CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

The application of Anandavardhana's principles for the interpretation of Eliot's works has brought certain positive results and conclusion can be drawn on the basis of the following aspects:

I. That there is a remarkable similarity between the views given by the critics in the West in the twentieth-century and Anandavardhana in the ninth-century concerning literary theory, nature of language and what modern critics name as "textasy".

II. That there exist close affinities between the poetics of T.S. Eliot and that of Anandavardhana.

III. That the parameters adopted for application and interpretation of Eliot's works were of practical value.

Though it has been pointed out earlier in this work (Chapter I) that the aim has not been to make a comparative study of the theories either of the West against the East or T. S. Eliot against Anandavardhana, the similarities and affinities cognized at times become essential to know and help us in many ways:

(1) The study of the theory of one provides a better understanding of the approach of the other widening the perspective.

(2) We get confidence that even the single theory of Anandavardhana is wide and deep enough and can be adopted for the interpretation of a work of art.

(3) All the present day literary theories of the West, in one way or the other are essentially the theories of reading and as a French Structuralist critic
avows, they "specify how we go about making sense of texts." The Sanskrit theory also fulfils the same purpose.

(4) This study of affinities also proves the significance and relevance of such an ancient theory in modern times that what was discovered by Ānandavardhana in the ninth-century is now being found by the modern critics.

The above mentioned aspects can now be taken up one by one.

I  East and West Poetics — Similarities

The two systems that Indian poetics has given since the time of its inception till date are: the primacy of emotion in art and suggestion as the central source of literariness. Bharata's formulation in his treatise on dramaturgy that emotion is made manifest through its vibhāvas etc. (objective correlatives) is taken over and extended to literature in general; and most importantly the process of emotion being rendered manifest is identified as essentially one of the suggestions, and the objective correlatives functioning as suggestive associates of the emotion. Rasa in this is taken as an inward experience. It is a state of intense satisfaction in the sahṛdaya (man of sensibility) so that his response as a spectator or a reader rather than the artist's act of creation, is the centre of attention in the Rasadhvani theory. Western critical theories have come to be widely seen as an alternative to the Rasadhvani system. Krishna Rayan observes:

There is irony in this situation, because the

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Rasa-Dhvani theory is not inconsistent with the mainstream of Western aesthetics and has in fact found independent corroboration in Western critical traditions, notably the American, the French, and the British, and many of its concepts have been restated and refined by critics who had never heard of dhvani.²

Earlier theories in West have interpreted the literary text from the point of view of what the writer has to say. The symbolist poetry during the modernist period introduced the idea that poetry is not what it says but what it does. Hence a text ultimately is that what is interpreted by the reader. Since the response to a literary text is, almost by definition, a predominantly affective one, it is the reader’s emotional experience, which in fact is the meaning of the text. George Steiner maintains that a text:

is generated where the reader is one who rationally conceives himself as writing a “text” comparable in stature, in degree of demand to that which he is reading. To read essentially is to entertain with the writer’s text a relationship at once recreative and rival. It is supremely active, collaborating yet also agnostic affinity whose logical, if not active, fulfillments

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is an "answering text". Abhinavagupta says that meaning is what the reader produces and when the critics of Indian poetics deal with the word 'meaning' it is a synonym for emotional reaction or experience. To create this the writer uses all kinds of structures, images, metaphors, in short, the objective correlatives. Krishna Rayan comments:

On the whole, despite the differences that exist, there appears to be a substantial degree of continuity from 9th Century Indian to recent and current European poetics on the subject of the reader's role. This is chiefly because the Rasa-Dhvani theory was essentially a theory of meaning and was basically interested in the way the meaning of the work is received or reconstructed (if not "produced") by the reader. It certainly anticipated the present-day position that the literary text and the response to it — and not the creative act — must be regarded as the proper concern of literary theory.

The reason why at all Anandavardhana or the critics in the twentieth-century refused to accept that a text is what a writer intends it to be, is the

changed concept about language — its character and its functioning.

Words of language are the signs conveying meaning. Signification as such is the function of all language. Initially meaning was described in semiotics in terms of a definition of the sign, which was based on one to one correspondences between signifier and signified. But the revisionists since then have displaced the notion that the signified is locked into the signifier. The accepted notion presently is that a signifier can have multiple signifieds -- that a signified can become the signifier of another signified and so on to an infinite extent. Thus the definition of the process of signification has moved away from denotation to polysemy. Once connotation and polysemy are accepted as the basis of signification and if seen as complex, flexible, loose process, it becomes identical with suggestion. Anandvardhana's terms like arthaśaktimūladhvani vyaṇjanā, vyaṅgana or vyañjakakāvya are the altered versions of this concept. Literariness of literary language lies in this quality of suggestivity and polysemy. It also indicates the difference between the literary discourse and the language of literature. Krishna Rayan comments:

The differentia of literary discourse as opposed to ordinary or standard discourse has been variously identified in terms of such oppositions as: fiction/ truth; emotive/referential; aesthetic/utilitarian; deviation/norm; foregrounded/automatized. But literariness is best described (as it indeed has been, across the ancient/modern and East/West divides) as defined by
the dominance of unstated, implied meaning. At one end of the scale is the affirmation cited in the opening verse of the *Dhvanyāloka*, the ninth century Sanskrit classic of literary theory: kāvyāsyatmā dhvanitiḥ (dhvani —i.e., suggested meaning; suggestion — is the essence of poetry or, more widely, of literature) — an affirmation refined elsewhere in the same treatise by describing dominance of suggested meaning as the defining characteristic of the best or truest poetry. At the other end of the scale are affirmations in recent or contemporary theories in the West. Paul de Man, chief among the founding fathers of Anglo-American Post-structuralism, declares that he "would not hesitate to equate the rhetorical, figural potentiality of language with literature itself".5

The terms in above citation show that they are not interchangeable but Ānandvardhana’s concept of 'Suggestion' subsumes both as the explicit sense can also lead to the suggested. A literary discourse, therefore, (1) is pervasively image-based, and (2) generates plural meaning through such implications as gaps, or subtext. Literariness, however, is not defined by the exclusive presence of suggestion but by its preponderance over statement.

Sanskrit theory focused — as literary theories should and indeed do today

— on the observable formal elements in the work, analyzing them in relation to reader’s response; it marginalized the creative imagination and psychology, philosophy, etc., as factors external to the experiencing of a work.

All modernist poetry has been written with these concepts in mind. Hence, the application of Ḍānandavardhana’s theory makes us adopt an approach as these writers and critics from the West would like any one to do. Indian approach does not kill the spirit of the poetry. It rather supports and works in harmony with the attitude of the writer himself (particularly when it is the text of a Modernist or any twentieth-century writer).

There are a number of other points where the modern poetics and Ḍānandavardhana’s theory converge such as on Catharsis, use of metaphor, images or literary devices, obliquity in poetry, but for the present, the points of comparison seem to suffice as the aim here is to show how suggestion has been accepted as the basic quality of literariness emerging as the soul and the function of good literature. This brings us to the close affinities between T. S. Eliot and Ḍānandavardhana.

For sure the aim in this study has not been to prove the supremacy of any of the critical approach or to denounce it but that which John Brough points out to show what the West owes to the Indian poetics. It definitely appreciates the account of the Sanskrit grammarians whose labour leads to the rise of Dhvani theory ultimately. He observes:

But while we in the West have acknowledged a debt to Pāṇini in the matter of formal analysis, we have
paid less attention to the theories of general linguistics and linguistic philosophy to which the Indians devoted much thought. I wish... to discuss a few of the most important aspects of the Indian theory... because in their extraordinary linguistic and philosophic acumen these ancient authors are still, I believe, worthy of our respect. As Bharṭṛhari himself puts it, the Goddess of Learning does not simile on those who neglect the ancients.⁶

Dr. Kapil Kapoor also observes:

Above all, de Saussure, who was the professor of Sanskrit at Geneva before coming over to Sorbonne, was an ardent scholar of Pāṇini and had published his early papers on Sanskrit poetics. de Saussure's structural principles caused a revolution in linguistic and literary thinking in the West. de Saussure's structuralism, it has been pointed out is understandably rooted in Indian linguistic thought....⁷

II Ānandavardhana and T. S. Eliot — Affinities

T.S. Eliot is the *avant-garde* of the modernist poetry during the first half of the twentieth century. In spite of the difference of time and cultural

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background, a number of parallels can be drawn between the views of Eliot and Ānandavardhana on poetry and poetics. In the fourth flash of his Dhvanyāloka Ānandavardhana rightly observes that, “there are bound to be plenty of coincidences amongst great minds. For it is a well known truth that the thoughts of great men bear strong affinities to one another”.

(1) First and foremost, the Rasa-dhvanī theory finds its parallel in Eliot’s concept of the objective correlative. The locus-classicus on the objective correlative is the latter half of Eliot’s essay on Hamlet. He writes:

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an ‘objective correlative’; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked... The artistic ‘inevitability’ lies in this complete adequacy of the external to the emotion; and this is precisely what is deficient in Hamlet. Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is in expressible, because it is in excess of the facts as they appear... his disgust is occasioned by his mother, but... his mother is not an adequate equivalent for it... And it must be noticed that the very nature of the données of the problem

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precludes objective equivalence. To have heightened the criminality of Gertrude would have been to provide the formula for a totally different emotion in Hamlet; it is just 

because her character is so negative and insignificant that she arouses in Hamlet the feeling which she is incapable of representing.9

This could be Ānandavardhana judging a play or a poem in terms of the theory of rasadhvani. The essential emotion is the dominant rasa. Disgust is jugupsa, one of the eight sthāyis. Gertrude is the human object of the emotion – the ālambana vibhāva.

Thus both Eliot and Ānandavardhana point out that the essential function of poetry is not intellectual but emotional. The poet’s desire is not for intellectual density but for richness and subtlety of emotional impression.

(2) However, both of them believe that these emotions cannot be communicated or stated directly. According to Ānandavardhana rasas can never become an object of direct verbal denotation. In a play, for example, the experience of sentiments can come only through the characters in a particular setting, irrespective of the fact what their proper names are. Thus they are only implied by the latent power of the explicit. In other genres the evocation will depend upon the images, situation, etc. Thus Eliot’s “set of objects, a situation, a chain of events” are the vibhāvas, etc. of rasadhvani. In the same way,

whereas Anandavardhana emphasises upon the proper combination of these *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *vyabhicāris* for the evocation and relish of *rasa*, Eliot stresses the need of complete adequacy of external to the emotion. Eliot points out that the concern of the poet is never with thought so much as with finding the emotional equivalent of thought. His understanding of the value of objective correlative caused him to base the dramatic lyric — intensity of *The Waste Land* in the externalized structure of parallel myths. It also led him to give the poem even further focus by sifting it through the eyes of a central observer Tiresias.

(3) In this way emotional unity in a work of art becomes central to the theory of both. Eliot writes:

> The poetic drama must have an emotional unity, let the emotion be whatever you like. It must have a dominant tone, and if this be strong enough, the most heterogeneous emotions may be made to reinforce it.\(^{10}\)

Anandavardhana asserts:

> Though there is a convention that more than one sentiment should find a place in entire works of literature, one of them alone should be made principal by the poet who aims at greatness in his works.\(^{11}\)

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Thus if the poet assigns prime importance to only one intended sentiment, it will adorn his work with abundant beauty. Ānandavardhana gives the examples of the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata and says that in the Rāmāyana Vālmiki himself has incorporated the sentiment of pathos which has been kept up as predominant till the very end of the work in view of his concluding the work at the point of the eternal loss of Sita by Rāma. Eliot himself, in all the four poems analysed in the present work, allows the śānta rasa to dominate.

(4) Another important concept in Indian Poetics as well as in Ānandavardhana’s Dhvanyāloka, is the concept of aucitya, that is, propriety or decorum. Ānandavardhana believes that whatever devices such as the setting, the situation, language, the attitude depicted, qualities, etc., a poet uses, should be in conformity to the characters and the rasa being delineated. For example, attribution of divine qualities to a character who is simply human will cause indecorum. For he contends: “there is no cause for a breach in sentiment except indecorum. The greatest secret about sentiment is conformity to well known considerations of decorum”.¹²

Holding very similar views Eliot in his essay “Three voices of Poetry” claims:

The poetry must be as widely distributed as characterization permits; and each of your characters, when he has words to speak... must be given lines

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appropriate to himself... And these lines of poetry must also justify themselves by their development of the situations in which they are spoken. Even if a burst of magnificent poetry is suitable enough for the character to which it is assigned, it must also convince us that it is necessary to the action; that it is helping to extract the utmost emotional intensity of the situation.\(^{13}\)

(5) Both these writers avow how the objects of emotion in art differ from those in real life and what the actual process is that affects this transformation. The answer to this is \textit{sādharāṇīkāraṇa}, that is, generalisation/universalisation or impersonalisation of emotions. The imitation of live emotions by the poet would not do to explain the uniformly aesthetic pleasure or \textit{rasa} that the reader experiences in literature. A real sorrow in life can only lead to pain in the onlooker. The poet is, therefore, credited in his creative moment to impersonalise and universalise the world of emotion by the spell of his art. This unique poetic function is significantly termed as \textit{sādharāṇīkāraṇa}. The characters projected by the poet cease to be mere individuals and become representative of humanity caught up in the whirl of the world’s joys and griefs. Thus, the very first condition of \textit{rasa} in the reader assumes the specialised skill of the poet in seizing the universal and enduring elements of an emotional situation.

Eliot in his essay “ Tradition and Individual Talent” writes:

Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality. 14

Thus indirectly he confirms the Indian theory that there is no rasa or aesthetic emotion in life though there are all the bhāvas or personal emotions corresponding to the rasa in literature. Only those that are gifted to transcend their mundane personalities, viz., the poet and the man of taste, can enjoy the aesthetic experience of rasa.

The poetic imagination or pratibhā is said to be one of the virtues of one who is a seer primarily. It is in this sense that the poet’s intuitions and insights claim the attention of humanity for all time. Their truth is a truth higher and deeper than scientific or empirical truth; their intimations of reality touch the deepest chords of the human heart. Indian theory never believes in raw emotion becoming poetry until it is ordered and patterned by the imagination (pratibhā), even in a lyric. Read in this light, the whole of the following passage from T. S. Eliot may take on the look of a modern commentary on the Indian theory of rasa:

The effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art. It may be formed out of one emotion, or may be a combination of several; and various feelings, inhering for the writer in particular

words or phrases or images, may be added to compose the final result. Or, great poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever, composed out of feelings solely.\textsuperscript{15}

Regarding the affects of poetry on the sensitive reader in particular and society in general in his lecture on "The Social Function of Poetry", T. S. Eliot draws a fine distinction between the direct didactic aim of early poets and the indirect educative value of all poetry. He writes:

I suppose it will be agreed that every good poet, whether he be a great poet or not, has something to give us besides pleasure; the pleasure itself could not be of the highest kind. Beyond any specific intention which poetry may have, there is always the communication of some new experience, or some fresh understanding of the familiar, or the expression of something we have experienced but have no words for, which enlarges our consciousness or refines our sensibility.... without producing these two effects, it simply is not poetry.\textsuperscript{16}

Sanskrit critics too affirm categorically that the beneficent influence of poetry on the reader in particular and society in general is two-fold, namely, (1) \textit{rasa} or the aesthetic pleasure, and (2) indirect instruction in \textit{puru\'s\'ārthas}

(human values) after the manner of a loving wife whose influence on the husband is as irresistible as it is sweet.

In this way one can find that the views of Eliot and Ānandavardhana regarding poetics converge on many points. This brings us to the principal question and that is regarding the practical applicability of Ānandavardhana's principles to the interpretation of Eliot's poetry.

III Practical Application

Literary works are read by the Western, the Eastern, the modern as well as the ancient readers. If there is any difference, it is of time, place, language, mythology, images, allegories and cultural background of a country. These differences may pose some difficulties but do not stand in the way of appreciating a literary work. Desdimona, Cleopatra, Šakuntalā etc. are not individual personalities but the models or representatives of characters. Their feelings are of every woman.

In the same way, the principles of criticism whether of East or West are not restricted in their scope. There is a kind of universal element in them which makes them applicable to all literature than those from which they have evolved. The principles of Indian criticism specially of Ānandavardhana have universal elements that are applicable to all literature.

While applying the Rasa-dhvani theory, therefore, for analysing and evaluating the texts of T.S. Eliot, following parameters were kept in mind:

(1) Whether the suggestion - based approach is applicable to the particular text;
Whether the results obtained were appreciable or not and if yes, how far Ānandavardhana's principles have been advantageous in the interpretation of Eliot's work.

The answers to these can be summarized as follows:

First, the theory provides a theoretical base providing a perspective, promoting order, a method and consistency in critical activity.

Secondly, the system of rasa-dhvani though intricate in its application maintaining objectivity and being formalistic and text based, its approach is universal and can be applied to any piece of literature of all genres, as Ānandavardhana has himself applied it to Sanskrit and Prakrit texts. Here one may claim that with wide cultural differences the traditions and images in the literature of one language may not be comprehensible to a person of a different background. To some extent, it may be correct but the writer with his skill universalises the character of his personages in such a way as all cultural differences become secondary. One need not know the Roman or English culture to appreciate Shakespeare's plays.

While reading a poem like The Waste Land one may definitely be stuck by the large number of references but these can always be explained through annotations, and once these are known, there is no problem in grasping the suggested meaning.

Thirdly, Sanskrit poetics helps in describing, explaining and evaluating its efficiency in these operations. It is meticulous and of high order. It proceeds with
the assumption that the language of literature is oblique. That is why the Indian poetics has developed the concept of vakrokti. The theory clearly distinguishes the area of statement and the area of suggestion and their mutual relationship (how statement at times can be a base for suggestion, at times an alternative or at other times a source of damage).

Fourthly, Rasa-dhvani theory is not biased towards any set ideas to be searched in a particular piece of literature. It analyses the structures and leaves it to the reader to receive the suggestion and particularly to be affected emotionally. For, truly, in responding to a literary work, the proper focus of attention is its formal order and not its origin in or impact upon personal, historical, social, political and moral factors.

At this point one may claim that the relish of rasa is a personal experience and this involves the element of subjectivity and that it is sahṛdaya who can enjoy it better. The point raised is valid but the argument that Ānandavardhana gives is that true literariness lies in the enjoyment or relish of rasa. This is possible for every intent reader, only that there can be the difference of intensity and Ānandavardhana does not rule out the cognitive aspect. If a reader has experienced the suggested sense, it speaks for the success of a work.

The theory is systematic and detailed and the principles laid down by Ānandavardhana set us on a track, i.e., which way and what to look for. Once set, the suggested meanings emerge on their own. In literature emotions are not communicated directly but are passively experienced. It may be described as
affective state but strictly it is a mixture of affective, conative and cognitive. Words, their sense and sound and the sense experience through images, all work together to evoke emotion. Hence interpretation plays an important role.

Criticism performs two tasks — one, to interpret a text on the basis of its linguistic intricacies; two, to evaluate the meaning extracted. The latter could be from the point of view of moral, psychological, religious or any such basis. Ānandavardhana gives the first one a priority and as for the second, he stops at suggesting this as relish of a rasa in a withdrawn state — as for its moral aspect he is silent. Critical theories are always taking various angles and various basis of approach and no one theory can be so perfect as to fit in every group. However, interpretation of text being the basic need, he fulfils his promise here.

The main thrust of Eliot's poems has been what Ānandavardhana found in his summary criticism of the Mahābhārata in the last flash of his Dhvanyālloka. Eliot was not an ordinary poet. He was deeply immersed in the Christian religious tradition. It is because of his deep religious background that he finds this world very appalling and desolate. He was very much affected by the modern conditions and situations. In The Waste land he deals with the themes of futility, frustration and the physical and spiritual barrenness of the twentieth-century Western civilisation. In the Mahābhārata too, there is a note of despair consequent on the miserable deaths of Vṛśnis and Pāṇdavas. But the main purpose of the Mahābhārata, says Ānandavardhana, “is the communication of the fact that Peace is to be regarded as the most prominent sentiment, the other being secondary to it and that final emancipation is the most prominent of human
values, the other being only subsidiary to it ".\textsuperscript{17} Similarly, Eliot also concludes \emph{The Waste Land} on the note of peace repeating the word \textit{shantih} thrice. The reverend sage Vyāsa himself declared in no uncertain terms:

\begin{quote}
Just (as much) as worldly pursuits

Turn out to be unavailing

One's sense of aversion to them will become firm;

There is no doubt at all.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Thus, desolate nature, futility and misery in this world lead to detachment which evokes \textit{Śānta} (Quietude). One has to look for values but not these ephemeral things.

Since Eliot in his poetry does what he says or says what he does the task of application proves that the theory is fully applicable. Eliot's poetry is replete with all possible suggesters viz., words, letters, sound, sense, images, etc. All kinds of \textit{dhvani} like \textit{vastudhvani}, \textit{alaṅkāradhvani}, \textit{śabda} and \textit{arthaśaktimūladhvani} are working at different levels. Eliot has been able to generalise and universalise through depersonalisation and the aesthetic pleasure one experiences is of Quietude.

Before closing, one point draws attention. Time and again we have been talking about polysemy and suggestion but that does not mean that suggestion has no bounds or that a reader can stretch the meaning to any direction or to any extent. The meaning is controlled by the context or the \textit{prakarana}. John


Brough writes:

... almost all writers on the theory of grammar have discussed the factors which enable a language to tolerate such homophones without giving rise to ambiguities. Bhartrhari gives a list of such factors, of which the most important are vākya, sentence - context, and prakarana, situational context. As a typical modern statement of the same matter I might quote Sir Alan Gardiner: 'The polysemie of words ... does not matter in the least, because the hearer always has the situation to guide him in choosing that type of meaning which is appropriate to the context.'

The efforts made in the thesis of applying this theory to T.S. Eliot's poems prove the unchallengeable universality of principles evolved by Ānandavardhana. It can always bring appreciable results. Though Ānandavardhana enunciated these principles as early as ninth-century to be applied to a literary work in its entirety and to experience the bliss of rasa evoked thereby and get at the moral teaching of the text, it is ironical to note that such an application has not been widely received in respect of literary texts in Indian literature itself. It is now found highly rewarding even in respect of literary texts of other lands and cultures. It would be a great tribute to such great critics as

Anandavardhana if the efforts are put forth to the application of this profound theory of *Rasa-dhvani* to as many literary texts of different nations as possible. It is also profitable to note the echoes of the theory in modern critics, such as T.S. Eliot and others.