

Review of: "Power of musical sound and its impact on the psyche: an Indic perspective"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The paper has some potential as it explores an important subject namely the psychological implications of sonic experiences through the lens of traditional Indic and classical Sanskrit texts. The paper needs stylistic attention, and the author would be advised to pay attention to writing conventions. The Indic aspect too needs elaboration, what is covered by this term, why not look at the larger story of sound in India and especially raga music that had an equally strong indo-Islamic dimension.

The actual focus of the paper is Abhinavagupta and his aesthetic formulations and his understanding on sound and its various gradations. It would be interesting to probe why linguistic sounds are assigned a lower value than musical sounds despite the fact that vocal music (with words) is always more valued in India. There is a useful section in the paper on understanding the 'power of music' where the argument is to contest the ways in which power is normally understood and overlooks the cultural specificity of a word like Shakti!

Central to the paper is the development of the rasa aesthetics a subject that has been widely discussed. What remains a mystery is how this elaborate exposition of Abhinavagupta gives us a better understanding of the therapeutic powers of music. It is an assertion based on an aesthetic and philosophical reading that is with merit but not convincing enough to demonstrate the proposition.