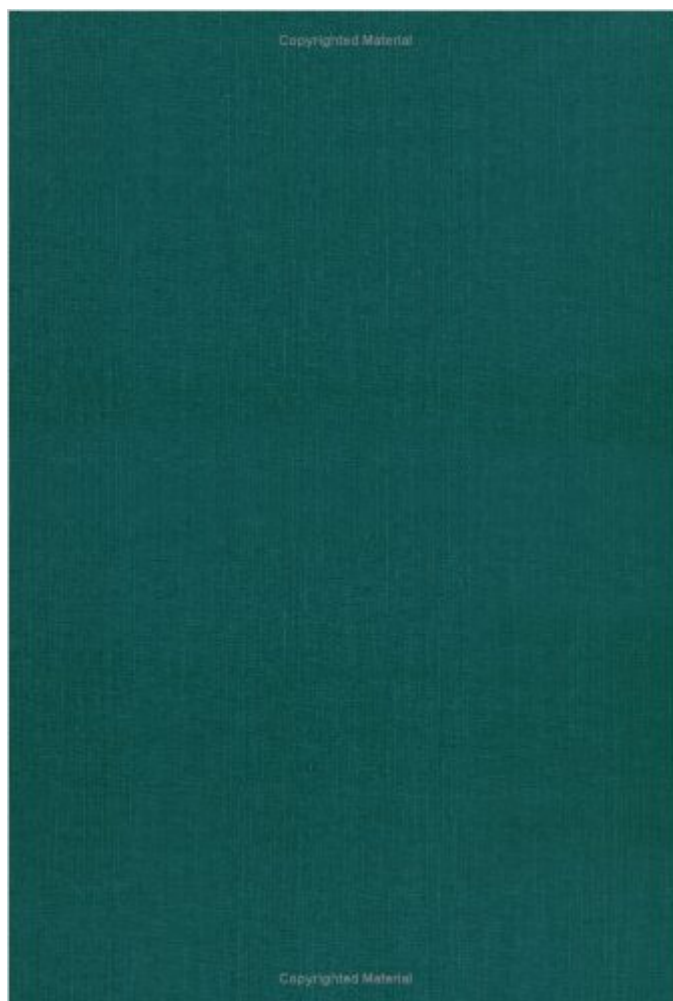


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Synopsis

For nearly a thousand years the brilliant analysis of aesthetic experience set forth in the *Locana* of Abhinavagupta, India's founding literary critic, has dominated traditional Indian theory on poetics and aesthetics. The *Locana*, presented here in English translation for the first time, is a commentary on the ninth-century *Dhvanyaloka* of Anandavardhana, which is itself the pivotal work in the history of Indian poetics. The *Dhvanyaloka* revolutionized Sanskrit literary theory by proposing that the main goal of good poetry is the evocation of a mood or "flavor" (*rasa*) and that this process can be explained only by recognizing a semantic power beyond denotation and metaphor, namely, the power of suggestion. On the basis of this analysis the *Locana* develops a theory of the psychology of aesthetic response. This edition is the first to make the two most influential works of traditional Sanskrit literary and aesthetic theory fully accessible to readers who want to know more about Sanskrit literature. The editorial annotations furnish the most complete exposition available of the history and content of these works. In addition, the verses presented as examples by both authors (offered here in verse translation) form an anthology of some of the finest Sanskrit and Prakrit poetry.

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