The ancient theories of poetics, which evolved at first with regard to classical Sanskrit literature, were taken over by critics of the new regional literatures, and in due course were used for general application. As K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar has pointed out,

The contemporary Indian critic is heir to the two great traditions which derive respectively from ancient Sanskrit and ancient Greek. On the one hand a succession of theorists - Bharata, Bhāmaha, Bhattanāyaka, Dandin, Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, Mammata, Jagannātha - have pointed the way to the indigenous way of poetry.¹

The Indian theories believe in the true and ideal reader of a work of art. He is often referred to as a sahrdaya, one who has a heart. He is given the status of a creator in his capacity to recreate the work of art and re-live the aesthetic experience imaginatively. His heart and whole being should be able to not only comprehend the truth and essence of reality behind the work of art; but the rasajña or sahrdaya is also aware of complexities of art creation. He is alive to the difficulties of achievement in the process of creativity. The concept of sahrdaya overlaps all

the concepts discussed in the earlier chapters. A good part of this chapter is related to the theoretical study of sahrdayatva which also makes references to some of the concepts covered earlier. A few works of fiction have been discussed with the aim of illustrating and analysing the concept of sahrdayatva. The discussion of these novels has naturally drawn upon the other concepts like dhvani, rasa and sādhāranikarana which in a sense are subsumed in the broader concept of sahrdayatva. Aesthetic concepts are interrelated and any attempt to separate them will lead to artificiality.

The study projects the two angles of interpretation and appreciation of the literary experience with examples of sahrdayas or ideal critics who have responded spontaneously to literature.

Abhinavagupta regards kavi and sahrdaya as two poles of the same creative power. The invocatory verse of Dhvanyālōkalōcana emphasises this idea, sarasvatyāstattvam kavisahrdavyākhyam vijayate. A classic definition of a sahrdaya, "the man of taste," is found in Abhinavagupta:

The connoisseur participates in the consensus of minds and is one who has perceived the natural appropriateness of what is represented. His mind has become lucidly receptive, like a mirror, through effort and constant practice of poetry.2

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2 Quoted in Gerow, Literatures of India, p. 217.
Sahrdaya means literally "of similar heart"; that is one who is able to identify his mood with that of the artist. It means one possessing a heart similar to that of the creator, or one with a poetic heart. This identity of attitude and feeling is a primary requisite for a true critic. The Indian aestheticians look upon the process of appreciation to be qualitatively not different from the process of creation, the difference being only one of degree. This non-difference is brought out by the use of the same set of terms to signify the artist's talent and the observer's experience. As the poet, the true sahrdaya is also born and not made. This is the view of the ideal critic in Indian poetics. For instance, the term pratibhä meaning literally creative energy is also used to signify the aesthetic response, even as the all-comprehensive term rasa is used to denote both the art quality and art experience.

The ideal critic then is capable of pure aesthetic experience because in him knowledge of the ideal beauty is innate. He is able to comprehend it intuitively. Through the wholsomeness of his spirit the first inspiration of the artist achieves a feedback into all beings. Criticism is experience responding to experience, creation straining after creation, life returning to life.3

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Ananda Coomaraswamy has analysed and given a crystal clear perception of aesthetic experience.

To receive the message of the work the spectator should have a sufficiently mellowed soul. He must enter into the mind of the artist who created it and through it he must be able to contemplate the archetypal forms.⁴

The sahṛdaya's experience of the art is possible through imaginative reconstruction or re-creation. Bharata states,

Born in the heart of the poet, it (aesthetic experience) flowers as it were in the actor (in drama) and bears fruit in the spectator. All three in the serene contemplation of the work form in reality a single knowing subject fused together (Nātyaśāstra VI.5.42).

The entire qualification for an imaginative re-creation on the part of the spectator is artistic sensibility of the same kind as the artist possesses. This being the case, the art object is only in the nature of stimulus which helps to bring forth that which is already present in the spectator. The art work sets aflame the imagination of a sensitive reader even as a spark kindles dry wood.⁵ The experience, emotions, feelings, memories and images are all present in the reader and the artist evokes them through proper

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⁵ Gnoli, p. xxvii.
presentation. Identification takes place when the spectator finds within his depth of experience a response which is identical to that created by the artist. It is not so much a feeling with him as a feeling identical to his. Many aestheticians describe this capacity for intense sympathy as a feeling of 'withness' with the object.

This stage is called tanmiyabhāvāna where the reader merges into the experience, becomes one with it, granting that no obstacle remains in his perception, caused either by the artist's inadequate skill or by the reader's own personal handicaps, and granting that he is taking the experience with an impersonal but deeply interested attitude of generalised perception. This ensures complete engrossment. In this stage he can really taste the relish that the art experience creates. It is necessary to reach this stage, because tasting, repeated tasting (carvāna), is the essence of aesthetic relish. The taste of the artwork is due to a recollection and a revival of one's own experience as afforded by the art medium and which one re-lives in tranquillity. Wordsworth's famous definition of poetry as emotion recollected in tranquillity is an echo of this idea.

The German theory of einfühlung like the rasa theory seeks to explain this experience. It calls for the projection of one's feelings into the objects perceived, which can be called empathy. As pointed out by Suresh Dhayagude, Theodore Lipps, the most famous exponent of this
theory, holds that aesthetic joy is our own inner emotional activity projected without and experienced in objects that exist independently of ourselves.

The beauty of an object is every time the beauty of this object and never the charm of anything that is not this beautiful object, or part of it.\(^6\)

He further points out that the aesthetic *einfühlung* is not only indifferent to the question of truth or falsehood, but that it could be felt only in aesthetic contemplation free from practical interests and momentary moods of everyday life. The active principle behind this attitude or feeling is man's sympathetic reaction to objects of art and nature. The psychology of the art connoisseur, which is a crucial factor in art experience is discussed in this theory. Art objects or nature can evoke in man a joyous feeling probably through association. The imaginative perception of the spectator invests the objects with beauty.

"Empathy means, not a sensation in one's body, but feeling something, namely, oneself, into the aesthetic object."\(^7\)

On comparison with the *rasa* experience, *einfühlung* is more like experience founded on the idea of pathetic fallacy. But the *rasa* theory gives more importance to the human participation and deals with art experience in a more comprehensive manner.

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\(^6\) Quoted in Suresh Dhayagude, p. 164.

\(^7\) Ibid.
According to a pan-Indian conception, human life is motivated by four purposes: dharma, artha, kāma and moksha. Dharma embraces moral and religious duty. Artha is material property (politico-economic condition). Kāma is pleasure and love. Moksha is the liberation or redemption of the soul from the flow of existence; it is the paramārtha, the supreme purpose of man. Literary art is considered to be the expression of the creative artist's vision of life directed towards the four puruṣārthas as these are called. The critic or sahrdava, in his interpretation of works of art, looks out for these in them and evaluates a work of art on this basis.

The Indian approach to literary criticism can be seen as analogous to the concept of faith and free-will in religion. Within the broader framework of faith, free-will operates choosing its paths of conformity and deviation. In like manner in literary appreciation, the Indian approach falls back on the larger framework of these concepts of emotionality, suggestiveness, impersonality and ideal readership. Within this it can operate to reveal beauties and insights which great works of art possess. There is ample room for variety of interpretations, which enriches the beauty. While enabling a reader to identify the beauties, the Indian approach also allows the perceptive reader to sift the good in literature from the bad.
Being essentially classicial and traditional in form and essence, it necessitates a hierarchy of values to grade literary art. This may sound an impossibility in the modern context of pluralism and inter-disciplinary trends, but, nevertheless, the enforcement of decorum, discipline, grandeur, grace and beauty in art is emphasised. The best rated literature is the *uttamottama kāvyā* which is also called *gunī-bhūta-vyaṅga-kāvyā* where the suggested meaning is more beautiful than the stated. Krishnamoorthy points to the similarity between *dhvani kavya* and the *gunī-bhūta-vyaṅga-kāvyā*.

But it should not be forgotten that both are beautiful in their own ways. . . . It should not be mistaken that *dhvani* is a kind of poem different in kind from the *gunī-bhūta*. . . . the distinction between *dhvani* and *gunī-bhūta-vyaṅga* is not only just functional and arbitrary, dictated by considerations of practical criticism; but also that it is unreal . . . everything will come under a single category of *dhvani* and there will be nothing like *gunī-bhūta-vyaṅga* at all.8

The literature rated next is called the *madhyama kāvyā*, where the *alaṃkāras* and suggestions are in equal proportion. *Chitra kāvyā* is rated as the last by virtue of its being too dependent on *alaṃkāras* alone. *Vākyam rasāthmakam kāvyam*, sentence saturated with sentiment is poetry. In other words, emotion is central to creative product and this emotion is

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charged into words in a collocation of words, context and sentence. The sahrdava intuitively perceives it and re-lives it as the creative artist has done. Poetry is a skillful use of words giving out ineffable beauty. The connoisseur must be able to identify the ineffable beauty and enjoy it himself.

If one aspect of sahrdayatva is the enjoyment attained through poetic experience, another aspect is its aim towards proper interpretations of the works of art. Most of the Indian critics were commentators who approached the texts with a humility like a devotee approaching his God in order to attune himself to the mood of the writer. They were guided by the principle of propriety, of the speaker, the spoken and the poetic kind and usage.

Appreciation, participation, understanding - all these imply a common world of experience, which, in its turn, means "tradition". Tradition subsumes, besides themes and situations, accepted norms of social and individual responses, the modes of expression, the literary styles and patterns developed and accepted by a social group. The ideal reader in a particular social community is as much influenced by these conscious and unconscious forces as the writer in that group. The natural corollary of this factor is that the ideal reader differs from group to group, and that so as to reach a certain universality of taste, he will have to eschew these complexes and predilections which
preclude a wider and more fundamental taste in literature. Such a reader, while being steeped in and saturated with his native tradition of content and expression, will not allow himself to be enslaved by it so as to look upon whatever alien to his tradition as bad and unworthy of being called literature. He has a more fundamental standard, a standard common to an appreciation of all literatures, by which he will test whatever literature comes into his purview. By virtue of his long, deep, sustained studies of various literatures, and of his easy familiarity with all their genres, modes of expressions, contents and styles he will examine them by referring them back to his own catholicity of taste and literary experience and find in them beauties in such absolute terms and as he would see in the greatest literature of his own native tradition.

Using the text as the starting point, the critic begins with 'a collocation of words called anvāya, followed by the explanation of the literal meaning of every word, called pratipadaśrtha, which leads to the total meaning or significance, tātparya. After this comes vyākhyāna or elaborate commentary which explains the beauty of the work, through the paths of rasa, the emotion, and the realisation of the utterances, which is dhvani. Being governed by stringent rules, this method avoids the trap of lawless license. In the modern context, there is a danger of anarchy if the movements are not by some means related or
stabilised. In the Indian concept of sahrdava there is some scope for originality and freedom while adherence to stringent rules establishes the necessary restraint. The analytical theories of rasa, guṇa, rīti and alāhākāra and auchitya ensure smooth and orderly application in the evaluation of individual literary texts.

Interpretation depends both on the emotional grasp which leads to the aesthetic emotion the reader feels and associate meanings which are aesthetic and which are grasped by a sensitive reader after carefully attending to every detail of the poet's language and which is distinctly a sequel to the grasping of the surface meaning of the poem.

The theory of interpretation in ancient India was formulated by the language philosophers. The language theories have influenced the traditional attitudes of Indian critics towards literary texts and their interpretations. There has been a close parallel between literary theory and linguistic theories based on phonetics, grammar, etymology, and exegesis: though literary theories maintain a distinctive character, they conform to some of the main precepts, terminology and even methods of analysis established by the linguistic theories. The two major axioms of interpretations are centred on "the autonomy and
The impersonality of verbal meaning" and "unity of meaning." The second concept is easily understood by all while the first needs clarification even in the explication of Vedic texts and more so in poetic art.

V.K. Chari in his article on the problem of interpretation discusses in detail the theories of Mīmāṃsā Sūtras which are logic texts. The Mīmāṃsā philosophers adopted an uncompromising literalism in their study of Vedas and other scriptural texts. V.K. Chari also discusses the intentionalist argument of William Empson and his followers, popular in Western criticism of today. The argument of the language philosophers is that meanings adhere to words of their own accord irrespective of the speaker's intentions. Words (language) carry their meanings on the face. Tātparya or intention then becomes the purpose of an utterance, which can be ascertained within the verbal construction. It follows that words are the only means for eliciting the meanings. The literary critics proceed on the basic assumption that a literary text, like the scriptural text, is impersonal, and poetic language (especially of the suggestive type where an unexpressed meaning is also implied) depends upon the poet's intention for its special effect. Here the meaning is shifted from the words to their

inherent significative capacity. It has also been realised that words are tricky instruments and cause difficulties of interpretation since they assume a bewildering variety of forms. As Bhartrhri has declared, "the word alone is the binding factor because it has its capacity fixed (in connected utterances)."\textsuperscript{10} While it was established that a word and its meaning were fixed by the union of \textit{vāk} and \textit{artha} called popularly \textit{vāgartha}, Bhartrhari also has claimed with tremendous foresight that "the meanings of words are not determined by their form but only by their views."\textsuperscript{11} A word is incapable of revealing its meaning outside its context. With this background of a logical and self-contained system of word and meanings, the theory of poetic suggestion and interpretation developed: and to date, if this theory can claim universality without any scope for critical censure, it is because of the strong foundations on which it has been built. The Indian theories believe that suggestion exploits the ambiguous and even non-contextual meanings, that is, associational meanings. Suggestion, they believe, is a special capacity of language, distinct both from its literal and metaphorical uses. But even these critics are sticklers for unity, and they show how poetry achieves this aim in various ways. They are also strong

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p. 333.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 335.
contextualists and argue that it is with the aid of context that suggestive language attains its many splendours.\textsuperscript{12}

Over and above the abhīḍā and lakṣāṇa, the unexpressed vyanjana is a special extension of meaning. The final stand on the Indian views of interpretation is that "verbal meanings can be ascertained without recourse to the author's intention, and that a unified interpretation of linguistic texts is possible as well as desirable."\textsuperscript{13} By distinguishing between the meaning of a text as that which accrues from what the text says verbally and suggestively (accepting the significance of dhvani in all its range), and from a unified sense of the work of art, Indian poetics defines its unambiguous stand on matters of literary appreciation. It can be seen to be different from the phenomenological view which has advocated the 'reception theory' where a text is potentially capable of different realisations, because different readers will realise it differently and the same reader is likely to realise it differently at different times according to the changes in his perspective.\textsuperscript{14}

Chari sees in this argument the need to account for the psychological dimensions of the reading experience. He

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid., pp. 335-37.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 338.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 338.
\end{itemize}
argues against those theories or readings which tend to conflate meaning and response.

During the last ten or fifteen years the new orientation in criticism stresses the reciprocal relations between the text and the reader. These theorists followed the phenomenological approach, and would like to include the reader's response to literary work, as well as the history of its reception. This active interaction between the text and the reader's consciousness is what is called "the hermeneutic circle."

... a text can only come to life when it is read, and if it is to be examined, it must therefore be studied through the eyes of the reader.15

As a result of this theory different kinds of readers have been identified. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan lists these readers anticipated by the phenomenological theorists:

... but who is the reader I am talking about? Is he the 'Actual Reader' (Van Dijk, Jauss), the 'Superreader' (Riffaterre), the 'Informed Reader' (Fish), the 'Ideal Reader' (Culler), the 'Model Reader' (Eco), the 'Implied Reader' (Booth, Iser, Chatman, Perry), or the 'Encoded Reader' (Brooke-Rose)?16


16 Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Narrative Fiction, p. 118.
She concedes that these views range from two extreme positions of a real reader, whether an individual or the collective readership of a period, to the reader as a theoretical construct. Such an approach relies on the element of incompleteness or indeterminacies of a literary text, which allows the imagination of the reader to picture for himself the 'unexpresed reality' of the text and which therefore gives it its productive value.\textsuperscript{17} The Sanskrit critics too recognise this lack of definiteness about words, but verbal meanings can be ascertained from the context. So the reader in Indian poetics moves towards a unified interpretation of the text leading to total aesthetic experience. The reader makes use of the theories of \textit{rasa}, \textit{dhwani} and \textit{sādhāranikarana} to micro-study the work of art. The \textit{sahṛdava} concept aims for an intricate and intrinsic study of the work of art. As Wellek and Warren claim, the intrinsic study is the attempt to unite poetics and criticism in analysing literary art.\textsuperscript{18} The \textit{sahṛdava} is expected to do exactly the same; be aware of the nuances of art creation and with a keen, sensitive mind enjoy a truly great work of art. As Richards puts it,

\begin{quote}
The qualifications of a good critic are three. He must be an adept at experiencing, without eccentricities, the state of mind relevant to the work of art he is judging. Secondly, he must be
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18} Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, \textit{Theory of Literature}, p. 7.
able to distinguish experiences from one another as regards their superficial features. Thirdly, he must be a sound judge of values. 19

In the Sanskrit tradition since the poet and the critic have the same kind of mental and intuitive power the critic's approach can never be wayward or bizarre. Of the creative poet it is claimed, by great poets and critics, that he should possess pratibhā, creative imagination, vyutpatti, culture and abhyāsa, training. The famous definition of pratibhā attributed to Keśmendra, prajñā nava navōṃśga dāli pratibhā matah, is quoted by P.V. Kane. 20 By implication it follows that a critic, sahrdaya, should also have the same qualities in the same measure in order to grasp the total aesthetic experience. The power of the poet enables him to call up in the readers' hearts the impressions of faded experiences; it also implies the power to present ever new, wonderful and charming combinations and relations of things never before experienced or thought by the ordinary man. By implication, then, a true sahrdaya who possesses a heart of similar nature should be capable of the same kind of pratibhā through the text. Sanskrit theorists vouchsafe the aesthetic experience in the highest form to those select few whose tastes are cultivated and who possess hearts that vibrate in unison with that of the poet. The


20 Kane, History of Sanskrit Poetics, pp. 220-21.
essential unity of genius and taste has been fully realised by the Indian theories. Krishnamoorthy quotes Kuppuswamy Sastri's views on this matter:

The glorious synthesis between kavi and sahrdava which was dimly perceived in this land was definitely achieved by Vālmiki and later worked by succeeding generations of poets and critics to culminate in the master critic Abhinavagupta.21

The concept of sahrdayatva as literary experience or aesthetic relish is also to be understood. Bharata's definition of rasa as relish implies the taste enjoyed by connoisseurs when they come into contact with great works of art. The sahrdava is able to enter into the poet's work and appreciate it well. Like the men of taste who appreciate the fine dish prepared from different condiments, these critics are also able to see the beauties of a work of art. The meaning of the term rasa is here identified as aesthetic experience on the part of the critic. Rasa can be felt as a totality of effect which arises from the work of art as a whole. Bharata compares it to the individual flavour which arises form the dish, where each ingredient contributes its own taste, but together they make the unique flavour unlike any that belongs to the ingredients separately. Even in the analogy of anna rasa or pānaka rasa which is used to explain the nature of aesthetic experience, the flavour of the delicious dish or drink is different from the taste of the

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21 Krishnamoorthy, Literary Theories, p. 149.
individual ingredients mixed into its preparation. Here *rasa* becomes the emotion or the emotions represented in literature. It is a flavour which art creates, that can be relished and repeatedly tasted. It is an awareness of a special kind.\(^{22}\)

In approaching a work of art, a *sahṛdaya* is expected to view the parts and the whole simultaneously and see the proper alignment of these in proportion if he is to enjoy its relish.

Mallinātha, a renowned commentator on the *kāvyas*, explains his function as a commentator and a critic.

All this is being commented upon by me by way of only positive exposition. I am not writing anything that is not warranted by the text, and nothing irrelevant.\(^{23}\)

Mallinātha has understood his task as one of *explication de texte* and proceeds to show how propriety or *auchitya* should guide one's approach to the texts.

The ancient texts, the *Upanishads* and the *Brahma sūtras*, have been studied and commented upon by learned men and philosophers. The chief among the interpreters have been Sri Sankara and Sri Rāmānuja. The interpretations of Sri Sankara have been argued against by Sri Rāmānuja in

\(^{22}\) Gnoli, p. 85.

\(^{23}\) Quoted in V.K. Chari, "Decorum as a critical concept in Indian and Western Poetics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XXVI, No.1 (Fall 67), p. 57.
very logical terms. If the former had interpreted the text to suit his *advaita* philosophy, the latter had used the same to authenticate his *visistādvaita* philosophy. Both are examples of *sahṛdayas* who have responded in their own ways to the scriptural texts.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* is a text which is popularly read not only as a philosophical treatise but as a literary work as well. It contains the greatest philosophy of the Hindus where Lord Krishna describes the world view to Arjuna on the eve of the famous Mahābhārata war. This text has generated multiple interpretations from many discerning readers and critics. Many of the readings have been highly subjective or impressionistic, but they have added to the richness of the text. That a multiplicity of meanings is admitted by the scriptures, like the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, is a proof of their universality of significance.

*The Bible* and many passages from the scriptural exegesis in the West have a hidden or spiritual sense. The literal meaning sometimes may even be absurd and meaningless as Gnoli has pointed out. Nevertheless the *Bible* is replete with poetry of great beauty and rare simplicity. Certain literary principles can be appreciated in sacred texts as has been done by Frank Kermode.

*The Rāmāyana* one of the towering epics of India, has evoked the responses of many *sahṛdayas* in India and
abroad. Based on the original epic of Vālmiki, creative poets like Tulsidas and Kamban have recreated this epic in their own regional languages. Apart from such an effort, there have been commentaries on this work by scholars, critics and laymen alike. Such rich and delicate nuances of appreciation and experience from the reading of the works are possible because they, like the true critic, "must have a modicum of imagination and culture in order to enjoy aesthetically the poet's outpourings."  

Appayya Dīkshita (c. A.D. 1500), a versatile and prolific writer on poetics, responding to the great Vaiṣṇva poet Vēdānta Dēsika's work Vādayābhudaya has written a commentary on this brilliant work of Dēsika in an equally brilliant style and with profound insight. Here is an example of hṛdayasahvāda or a sahṛdāya who has understood the poetic and philosophical nuances of Desika. The commentary is a testimony to the fact that the critic/experiencer brings into his work the insights and visions of the great poet himself whom he interprets. Appayya Dīkshita himself is a no mean poet.

Abhinavagupta lists certain prerequisites for the ability to appreciate the work of art. An ideal reader would have travelled much into the realm of gold. Commenting on the mental state of the experiencer, he says that the

24 Kane, History of Sanskrit Poetics, p. 351.
experiencer must have a mirror-like mind to permit ready and clear reflection of the experience presented. The experiencer must also possess aesthetic sensibility, a capacity to feel strongly to understand and reach the heart of the experience. He must also have an unbiased mind free from prejudice and reservations. He should also be able to respond to the art experience and be able to forget himself in the experience presented. A person with all these qualifications is called a sahrdaya or a connoisseur.

Raniero Gnoli has displayed himself as a true sahrdaya in his exposition of the rasa theory of Abhinavagupta in particular and the aesthetic theories of other thinkers in general. His is a scholarly and lucid interpretation where he analyses the important text in the whole of Indian aesthetic thought, and explains it in the light of the views of prominent rhetoricians and philosophers, both ancient and modern. His work, The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta, is marked by painstaking research and the single-minded devotion of approach which avoids all kinds of misinterpretations or misreadings.

Chari has also interpreted Indian aesthetic concepts and related them to modern criticism. His profound knowledge in both Indian and Western theories is evident in his discussions. The comparative studies initiated by him have thrown open new vistas in critical circles in India.
and abroad on issues relating to interpretations, suggestions and critical analysis. Western awareness in the Indian concepts has been largely fostered by Chari's discussions.

There are examples of sahṛdaya bhāva in many Western responses to great works of art. Ruskin says, "You have to enter into their hearts" if the thoughts and passions of great teachers have to be understood. Sensation or feeling, the ability to feel, "to feel with them for which we have to be like them," is the way to true knowledge.25

T.S. Eliot talks of a true critic when he emphasises the need for empathy to enter into the creative artist's temperament. Other twentieth century critics have displayed this ability to feel one with the work of art, and relate their artistic experience in similar terms.

A succinct account of the critic in action occurs in F.R. Leavis's "Literary Criticism and Philosophy," where Leavis considers the difference in approach to literature between the literary critic and the philosopher:

The critic's aim is, first, to realise as sensitively and completely as possible this or that which claims his attention; and a certain valuing is implicit in the realising. . .

25 John Ruskin, Sesame and the Lilies (London: Oxford University Press, 1907), p. 188.
His first concern is to enter into the possession of the given poem in its concrete fullness, and his constant concern is never to lose his completeness of possession but rather to increase it.26

In quoting D.H. Lawrence, Coombes points out the implied assertion that literary criticism can never be a science. A critic must be able to feel the impact of a work of art in all its complexity and its force . . . a man who is emotionally educated is rare as a phoenix. . . A critic must be emotionally alive in every fibre, intellectually capable and skillful in essential logic and then morally very honest.27

In some of the responses to great masters and poets of English literature, there is evident the spirit of the sahrdava. The critical responses of Bradley and Tillyard have revealed newer and finer shades of appreciation in the works of Shakespeare and Milton. This shows that when a sahrdava comes into contact with a great work of art, he is able to bring out some of the inexhaustible wealth and charm in it.

Consider how Bradley introduces the study of Shakespearean Tragedy:

I shall leave untouched, or merely glanced at, questions regarding his life and character, the development of his genius and art, the genuineness, sources, texts, . . . Our one object will be what, again in a restricted sense, may be called dramatic appreciation; to increase our understanding and enjoyment of these works as dramas; to learn to apprehend the action of some personages of each with a somewhat greater truth and intensity, so that, they may assume in our imaginations a shape a little less unlike the shape they wore in the imagination of their creator.28

Bradley's analysis of the evolution of Shakespearean tragedies proceeds from the text, analysing the various issues involved in the development of the tragedies. Rejecting the idea of fate or the helplessness of man in this world, Bradley convincingly argues about the actions of man dictating his destiny. It is a world view which is no doubt acceptable and is there in the dramas. In the manner of a true sahrdaya Bradley is able to make the readers see certain features in Shakespearean characters and events which clarify the dramatist's view of life.

The concept of sahrdaya which tries to identify the oneness of the critic with the creative writer is also present in the West from the time of Plato. Krishna Chaitanya speaks of "the transfer of aesthetic experience

through sympathetic induction." He cites Springarn, Dewey, Emerson and Ruskin who have voiced similar views as those of Indian thinkers. Dewey speaks of the sensitive reader who is "of like heart with the poet." Spingarn writes:

The identity of genius and taste is the final achievement of modern thought on the subject of art, and it means that, fundamentally in their most significant moments, the creative and the critical instincts are one and the same. . . . Criticism at least can free itself of its age-long self-contempt, now that it may realise that aesthetic judgement and artistic creation are instinct with the same vital life.

Empson echoes the same view when he says, "The process of getting to understand a poet is precisely that of constructing his poems in one's own mind." These quotations have been aptly brought out in Krishna Chaitanya's Book.

Speaking of the qualities that must go to the making of a sound critic, E.M.W. Tillyard says:

He must have the mind of a poet, a cool head, the faculty of self-surrender and a certain modicum of bookishness.

These are the very norms of Indian theories. A critic having the mind of a poet is almost an English translation of the term sahrdaya.

29 - Krishna Chatinya, Sanskrit Poetics, p. 46
30 Ibid.
31 Quoted in Krishnamoortry, Literary Theories, p. 257.
The Indian scene has produced sahrdayas in whom the creative intuition and the critical acumen are combined to a very fine degree. Especially in the twentieth century where the impacts of the two grand streams of thought, Eastern and Western, have now been recognised as parallel, the sahrdayas have been aware of the dual vision in their approaches. Ānanda Coomaraswamy, Rabindranath Tagore and Aurobindo have proved themselves as sahrdayas not only in the context of literary appreciation, but also in the larger field of responding to traditional Indian art and poetics.

Ānanda Coomaraswamy's lifetime was spent in the process of discovery and interpretation of "India's usable past and its relevance to our times." In Coomaraswamy's work can be seen the picture of an ideal scholar whom Emerson describes as one "who must take up into himself all the ability of the times, all the contributions of the past and all the hopes of the future." Coomaraswamy believes all artistic activity to be an activity of lives responding to life, and to him criticism is not appreciation or exposition only but almost a kind of religious passion, the worship of a creative force behind the contingent activities of the imaginative process. By this token, criticism would at once be a discovery and creation. He treats criticism as discovery and practises his beliefs as is evident in his

interpretation of Indian art, culture, beauty, and truth. He seeks to discover the underlying unity of all varieties of aesthetic experience. He sees poetry, painting, culture, iconography and music as affiliated to a single and common ethos.

Like Coomaraswamy, Rabindranath Tagore also interprets the traditional Indian position in the light of modern theories and shows the rationale of accepting the point of view that art is a total human activity. The aesthetic philosophy which emerges from Tagore's different works, critical and expository, is invaluable in the apprehension and appreciation of art in general. His creative genius has a parallel in his critical outlook. His approach to art is founded on his intuitive understanding of it and on his personal experiences as the practioner of varied art forms. He believes that art is the response of man's creative soul to the real. Much of the finest of the Indian and Western aesthetics has been retouched and modernised by him and to this he has contributed considerably by dint of his original mind. His aesthetic philosophy assimilates the best of Indian and Western aesthetics, shows the clear stamp of orignality and helps in the understanding of art and literature, both old and new, Indian and Western. Tagore comments on the subject of aesthetics with a poet's vision:

That which is not known by logic, whose value is not in practical use, but which can only be
Tagore calls that man who is endowed with the power enjoying a creation of art as a sahrdaya pathak. Art to him is the reflection of man's image of the Ideal. To him tradition is necessary, but has to have a certain degree of flexibility and absorption so as to incorporate the new, variegated impulses of life and to be able to grow with its growth, dance with its rhythm. The tradition with is helpful is like the channel that helps the current to flow. A blind reverence to tradition can only mar the natural progress of art. Art has to explore the immeasurable depths of reality which may be revealed in future times too.

It (art) belongs to the procession of life, making constant adjustments with surprises, exploring unknown shrines of reality along its path of pilgrimage to a future which is as different from the past as the tree is from the seed.  

Aurobindo is an outstanding figure, along with Tagore and Coomaraswamy, who has shaped the creative, critical and appreciative faculties of the Indian mind. Well-versed in both the Western and Eastern traditions of thought, religion and culture, "the politician, the poet, the philosopher and the yogi were all of a piece, and made

34 Ibid., p. 48.
the sum - the Power - that was Rishi Aurobindo.\textsuperscript{35} The poet and the critic in him made him voice the prophetic rhythms of future poetry. That he is a true sahrdaya can be seen from the observation:

I am afraid, I have to say what Arnold said about the grand style; it has to be felt and cannot be explained or accounted for. One has an intuitive feeling, a recognition of something familiar to one's experience or one's deeper perception in the substance and the rhythm or in one or the other which rings out and cannot be gainsaid.\textsuperscript{36}

Aurobindo has successfully established a line of communication between Shakespeare and himself. That is why there is a spontaneity and a feeling of oneness with Shakespeare. Aurobindo's 'Overhead Aesthesis' is the term which tries to explain the consciousness of the sahrdaya, on the lines of Arnold's touchstone method.

The Overhead Aesthesis in poetry and the Overmind Aesthetics are subjects, which Aurobindo feels, cannot be explained with any precision. These cannot be clarified to the intellect in terms of positive statement. It is not the psychological nor the transcendental view of life which brings this feeling; it is all this and also something more than the "vital emotions and reactions or the thoughts that

\textsuperscript{35} Iyengar, \textit{Indian Writing in English}, p.152.

spring out in the life-mind under the pressure of life."37
It includes a "quality or power in the language and the rhythm which helps to bring out the deeper something."38

Aurobindo's discussions on the power of poetry and literature to move readers reveal the heart and mind of a sahrdaya, a man of taste himself, who has also been a successful creative writer. The idea of the Overmind and the Overhead can be analogous to the Genius or pratibhā or creative imagination. In his response to Shakespeare's art and genius, and to English poetry in general, Aurobindo displays the insight of an excellent sahrdaya. The insight which he brings to this literature is remarkable, coming as it were, from an Indian heart and mind. The universal vision of Aurobindo is a testament to the concept of sahrdaya which can transcend time and space.

The Indian response to criticism has followed a two-fold method of approach through imagination where the intellect and the heart are fused. The creative imagination with the fusion of emotion into the artistic form expresses itself as a work of art. Criticism likewise repeats the same experience through the work of art, intellectually and emotionally in a detached manner. The critic by creating

37 Ibid., p. 21.
38 Ibid.
criticism can enable the audience to catch the gleam in a work of art. The vision of the original artist has to be discovered by the critic.

The creative effort of Indians who chose to write in the English language, led to the voicing of responses by readers. The hitherto unexplored area of Indian Writing in English was made known to Indians themselves through the efforts of pioneering critics like Iyengar, Narasimhaiah, Raghavacharyulu, Naik, Meenakshi Mukherjee and Kantak. The critical performance in the interpretation and evaluation of this creative writing in English by Indians is still an unaccomplished task except for the spadework carried out by the above mentioned critics. The critical viability of studying this literature has drawn the attention of sensitive readers to the inevitable problem of expression in a foreign language. Being a new and hybrid literature, its significance in the general evolution of modern culture has to be studied, taking into consideration the historical and thematic cross-currents. The need for a sound critical foundation to evaluate this literature has been felt by many (Chapter 1). The similarities in the literary situation in other Commonwealth countries should also be taken into account. "Applied criticism should be broadminded, international and inter-disciplinary."\(^{39}\)

Iyengar's assessment of Indian writing in English where he makes a full sweep of the achievement of this new kind of writing is an example of sahrdaya critic-historian. Iyengar began as a reviewer in the thirties and forties, and later published two volumes, *Indo-Anglian Literature* (1943) and *The Indian Contribution to English Literature* (1945). Historical and encyclopaedic in range, the perceptive and intuitive comments of the critic are in the nature of a sahrdaya. In his work is evident the appreciative qualities of a critic who brings to bear a keen insight into the very creative process so as to unveil the hidden beauties in Indian writing in English. Apart from viewing the creative writing in English by Indians (including poetry, drama, prose and the novel) with the eye and spirit of a sahrdaya, he is able to correlate the many issues involved in the kind of hybrid literature. He has been responsible for giving this literature a special status and is generous in his assessments, though he has not failed to point out flaws and excesses wherever necessary.

Himself a creative writer of outstanding merit, Iyengar has paved the way for later critics and writers in very positive terms. He has excelled himself as a sahrdaya in his appreciation of Aurobindo's works. His two volume biography of Aurobindo reveals Iyengar's profound understanding of and a penetrating perception into the works of the modern ṛṣi in the true spirit of a sahrdaya. He
has entered the creative genius of the creative writer and elucidated the larger themes and nuances of literary art, revealing the depths of creativity.

As we read *The Life Divine* today, we cannot but marvel how greatly it is planned and constructed, . . . not a single relevant circumstance or qualification is omitted. Still the symbols and images of poetry are more effective - and on the whole more convincing than the laborious tools of analytical criticism.40

Speaking of the poetic achievement of Aurobindo, Iyengar remarks,

In the final cast of the poem, the old Mahābhārata story of Sāvithri and Satyavān has immeasurably gained in volume and purpose, and what is legendary integrally fuses with the symbolic, and the matter spirals into realms of spirit, while the spirit willingly suffers definition in terms of the material.41

Again we cannot but marvel at the striking modernity of Sāvithri:

. . . in Sāvithri, this comprehension is seen in all its encyclopaedic grasp of the totality of the human experience and knowledge, ranging from the intuitions of the Vedic rishis to the scientific discoveries and inventions of our own day.42

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
Iyengar is aware of the varied talent in the field of Indian writing in English and has this to say about the novel in English:

The future of Indian fiction, and of Indo-Anglian fiction is full of promise. Recent fiction has given ample evidence of vitality, variety, humanity and artistic integrity. But, a word of caution is called for; while the writer of fiction must needs observe the world around him with the conscientious care and rigorous discipline of a scientific researcher, these alone are not enough. The quality of his mind and soul alone, and not any merely laborious accumulation of data or expenditure of industry, can impart to his writing that Promethean heat of life which transfigures - surprising and satisfying us at the same time - the 'lie' of fiction into the utter 'truth' of actuality.

Iyengar's word of encouragement to the novelist is to be more creative and listen to the inner poetic voice. He describes Narayan as a master of comedy who is not unaware of the tragedy of the human situation; neither an intolerant critic of Indian ways and modes, nor their fanatic defender: he is on the whole content to snap Malgudi life's little ironies, knots of satiric circumstance and tragi-comedies of mischance and misdirection.

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43 Ibid., p. 518.
44 Ibid., p. 384.
Narasimhaiah is another pioneering critic in this field. He too brings into his discussions the kindred spirit of the sahryaya. Like Iyengar he is aware of the complexity of this literature born out of the amalgamation of two cultures and the problems of writing in a language other than the mother tongue. He emphasises that this literature is part of the Indian tradition, rather than a branch of English literature, where the Indian sensibility tries to express itself in the English language. He points out that a synthesis of Indian thought and a foreign language has forged a rich expression of creativity.

In his assessment of Raja Rao as a novelist, Narasimhaiah reveals himself as a true sahryaya. He knows and admires Raja Rao as a novelist and creative writer. Narasimhaiah has recognised the complex art of Raja Rao, in themes and styles. Through his critical responses he persuades other readers to recognise this quality in Raja Rao. What he experiences as a critic, the identifying with the perfect art, he has recorded as an experience to enable many who are not as sensitive as himself to the nuances of Raja Rao's art. He also substantiates his eulogy for the artist with apt quotations from the text. This is how he assesses Kanthapura:

There are at least three strands of experience in the novel: the political, the religious, and the social, and all three are interwoven inextricably into the one complex story of Kanthapura.
Kanthapura is not any Indian village but a village in the state of Mysore, in the valleys of Himavathy. . . . And to one who knows his village so well as he does, it acquires an unusual complexity - a complexity of the kind which readers of fiction in the English language have not been accustomed.  

Narasimhaiah points out Raja Rao's sympathy for the peasant's faith, and also draws attention to the tinge of irony which precludes identification on the part of the novelist while it also makes for authenticity. Commenting on Raja Rao's style Narasimhaiah says:

When it comes to style, the breath-taking long sentences, page-long sentences, repetitions of names and words, while sometimes necessary to build up the tempo of the commotion in Kanthapura, can also sound highly mannered and they do. But the author is not impoverished of stylistic devices to suit a wide range of emotional or mental states.  

Narasimhaiah credits Raja Rao with the ability to have struck new paths for a sensibility which is Indian, and the Indian fiction in English could make headway by continuing the Raja Rao line. Likewise *The Serpent and the Rope* and *The Cat and Shakespeare* are classics in themes and techniques which express the novelist's preoccupation with

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46 Ibid., p. 269.
religion, tradition, the presence of the intellectual hero and the exploration of spiritual depths by means of symbols. Speaking of *The Cat and Shakespeare*, Narasimhaiah says:

. . . nowhere in Indian writing in English, or at least in any of the Indian languages I know of, is so much sought to be said in so short a compass. . . its length is hardly 117 pages. And yet 'said' is hardly the right word, for what remains unsaid in this tale is far more important than what is said.47

The critic here directs the reader's attention to Raja Rao's successful exploration of the possibilities of a metaphysical unity in the field of fiction writing. Referring to Raja Rao's use of myths, Narasimhaiah feels that the novelist has re-entered the old myths of his own culture as a mode of achieving coherence and order amidst the chaos of the present whose temper is essentially egoistic, given to inordinate assertion of the self.48 To comprehend Raja Rao's introspective way of life fully, Narasimhaiah feels that one needs to belong, to be part of the evocative tradition.49 Narasimhaiah has comprehended the world of Raja Rao in the spirit of a true sahrdaya. A better


understanding of the novelist has been reached both in India and abroad through Narasimhaiah's appreciation and in-depth studies on Raja Rao's works. He has also shown how such an in-depth study of great novels can be a rewarding exercise for the critic.

Other studies in the field of Indian criticism of Indian writing in English are analytical assessments of this new literature with perceptive comments on individual achievements. Meenakshi Mukherjee has identified certain major themes, like the East-West encounter, renunciation or nationalism, which recur in the Indian novels. She is historical and sociological in her approach in the novels. She has commented on the Indian writer's conscious use of the English language and has made an assessment of the various styles adopted by the writers. She has presented a balanced picture of the various issues, often delicate and sensitive, in the matter of creative use of the foreign language.

Indian writers naturally are faced with the problem of presenting Indian consciousness, of presenting reality as seen by Indian eyes through the medium of English, which to all of them is an acquired language that they use with varying degrees of competence.50

But she says that though the novelist is writing in English about people who do not normally speak or think in English,

50 Mukherjee, Indian Writing, p. 151.
with the added problem that he himself is writing in a language which is not his own, his achievement has to be related on the basis of more than mere competence.

She has also discussed the Indian writers' conscious use and unconscious use of myths as a technical device to suggest contemporary reality.\textsuperscript{51}

She is aware of the variety and trends in this genre.

It is unreal to speak of trends and traditions in Indo-Anglian fiction when there are barely half a dozen novelists who have taken their craft seriously, and have written consistently over a period of time. But if we take into account the whole uneven corpus of Indo-Anglian fiction which consists of over two hundred novels of good, bad and indifferent quality, written mostly in the past forty years, we find amidst this confusing mass two fairly discernible threads.\textsuperscript{52}

Meenakshi Mukherjee traces the two threads as that of a committed writer like Anand, and the writer like Sudhin Ghose who has no commitment save perhaps to art itself.

She has tried to realise as sensitively as possible this genre and has incorporated value judgements as well.


She is aware of the paradox inherent in the Indian context and also lays emphasis on the parallel developments in the regional language. She is concerned with the aesthetics of the novel, the methods and means which novelists have exploited to reconcile realism with reality. She is aware of the novel in India as the result of the "complex culture determinants" which are the products of the intermingling of Eastern and Western cultural streams.53

Naik is another major academic critic of Indian writing in English, concentrating on the historical as well as the individual aspects. He is methodical and analytical in his approach, offering balanced comments on writers like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and Narayan. He has been responsible for fostering and intensifying critical activities towards interpretation and revaluation of the achievements of Indian writers in English. As the editor of excellent volumes on this subject, Naik has presented perspectives of the Indian response to Indian writing in English, with reference to drama, poetry, prose and novels. Apart from encouraging scholars engaged in critical activity, Naik's efforts have tried to evolve a critical apparatus that is at the same time sensitive and efficient.

Naik interprets the complex work, The Serpent and the Rope, as an epic legend. He describes Raja Rao as

perhaps the finest painter of the Indian ethos and of the East-West confrontation, the greatest symbolist and mythmaker and the only truly philosophical novelist in English that India has so far produced.\textsuperscript{54}

Naik is aware of Raja Rao's cosmic vision and responds to Raja Rao's fiction with the spirit of a sahrdaya.

In \textit{The Ironic Vision}, Naik considers Narayan as an artist who comments on the entire human condition. Naik traces the growth of Narayan's irony from merely a weapon into a vision. Commenting on Narayan's unfailing sense of time and place and his acute observation which he calls Narayan's assets, he says:

Narayan's fiction takes a giant leap from irony as weapon to irony as vision, from irony of the brief moment to irony of the great occasion, from ironic filigree to ironic archieuctonics, as a result of which his work gains in moral richness.\ldots\textsuperscript{55}

Indian writing in English is a product of the mingling of at least two cultures and two languages. Therefore, it presents particular difficulties of evaluation to critics who try to analyse and interpret it. The literary situation calls for a sensitive and perceptive approach which is also objective. This will be possible if an


\textsuperscript{55} Naik, \textit{The Ironic Vision}, p.3.
eclectic, pluralistic and liberal attitude is fostered which avoids dogmatism of any kind. Without the exclusive emphasis on any theory, without the attempt to apply any theory wholesale to every aspect of fiction which would be a doctrinaire approach, criticism should modify and relate relevant aspects in every approach. It would not be wrong to bring a variety of critical approaches to Indian writing in English. But a word of caution should be sounded; which is that critical pluralism can lead to confusion or anarchy if it is not guided by a sound rationale.

In this context, the Indian classical theory has provided against wild interpretations, which lead to a plethora of confused significations and polysemic indeterminacies, by setting a broad parameter within which a critic is free to interpret a work of literature. The classical theories have set forth certain factors that are true at any time. For instance, the criteria that literature should avoid certain defects (ḍoṣas), that it should have certain positive qualities (gunaś), that it should have emotion as its central spirit (rasa), that it should use words in such a way as to suggest multiple levels of meaningful significations (dhyāni), and that the human experience presented should be universalised (sādhāranīkarana), are factors that any critic should have in mind while evaluating any literature. Such a critic who operates within broad parameters with a verisimilitude
commensurate with creative sensibility is the ideal reader, the *sahrdaya*.

The portrait of a *sahrdaya* is aptly summed up in Iyengar's words:

The ideal literary critic of free India will be neither a mere fault-finder nor a mere eulogiser. He will be not only learned but also wise, and he will be an upright judge without seeking to be a gentleman at the same time. He will be somewhat of a philosopher with his own point of view . . . He will be able to judge a work of art justly and humanely, both in its unique individual setting and also in its relation to the absolutes of criticism.56

Such a critic makes criticism itself a creative activity, giving light no less than delight, indeed confusing the categories of creation and criticism to splendid effect.

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