwanikavya* in which suggested meaning is central. *Madhyam kavya* also known as *Gunibhutvyangya kavya* in which suggested meaning loses its primary place and gets secondary importance and last is *Adham kavya*- known as *Citra kavya* in which there is no suggested meaning.

*Animal Farm* is a work of art which is quite proper to apply this theory. It is a human allegory in general because the novel possesses the historical political meaning in general. The incidents and surroundings which take place in this novel generally occur in the society in which humankind is living.



## Dhwani Theory: In Brief

Anandavardhana's Theory of *Dhwani*, sometimes referred to as the 'theory of suggestion,' is highly advantageous for anyone engaged in literary pursuits. In his initial assertion, he posits that poetry possesses both corporeal and ethereal dimensions. He further asserts that *Dhwani* embodies the essence of poetry. The notion of *Dhwani* holds appeal due to its expression of *Lavanya*, which is the inherent quality of poetry that embodies charm and inspiration. According to Franklin Edgerton:

One of the most prominent of the several Hindu schools of literary aesthetic theory is that known as *Dhwani* School. It teaches that all literary art of the first rank contains *Dhwani* - "tone, resonance, reverberation"-which is something that is not directly said in words, but indirectly suggested; and this "unsaid" meaning always (in first-class poetry) constitutes the prime source of aesthetic appeal." (Edgerton, Franklin: 687)

Prior to Anandavardhana, the preeminent linguist Bhartrahari also alludes to the significance of contextual meaning. In Indian theory of meaning, "*Sphota* is considered to be one single meaningful unit that can comprise a series of words or even sentences arranged in order." (Prabhu, Venkataraman: 25) The proponents of *Dhwani* theory, adhering to the tradition of grammarians, expand the domain of *Sphota* by incorporating the idea of *Dhwani*. The term "*Dhwani*" is employed by grammarians to denote the concept of *Sphota*, which represents the sequential process of suggested meaning from word to sound, from sound to *Sphota* and from *Sphota* to meaning.

A word carries not only literal meaning but also conveys a further meaning i.e. the socio-cultural meaning. This socio-cultural meaning is the suggested meaning and it falls within the domain of *Vyanjana*. According to proponents of *Dhwani* theory, the quality of poetry extends beyond the mere presence of literal meaning (*Abhidha*) and metaphoric meaning (*Laksana*). It is argued that a really exceptional poem should also incorporate the implied meaning (*Vyanjana*). *Vyanjana* is that which generates the *Dhwani* meaning. According to Anandavardhana the difference between a good poem and an ordinary poem lies in the excess of *Dhwani* meaning. "The unexpressed or the suggested part, which is distinctly linked up with the expressed part and which is developed by a peculiar process of suggestion is taken to be soul or essence of poetry" (Prabhu, venkataraman: 27)



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Anandavardhana categorises poetry into three distinct classifications based on the concept of *Dhwani*. *Uttamkavya*, sometimes referred to as *Dhwanikavya*, is a kind of literature that emphasises the significance of suggested meaning at its core. *Madhyam kavya*, alternatively referred to as *Gunibhutvyangya kavya*, involves the relegation of the suggested meaning to a secondary position, thus diminishing its fundamental significance. Lastly, one gets *Adham kavya*, also referred to as *Citra kavya*, whereby no suggested meaning is there.

Anandvardhana categorizes *Dhwani* based on its nature per se in three categories. If suggested meaning emerges out of the content or a thing, concrete or abstract then it is called *Vastu Dhwani*. *Dhwani* emerges from the manner in which something has been said is *Alamkar Dhwani*. The meaning, here, may be hidden in a poetic figure which may be indirectly hinted at as in veiled metaphors and allegories, rather than prosaic expression of words. *Rasa Dhwani* emerges from the overall aesthetic experience that the poem gives. It is the consequence of the *Rasanubhav* of the reader and hence it is called *Rasa Dhwani*. These are known as the kinds of the *Dhwani*. Anandavardhana says that *Vastu Dhwani* and *Alamkar Dhwani* are *Laukik Dhwani* while *Rasa Dhwani* is *Alaukik Dhwani*.

The phenomenon of "resonance-like suggestion" occurs when a certain meaning evokes another meaning based on its inherent power of implication, rather than relying on the literal meaning of words. The concept of *rasa* posits that emotions are considered essential elements in the realm of poetry. Hence, the poetry that evokes suggestions have inherent musical qualities. Similar to the manner in which music evokes certain emotions, a well-crafted poetry similarly elicits an emotional atmosphere. This is achieved not alone via explicit depiction, but also through the skilful utilization of indirect suggestion. Hence, the assessment of poetry's worth is contingent upon the suggested, unsaid, emotive and other meanings.

In the twentieth century, the theory of *Dhwani* has established a new way of understanding life in literary presentations, especially under the effect of western stylistics and structuralism. Critic like C. D. Narasimhaiah has been very delightful due to the effective use of the *Dhwani* theory in the reference of Modern Indian Literature.

The time has come for us to make efforts to test the adequacy of these critical concepts in responding to a given work of art. one is embarrassed to see them dismissed as obsolete in Knowledgeable circles, while Aristotle sharing much the same antiquity, still enjoys an enviable status in Indian literary circles and in discussion of Indian literature too, as if to imply „Other abide our question/



Thou art free. (C. D. Narssimhaiah, ed. East West poetics at work, ix.)

In short, it can be stated that *Dhwani* is synonymous with *Anuranan*. *Dhwani* constitutes a fundamental element within the realm of artistic creation. A significant piece of art possesses a profound *Dhwani*. Anandavardhana places emphasis on the concept of *Dhwani* in poetry, while also acknowledging the significance of other poetic elements. His perspectives do not ignore other aspects of poetry. The significance of his contribution is in the revival of the notion of *rasa*, which had been largely overlooked, therefore reintroducing it into contemporary literary discourse. The notion of *rasa* holds significant importance for poets, serving as a fundamental focus. He lays the foundation for Abhinavagupta, who undertakes the task of revising a significant text known as *Dhvanayaloka*, and afterwards designates it as *Dhvanayaloka Locana*. *Dhwani* is greatly illustrated in Basho's famous haiku:

“Breaking the silence

Of an ancient pond,

A frog jumped into water

A deep resonance” (Riepe, Dale: 405)

### **A Dhwani Reading of Animal Farm by Orwell:**

*Animal Farm* is written with the *Laksana* (Connotation) at its core. Orwell has something in his mind to say. The setting of the story is the Manor Farm, somewhere near to Willingdon, England. This Manor Farm represents Russia. Orwell's intention behind choosing a farm as a setting is to create a sense of allegory. Whatever actions occur in the farm refer to different events which have taken place in Russia. Animals on the Manor Farm are generally hungry, thirsty and terrified in the presence of their tyrannical master and his men. The suggested meaning automatically rises in one's mind that the same thing is also happening with the people of Russia. The Manor Farm is replaced as the Animal Farm after the rebellion by the animals. This setting has a direct echo to actual history. After the rebellion in 1917, Russia has a new name U.S.S.R. 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republic.' But the atmosphere of the farm remains the same as before. Thus, the suggested meaning is that if the name or the ruler is replaced the actual condition may never change. The evil features of the farm will remain the same though the name has changed.



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*Animal Farm* in its hidden or implied meaning is the story of a class struggle, suffering of people and false promises for social, political and economic development. Orwell's essay 'James Burnham' is helpful in explaining the true condition after any rebellion. He says: "In such a great revolutionary struggle the masses are led on by vague dreams of human brotherhood, and then, when the new ruling class is well established in power they are thrust back into servitude." (Ed. Dr. C.L. Kharti: 61) The owner of the Manor Farm is Mr. Jones who represents a historical character Tsar Nicholas II. Animals on the farm are not happy and satisfied with their master's behaviour. The suggested meaning is that the ruler must act in a way which gives total satisfaction to his people. A good leader never dissatisfies his public. This dissatisfaction leads the animals to rebel against their tyrannical master Mr. Jones.

The farm has a large number of animals including the hens, the ducks, the sheep, the pigs, the dogs, the cows, the goat, the pigeons, the horses, the cat, the crow, the donkey. All kinds of animals are there. But among them an elderly pig Old Major is a source of inspiration for them. Old Major represents Vladimir Lenin and also Karl Marx, who gave the idea of the unity of the laborers; a social reformer and his ideas are known as Marxist Principles. Animals on the farm are as Orwell says 'quite ready to lose an hour's sleep in order to hear what he had to say.' The suggested meaning is that people are always eager to learn the thing which helps them in getting out of the difficulty.

*Animal Farm* is a mirror of the capitalist and authoritarian society. Old Major's speech resembles Karl Marx's theoretical text *Das Capital*. As this text is an aggressive critique of Capitalism, the same way this little text *Animal Farm* is also an assault over brutality of the rulers on ordinary and poor animals. Old Major in his speech tells animals about their true condition which they face. He says "Our lives are miserable, laborious and short." The central idea of the story lies in old Major's advice: the animals must reject men's vices, or live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money, or engage in trade. He further says that whatever goes upon four legs and has wings is a friend and has two legs is an enemy. Weak or strong, clever or simple, all are brothers. He advises not to kill any other animal, and treat all animals as equal. The suggested meaning is that if people want freedom, then equality and brotherhood are of prime importance. Furthermore, if one wants to reform the society, he must reject the vices of the ruling class people.



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Animals want to keep themselves away from anything which belongs to men. Therefore, they burn the tools and weapons from the harness room. When they saw the burning whips Orwell remarks “All the animals capered with joy when they saw the whips going up in flames” (25). The reader gets the implied meaning that the whips are the weapons of suppression. The pleasure comes naturally when the object of pain is destroyed. So, animals reject the ribbons as a cloth of human beings and declare “All animals should go naked” (25).

A horse named Boxer who represents the proletariat is physically tremendous but not a first-rate intelligent animal. He slopes the barrel of beer from the scullery. It suggests that beer is considered a drink of the ruling class. The pigs with their superior knowledge possess the leadership. They actually do not work but they like to guide, direct and supervise the others. In this literary text the pigs are known for their wit and technique to make others work. Orwell draws here the meaningful picture of the society. The suggested meaning is that knowledge is power. There are two classes in society: Ruling and Working.

Gradually, the pigs also begin to act and behave like men. They start to sleep in a bed, to drink whisky and to trade with neighbouring farmers. In short, the pigs start to break the Seven Commandments for their own comfort. By this the reader might get the suggested meaning that the corruption enters with the breaking of the basic principles. Only rulers have the right to modify the ideas for their personal relaxation and convenience. Mr. Fredrick, a neighbouring farmer and owner of the Pinchfield- represents Hitler and Germany respectively- cheats Napoleon in a timber deal and then attacks on the farm and destroys the Windmill which was rebuilt by the animals with their efforts. It suggests the role of vices like envy in the field of politics. When a ruler is cheated by someone else, he consequently harms the other also.

Years pass and the condition on the farm also has changed. Now the pigs are more and more like the men. They walk on their hind legs, carry whips, wear clothes, and smoke a pipe. Ultimately, the Seven Commandments are reduced to a single commandment: “all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.” The great resonance lies here, when one can see the ruling class people with all the vices of their enemy. The purpose of the rebellion vanishes from their minds. They are considered as the lazy, corrupt, power-drunk, and power voluptuous rulers.

Napoleon invites the nearby farmers for dinner, and specially Mr. Pilkington who represents the historical figure Churchill. It shows the actual Tehran Conference between U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Prime Minister Joseph Stalin. Besides this meeting, Napoleon





changes the name of Animal Farm back to the Manor Farm, saying that it is the “correct” one. It indicates that with the corrupted behaviour of the rulers, their actions and their vision for better society also get corrupted. The ordinary people have to be ready to suffer as they suffered in their past days. They all play card games and drink a glass of beer. The other animals of the farm are watching the party of these ruling class people through the window. However, they fail to recognize which are the pigs and which are the human beings. Thus, George Orwell, like a socio-political writer, reveals the fundamental and universal ideas through this political allegory of Animal Farm. He gets the idea of a fable from seeing:

“A little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge carthorse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. It struck me that if such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the exploit the proletariat.” (Ed. Dr. C.L. Khatri: 47)

This literary text reveals the political ideals, realities, controversies during Stalin’s rule. One can say that this text is an attack not only on Stalinism but the political leaders in general. The fundamental political connotations in the book can be summarised as; degradation of socialist ideals, class stratification in society, the hazard of naïve labour class and finally, the use of abusive language to usurp the power.

### Summing Up:

*Animal Farm* is pregnant with suggestive meaning. Consciously or unconsciously, George Orwell has followed the theory of *Dhwani*. The theory of *Dhwani* can be applied to any form of literature. Every work of art has something to say and identify beyond itself, but it is the reader's duty to apprehend the suggested meaning. *Dhwani* gives the broad, perfect and universal meaning which differs from its regular, literary meaning. Here, throughout the reading, a reader is captured in a deep interest, therefore the novel is full of suggested meaning (*Vyanjana*). The novel is *Uttam kavya* because it exactly fulfills Anandvardhana’s quality of a great work of art. It is rich with *Dhwani* meaning and so, moves a person and affects his insight. The theory of *Dhwani* has broad and deep scope in the world of literary research. This research paper is just to deal with a single novel of George Orwell: *Animal Farm*. Nathless, like this novel any literary work in any form can be examined, evaluated and judged through the lenses of *Dhwani* theory.





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