The theory of dhvani or suggestion was first introduced by Ānandavardhana in his treatise Dhvanyāloka in the ninth century. Though the germs of this doctrine manifest themselves in the speculations of earlier theoreticians, Ānandavardhana is the first literary critic to give a full bodied form to the concept and to enunciate a new principle of literary evaluation absorbing the concepts propounded by the earlier theoreticians. The doctrine has since then been accepted as an important principle of criticism in Indian poetics and has been strongly recommended by Ānandavardhana both for poets and critics.

Bharata, Ānandavardhana’s predecessor and another renowned Sanskrit scholar, propounds the principle of rasa in drama and literature with the basic implication that the poetic context is creatively organised for the communication of feeling. Feeling cannot be communicated through pro-positional statement. The feeling ultimately experienced by the reader is his own; it is the movement of his sensibility. Since the feeling cannot be aroused by naming it, the poet builds up a system of objective correlatives, essentially identical with the context of stimuli in life which can elicit the emotional reaction.

Bharata uses the word niṣpatti, that is, emergence or outcome, for the appearance of rasa when the prime and the ancillary stimuli, etc., are creatively organised. Ānandavardhana claims that this niṣpatti really means abhivyakti, that is, manifestation as the emotional reaction is ever abiding, as a latent reactivity, in the reader. Since the manifestation of rasa in the poetic context is not the communication of a pro-positional meaning but the presentation of a
sensitively organised complex of stimuli, he affirms that stimuli and reaction, vibhāvas and rasa stand in the relation of the suggester and the suggested. Poetry gets operated basically through the power of suggestion.

The doctrine of suggestion is founded on three-fold division of meaning emanating from three-fold powers of words, viz., abhidhā or the power giving primary denotative meaning; lakṣanā or the power giving secondary derivative or indicated meaning; and vyanjanā from which the meaning obtained is vyaṅgyārtha, the tertiary or the suggested meaning. This vyaṅgyārtha is also known as dhvanyārtha.

Every poem, feels Ānandavardhana, has two levels of meaning: the explicit and the implicit. The explicit, as the word itself suggests, is the literal or derivative meaning set forth in many ways through figures of speech, images, etc., whereas the implicit is like the charm in ladies that “shines supreme and towers above the beauty of the striking external constituents...”¹ The relationship between the explicit and the implicit differs from poem to poem, depending upon the purpose and intention. One or the other meaning is given prominence and it is only when after the appearance of the expressed sense, the explicit meaning completely subordinating itself gives rise to another sense, that we name it as the suggested meaning. Defining dhvani Ānandavardhana writes:

That kind of poetry, wherein the (conventional) meaning renders itself secondary or the (conventional) word renders its meaning secondary and suggests the (intended

or implied meaning, is designated by the learned as

**Dhvani** or 'Suggestive Poetry'.

Thus after the appearance of the explicit meaning the denoted and the indicated meanings completely subordinating themselves assign the primary position to the tertiary or the suggested meaning and such poetry is ranked as the suggestive poetry.

Semantic meaning in this process does not contradict or hinder the poetic meaning. Rather, the semantic meaning is a doorway to the suggested one. Ānandavardhana says:

"That sense" here is the suggested meaning and in a *dhvanikāvyā* it is of the highest importance. "Suggestion", writes Ānandavardhana, "itself is both the quintessence of the works of all first rate poets and the most beautiful principle of poetry". In a general poetic parlance a poetry is classified inferior where the suggested meaning is less relevant than the poetic intention.

Ānandavardhana further declares *dhvani* or the symbolic content as the poetic creation and the other types of poetic endeavors are categorised in the light of the principle of supremacy of suggestion. The best specimen of

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3. Ibid., p. 17.
4. Ibid., p. 7.
poetic art does not keep itself confined within the narrow limits imposed by the expression and the expressed. It transcends the limits and hints towards the symbolic content, which proves itself as one of the inexplicable charms, and this rise is likened to resonance or echo. Thus the best poetry is that in which the suggested sense predominates and supersedes the expressed sense. This is called the Dhvanikāvyā or the poetry of Resonance. The second class is that in which the suggested sense is not predominant and this is called the Guṇībhūta-Vyaṅgya or the poetry of Subordinated Suggestion. The third class of poetry which is of lower kind is the one without any suggested meaning. This is called Portrait-like poetry or the Citrakāvyā.

The epithet of dhvani, however, is assigned not only to dhvanikāvyā, but even to words, their meanings or the activity of suggestive poetry. In short, in Ānandavardhana's treatise it is taken in five senses, viz.:

1. The suggestive word/sound which resonates meaning, that is, vyaṅjaka śabdaḥ.
2. The suggestive meaning which resembles another sense, that is, vyaṅjaka arthaḥ.
3. The suggestive poetry, that is, vyaṅjaka kāvya.
4. The suggested meaning, that is, vyaṅgyārtha and
5. The activity of meaning, that is, vyaṅjanā vyāpāra.

Ānandavardhana elaborates his theory from the angle of what is suggested and the suggesters or what suggests. Regarding the nature of what is suggested, Ānandavardhana divides it into three categories, viz.:
(a) *Vastudhvani* or where there is the suggestion of a matter/fact or an idea,
(b) *Alankāradhvani* or where there is the suggestion of a trope, and
(c) *Rasadhvani* or where there is the suggestion of a mood or feeling.

The last category which has been taken as the cardinal principle by the Indian critics, has been assigned prime significance by Anandavardhana also. Elsewhere, he has categorically expressed that his subject is not merely to establish the doctrine of suggestion but also to harmonise it with the theory of aesthetic emotion.

The theory of *dhvani*, as such, is a comprehensive principle which can cover any genre that fulfils the definition of poetry and in fact when the Indian poetics adopts the term, it includes any literary work. The activity of suggestion in literature, whether in the East or in the West, has been an age-old phenomenon. Only that its conscious usage in West both as a term and as a technique, was a later development and as Krishna Rayan suggests, it was during the nineteenth century that "in Poe's critical writings that 'suggestiveness' is first used as a technical term". 

In the twentieth century it was because of Eliot that the universality of objective correlative became the most accepted and influenced criticism. It is concerned with the intensive study of the correlates of emotion—imagery, sound values and to a lesser extent plot and character—within the verbal organisation where they occur and belong. The states of sentience in art are expressed through their sensuous equivalents. As Wimsatt and Beardsley put it in their

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essay, "The Affective Fallacy" that emotions in poetry are "not communicated to a reader like an infection or disease, not inflicted mechanically like a bullet or knife wound, not administered like a poison, not simply expressed as by expletives, grimaces or rhythms, but presented in their objects and contemplated as a pattern of knowledge." 6

Ānandavardhana and Eliot, as such, have much in common to say. They both profess the theory of suggestion, may be in different terms. Eliot's analysis of the emotional motif of *Hamlet*, like his definition of objective correlative is very much in consonance with the *rasa-dhvani*. Such parallelism facilitates the task of applying Ānandavardhana's theory to the works of T. S. Eliot.

The thesis makes an attempt to analyse the four major poems of Eliot in the light of the principles of Ānandavardhana's *dhvani* theory.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915), the opening poem in the anthology *Prufrock-and Other Observations*, is a monologue where Prufrock is the speaker. The woman to whom he wants to sing his love song though never appears on the scene, her presence in the poem is felt throughout. The poem is an expression of a mind desiring and longing but unfortunately defeated by its own arguments. The moment we connect it to the *prakarana* (context) of the central thought in Eliot's major poems, Prufrock emerges as representative figure — a twentieth century man who is a victim of indecisiveness, diffidence and stress, ultimately getting mutilated in the face of reality.

*The Waste Land* (1922) draws our attention on the different facets of life without belief, on severance of man from the divine which implies man's absolute

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dependence on himself. There is no moral authority beyond him to curb his wayward instinctive urges; no objective value exists in the waste land of his anarchic self-seeking pursuits. Man-woman relationships are based on vulgar sexuality; every human being moves like an automaton with a parched spirit and deadened soul.

In this way Eliot is dealing here with the themes of futility, frustration and the spiritual and the physical barrenness of the twentieth-century western civilization. However, the poem is not merely a cry in the wilderness over something past and gone, for it ends with a note of hope and belief that by obeying the triple commands of the Prajapati: give, sympathise and control, man can rehabilitate his lost glory. The poet does not explain these ideas in such direct words. This is his most symbolical poem where he uses a series of objective correlatives to suggest these states of the modern man.

In the poem "Ash-Wednesday" (1930) the poet combines the 'exile theme' and the 'turning theme'. The exile theme is related to the sins of man resulting into the expulsion from the permanent joys of Eden or Heaven and the turning theme is related to man's effort to turn from this world and regain eternal peace.

The Four Quartets (1943) are deep meditations on important Christian themes. The grimness of life without belief still torments the poet for which he holds Renaissance humanism and its offshoots responsible yet the ugly scenes of contemporary civilization fade in the effulgence of the spiritual vision. Faith necessitates spiritual exploration of the meaning of belief and spiritual exploration leads to the struggle of the soul to purify it and transcend the
temporal and seek the eternal. He does not reject life or the world, he rather loves both because in them he observes the immanence of God.

An overall survey of Eliot's major poems reveals that the dominant factor in all these poems is the suggestion of rasa which has been assigned the highest place in Indian Poetics. This is a moment of detached relish of aesthetic emotion and Ānandavardhana has evolved his entire theory very comprehensively and systematically to show how the various stylistic devices can be used for the evocation of this emotion. Since Eliot is a symbolist, there is no dearth of such devices in his poetry and, if we study the poetry of Eliot in the light of Ānandavardhana's theory we can analyse it systematically going into all possible details. The application does not create any hindrance as any poetics does not concern with interpretation or determination of meaning of particular work but with the definition and refinement of instruments of analysis. Theories are broad-based and can be applied to different literary works. Hence, when we apply the rich aspects of dhvani theory it helps us to reach convincing conclusion, enhances better understanding of Eliot's poems and enables us to judge a western poet from oriental point of view.

The purpose of the present study is therefore:

a) to interpret the major poems of Eliot in the light of Ānandavardhana's dhvani theory,

b) to assess how far the application of this theory provides a better understanding of the poems, and

c) to judge its relevance and significance in modern times.