The impact of T.S. Eliot on modern poetry has been both wide and deep - in fact, so wide and deep, that he has, as Professor Ward puts it, much against his will, become the literary arbiter of his age - an age which may be rightly described as the age of Eliot. He has influenced generations of writers in various ways not only in Europe and America but also in India. Modern literature in most of the regional languages in our country bears clear evidence of this influence. It is not, therefore, surprising that he would set a trend in modern Hindi poetry too - particularly the poetry written during the forties. This thesis is a study of the nature and literary value of this influence.

The Western influence on Hindi poetry after the first World War was unmistakable. The poets were naturally exposed to English literature not only because English was a compulsory subject and its study was encouraged in the different Universities, but also owing to an emergent sense of secularism which rendered them susceptible to the alien influences and made them absorb the best of what they imbibed from them. The writings of some of the great Hindi poets between the two Wars are characterised by a strong streak of romantic mysticism derived mainly from a study of English poets like Byron, Shelley and Keats as well as the Bengali poets like Tagore, the lyrics of the 'Gitanjali' in particular leaving an indelible impression on the writings of most of the poets during this period popularly known as the 'Chhayavad' era.

The Second World War, however, witnessed a holocaust unparalleled in human history: Old values had changed yielding place to none. An agonising sense of despair, a growing awareness
of the social reality as distinct from the world of fantasy created by the poets of the 'Chhayavad' School along with an increased political consciousness could not fail to affect the trends in modern poetry - particularly in the early forties. The frustration, the loneliness and the 'ennui' of mankind and anguish of the human soul so prominently reflected in Eliot's early poetry - particularly Prufrock and The Waste Land - found expression in the writings of the Hindi poets, many of whom echo the unmistakable strains of Eliot.

T.S. Eliot as the Critic, more than Eliot the poet, set the trend in modern Hindi poetry. The poets had been rendered anchorless. Behind them was the vast convention of mediaval 'Bhakti poetry which they were too shy to inherit or acknowledge. Besides, the examples of the English Romantic poets failed to provide the right poetic idiom for modern sensibility. T.S. Eliot through his critical writings also focussed their attention on the continuity between the old and the new. More than any other writer he resurrected "tradition" and divested it of its deplorable associations and this almost revolutionised the whole concept of poetry by integrating into it the idea of tradition and an awareness of the "historical sense" which, according to him, involves "a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence." Eliot's idea of a living tradition, generated a new attitude towards tradition and a sense of confidence in the Hindi poets who were psychologically as well as by environment steeped in "tradition" that finally led to a new poetic orientation. That is not to say that the Hindi poets turned to traditional Bhakti poetry, but that they tried to relate it to their awareness of the world of experience. It is, therefore, in the choice of themes and the adoption of technique that their return to tradition is reflected, that is, in the absence of eerie atmosphere, in a firm grip on reality and a general expression of confidence so characteristic.
Like Eliot's own poetry which abundantly shows the aptness of the maxim: to appreciate is to appropriate, modern Hindi poetry also displays in various ways, its indebtedness to Eliot's poetry boon out of a profound admiration for it. Eliot cast a spell on the Hindi poets who showed the influence of this spell not only in the choice of themes but also in the technique of their poetry. This technique, as employed by Eliot, prompted them to search not only for a new idiom for the expression of their sense of desolation and horror at the debased values of a decadent civilisation, but also an anchor in their own literary past which had so far remained neglected. To claim that the Hindi poets discovered their own traditional heritage through the medium of Eliot's poetry and critical writings is perhaps an exaggeration, but it remains the exaggeration of a vital fact. Simultaneously the Hindi poets undertook bold experiments with the technique inspired by Eliot's example and sought to convey the modern sensibility through the vehicle of common speech, symbolic expressions and a novel rhythm. This was naturally a reaction against the grandiloquent diction essentially suited for describing a world of escape in which the poets of the 'Chhayavad' School preferred to live.

With a view to appraising the influence of Eliot on modern Hindi poetry I have first discussed briefly the nature of his poetry and criticism before tracing their influence on the modern Hindi poets, against the background of their current social, economic and political situation. This is followed by a perspective of the Hindi literary scene during the Wars and the reaction against the 'Chhayavad' School of poetry spearheaded by Agyeya who, along with a group of writers, set up the "experimental" school. It would be difficult to define the watermark, but it is generally agreed that the publication of Tar Saptak in 1943, containing a collection of poems by the
"Experimental" writers, ushered in a new era and widened the horizons of poetic beliefs. Girija Kumar Mathur, one of the eminent poets of the new school, considers 1940 as the starting point when a new school of poets emerged who gave expression to the despair of the tormented soul in a world of grim realities. This trend is visible amongst others, in Agyeya, Girija Kumar Mathur, Prabhakar Machve, Shamsher Bahadur Singh, Dharmvir Bhagri and many other poets included in the Tar Saptak, as also in the Deesa Saptak and Teesra Saptak—all edited by Agyeya.

It is, however, not contended that all the writings of these poets bear the mark of T.S. Eliot. It is not so much in individual writings as in the general trend that one can clearly trace Eliot's influence. In fact, the poets mentioned above have categorically refused to conform to any school. As Agyeya, the editor of the Tar Saptak has asserted, there are more dissimilarities than similarities in the writings of the poets included in the volume; and yet, they all share a common attitude in so far as they are engaged in exploring new possibilities in matters relating to poetry, its contents and form: "They are fellow way-farers on the path of literary investigation, none of them having yet reached the goal." But the inspiration and confidence derived from their acquaintance with Eliot's writings brought about a radical change in their outlook and attitude.

Bachchan, though not included in this collection, was clearly though unconsciously influenced by the Western poetry. While some of the earlier writings that carved a niche for him in Hindi poetry, like Madhusale, Nisha Nisamtran and Ekaut Sangeet, are undoubtedly steeped in a lore of mysticism and romanticism, it is only later that he came under the spell of Eliot. Similarly, the other writers reflect Eliot's trend only in parts and not throughout. What is, however, common to all these writers is the striving for new grounds of reality and new levels of consciousness, and above all, the
fundamental conformity to the concept of the "integrity of poetry" - a concept repeatedly propounded by Eliot in all his critical writings.

This does not imply that the modern Hindi poets have been plagiarists. It would be uncharitable to present them in such a light. No writer can afford to remain in an ivory tower insulated from the cross-currents of literature and ideas in the world about them. The modern Hindi poets, therefore, were equally susceptible to the winds of changes blowing all over, and though deeply influenced by the Western poetry - particularly Eliot's - they assimilated the influences into an organic whole, and what they eventually wrote bears the unmistakable stamp of their own individuality.

The influence of Eliot on the modern Hindi poets is, however, perceptible with a basic difference. Eliot portrayed the bareness and futility of human existence in an affluent society - in the midst of plenty. The conditions in India, were different, where the feeling of frustration arose out of material want and despair. The Hindi poets accepted the earlier Eliot of *Prufrock* and *The Waste Land* in totality. They created their own *Waste Land* wherein not only were the spiritual values at a discount but even physically there was total sterility and lifelessness. The poets were seized with the aridity of culture not merely because of its spiritual bankruptcy, but also material inadequacy. A return to spiritual values would have made them escapists since such concepts would have been farcical in the face of stark poverty and want.

The experimental poets, therefore, did well by not blindly imitating Eliot. In fact, the philosophical concepts in Eliot's late writings - particularly regarding the eternity of time in *The Four Quartets* - are basically Hindi concepts and the Hindi poets had just to look back to their own past to get these ideas. Hence it was the technique of Eliot that influenced modern Hindi poets most.
Eliot had developed a new idiom for the expression of the complexities of modern life and the trials and tribulations of the human soul, and in doing so, abandoned the old, hidebound form. The Hindi poets, too, had perfected a style to express the modern sensibility and resorted to the common style instead of the ornate and rhetorical diction of their predecessors, and made successful experiments with the language and the metre in order to put a much more universal meaning into the words and to express dramatic situations strikingly and perceptively with the help of clear and sharp images.

In my study I have discussed, after a general survey of modern Hindi poetry, and social background and Eliot's contribution to the growth of the new poetic sensibility in Hindi poetry - the poetry of four major exponents of the new trend. These major poets are Bachchan, Agyeya, Girija Kumar Mathur and Dharmavir Bharati. This does not imply that there are no other major Hindi poets whose writings bear the influence of Eliot. These poets have been selected mainly with a view to bringing out the trends of development and the range of the influence of Eliot. A significant feature is that most of these poets have been students of English literature and hence closely familiar with Eliot's writings. In selecting these four poets, I had also kept the following observations of Helen Gardner in view:

"The major poet's work must have bulk: he must attempt with success one or other of the greater poetic forms, which tests his gifts of invention and variation; he cannot claim his title on a handful of lyrics however, exquisite. His subject matter must have universally recognised importance, and he must treat it with the imaginative authority we call originality; he must have something at once personal and of general relevance to say on important aspects of human experience. But the further quality which distinguishes
the major poet is a special power of language, a special feeling for the connection of words in sound and meaning. This leads him to create an idiom and a rhythm that are new and individual, but which become classic. The major poet, is most of all, the poet without whose work the later poets would not have written as they did."

While discussing Eliot's influence on the Hindi poets, it has been necessary to quote from their writings in order to illustrate this point of view. For this I have resorted to rendering the relevant passages from Hindi poetry into English - not oblivious of the fact much of the original beauty of Hindi poetry must have been lost in the process of translation. Most of the passages quoted or referred to express a rhythm and an idiom of their own and their literal rendering into English can hardly be expected to preserve their basic spirit and sensibility. Nevertheless, this method had to be adopted not merely to facilitate typing, but also to enable a much closer appreciation of Eliot's appeal - as felt through the writings of the Hindi poets.

In his brilliant study of Eliot's writings, Leonard Unger has referred to this exercise, that is writing on Eliot, as "an experience of exploration". This perhaps applies equally to the present dissertation; for an attempt has been made to penetrate into the depth of vision, width of experience and intensity of consciousness in the modern Hindi poetry with the exercise of what Eliot described as the inevitable tools of criticism: "Comparison and analysis".

As far as I know, there is yet no published book on this specific subject. I had, therefore, to depend almost entirely on the source material. I could not also derive any substantial help from any Journals which are usually silent on this aspect of modern Hindi poetry. I have hence based my judgement on my reading of the poems.
I must acknowledge my debt to my Guide, Professor Dr. Amaresh Dutta without whose constant direction and guidance I would have hardly ventured to take up this work. He took an abiding interest and unfailing care in following my progress. I should also express my gratitude to the Ministry of Railways for the permission accorded to me and to the General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway for their indulgence in allowing me to undertake this study.