CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

A retrospective view of the study presented in the preceding chapters may help to see how the different parts are ultimately linked together in their common aim of identifying the beauty behind a novel (the Indian novel in English). The Indian aesthetic concepts discussed severally in the four different chapters have after all said the first and last word on poetry and literature. All aspects of the creative process, the created art and final response at the reader’s end have been exhaustively discussed in the theories.

The study has made a bold attempt to extract the essence of the aesthetic concepts and to apply them to the Indian novel in English. It may raise the eyebrows of those steeped in the sacredness and esoteric value of these theories, who may argue that the theory is being diluted and profaned when put to such uses. Built into them, unnoticed or ignored by the orthodox traditionalists, is a vast potential that has to be kinetised into newer and newer forces.

Indian aesthetic theories are primarily concerned with the criteria of beauty and pleasure in the creation and
in the appreciation of literary works of art. Bharata, Anandavardhana, Abhinavagupta and their followers have all been concerned with the issues involved in the experience of art. The study is not to be interpreted as offering solutions to the problems of art and beauty and their appreciation, but rather as an effort to grasp the essential beauty in art. The responses of Bharata and his followers help in the inquiry, analysis and exploration of works of art and help in the enrichment of one's experience of beauty in art and nature. Once the inquiry is directed to why and how the response was elicited, then the sense of wonderment will be the initial step in a lifelong exploration of the study known as aesthetics.

The similarity of response to beauty and works of art, especially literary art, emphasises its universal nature which can transcend the bounds of place, time, culture, language and genre. Almost all literary discussions feature Plato and Aristotle, for indeed these thinkers had analysed literature with great insight. The validity of the Indian approach has been instrumental in stimulating the preceding study where the Indian aesthetic concepts have been applied to an analysis of the Indian novel in English.

A fresh approach can make the understanding of the novels an interesting venture. The Indian concepts have been grouped under the headings rasa, dhvani, sādhāranīkarana and sahṛdayatva where each of these concepts focusses on a total
approach to the novel though from a different angle. It should be remembered that these concepts are interrelated, even integrally related, and explain art creation and experience through the work of art itself.

Chapter 1 identifies the real value of aesthetic study in general and Indian aesthetic study in particular, claiming a universality for these concepts in the analysis and interpretation of literature with special reference to the Indian novel in English.

The Indian theories have given central place to emotions in literary art, which is the basic postulate. In the preceding study the approach to the Indian novel in English has been from the angle of emotions represented in novels. It has been shown that rasa when interpreted as a distinct form of emotion, is real, no doubt, and drawn from human experience, but having a different status in the world of the novel. The importance of unity of emotion in a work of art is also emphasised. The distinct nature of the artistic emotion helps to clarify views on art and the mimetic theories. Though the emotions represented in contemporary novels are strange and novel, in keeping with the modern times of unrest and complexity, in as far as they were artistically represented, they could be read and enjoyed.
The chapter on dhvani can be seen as spanning the entire range of artistic effects in a novel. Interpreted as the suggestive element in a work of art it covers a wide range of fictional art. The different facets of the poetics of fiction can be seen as being subsumed in this theory. The themes implied in the novel are what the novel suggests; and the method and manner of suggestion are seen as fictional devices which act as suggestors in the novel. In poetry Ānandavardhana has lifted the term from the confines of literalism to the ever-widening horizons of infinite suggestion. Taking a cue from this suggestive elasticity of the term itself, the study has shown the sophisticated narrative tools as aspects of suggestion. More than Ānandavardhana's, Bhattanāyaka's definition of the poetic consciousness as being suggestive admits of infinite possibilities of suggestion in that everything in a fiction from particular collocation of words to the novel's finally achieved form becomes highly suggestive. The novel is an expression of that extremely suggestive entity called poetic consciousness, bhāvakatva vyāpāra, the rasa- evocative activity. But then, it may be asked whether dhvani is merely the craft of fiction. The answer to this is an emphatic no! Dhvani is present in the technical beauties of the art; it is also present in the style and language of fiction; and it is present in the themes; and finally dhvani is identified as the over-all beauty which inheres in a work of art. Sticklers for chaste interpretation of the term,
especially those engaged in the study of the relative supremacy of rasa and dhvani, may object to this kind of interpretation; the pro-rasa theorists claim for rasa the highest place in art; while the pro-dhvani theorists claim the same for their term. Like Ānandavardhana earlier and K.Krishnamoorthy of our times, the broader significance (or even the basic essentials of these terms) when analysed reveal the oneness and togetherness of these issues in the context of literary appreciation. For both lead the critic towards the goal of deriving an authentic pleasure and delight from a work of art. Both are responsible for suffusing the work with an ineffable beauty in their own separate and combined ways. If rasa is the "what" of the created work, dhvani is the "how" of it.

Leaving aside controversies over the relative importance of rasa or dhvani which lead one into a muddle of critical terminology of interpretations and reinterpretations, one must, when these two terms are studied as the features which totally contributbe to a work of art, seek a clear understanding of aesthetic experience. The concepts of sādhāranīkaraṇa and sahrdayatva are related to the foundations of aesthetic experience and feature the ideal reader who is to enjoy the work of art. If rasa and dhvani deal with the poetic process involving the poet, sādhāranīkaraṇa draws the reader into the literary experience so as to share the joy of creativity along with
the poet, and not all readers are capable of such a joint adventure. It requires special intellectual, emotional and aesthetic consciousness, coterminous with the creative artist's similar consciousness. One who possesses such a sensibility is a sahirdaya, an ideal reader. So, together these four concepts constitute a mandala, a realisation of which completes the circle of literary experience. From the birth of the emotion in the poet's consciousness to its realisation in the reader's consciousness, the artistic pilgrimage is thus a total and holistic experience, with the poet, the text and the reader forming the triune of that world.

Meaning or significance in literary art from the reader's point of view can be equated to interpretation; interpretation itself has also been shown to be what the reader brings to bear on the novel, as also what he takes from it, that is, in what ways he has been affected by it. Beauty is to be enjoyed in a wholesome state; and any attempt at dissecting it would be to bring about a distortion in it. The spontaneous response to a work of art depends on the mystery in it which stimulates the response. But the real critic is capable of analysis and synthesis simultaneously and so is able to appreciate the intricacies and the difficulties encountered by the artist in achieving this goal.
Indian theories have covered a wide range of concepts relating to the process of art creation and appreciation. The study has pointed out the directions for further detailed analysis of these to other genres and literatures. The need to be more catholic in outlook in the application of these concepts to modern literature is emphasised. The concepts have dealt with the fundamental issues of art like its ontological status, its usefulness, its use of language and its intricacies, its projection of rasa and its relish to the reader. These fundamental issues are the necessary foundations of all art. The Indian concepts have dealt with these issues in a most detailed and exhaustive manner; and further studies of these concepts can throw interesting sidelights and bring fruitful revelations to critics who may come up with perceptive interpretations of great works of art.

When these concepts are studied over the span of nearly a thousand years, the need for re-definition and re-classification cannot be questioned. From Bhāmaha of the 7th century to Jagannātha Pandita of the 17th century, Indian poetics had witnessed a long battle of books necessitating modifications and reiterations. Otherwise one cannot account for such a multiplicity of interpretations. One simple example will do to show how the Indian theory is liberal enough to adopt new attitudes. Early dhvani theoreticians did not accept paronomasia (slesa) as capable of
suggestion, but the latter ones have admitted it. Their flexibility can lead the enquiring critic and connoisseur of art to study these concepts in depth and make them available for the common reader too. In India especially, where the tradition grew and developed, it is only fit and proper that they should be studied and utilised. In modern India, which after British intervention had almost severed connections with its past and its heritage, the need for a revival is conspicuous.

In the absence of a viable critical framework with which to assess works of art, especially in the critical scene which is characterised by a plethora of approaches and methods and tools of criticism, where everyone attempts critical analysis of works of art, a grasp of these theories from the angle of basic essentials can help the reader or critic, specialist or layman, towards what to look for in a work of art. These concepts lend themselves to discussions of art and art theory, and are capable of providing newer and finer insights into the nature of literature and literary criticism.

The growth of the Indian novel in English will depend on the extent to which Indian writers in English are able to integrate acquired sophistication in a second language with the inherited culture experience in mirroring contemporary life experience in aesthetic forms. It will also depend on the kind of criticism it generates. The
theoretical formulations of Indian aestheticians may at times appear to be less rigorous and satisfactory by current standards, but they can enlighten the modern mind on a number of issues. Although the terminology of modern criticism may be lacking in the Indian aesthetic concepts, they seem to have gone far in this area, and in certain respects their approach is more comprehensive and striking than that of the Western scholars.

Critical trends and studies can direct the nature and scope of the novel. These exert a tremendous influence on creative writers. The invaluable mutual influence between art and criticism has to be reckoned with, provided the two disciplines develop along healthy lines. Criticism should take care not to descend to mere fault-finding or sarcasm on the one hand and indiscriminate praise on the other. It should steer clear of the Scylla of promotionalism and the Charybdis of cynicism. The growth of the Indian novel in English depends on the evaluation of learned critics who exercise impersonal objective views to spot goodness and greatness in works of art, not coloured by prejudices directed towards the writer or his opinions.

A critical framework which supplements and complements the sophisticated Western critical tools is found in the Indian critical tradition. The sound basis of this aesthetic can help to discover even the shortcomings
and failings of some of the modern critical methods. It is a field of study which can provide inexhaustible insights and help to enrich critical trends and creative art too.

Though there is bound to be felt a gulf between possession of ideas and their application, further studies should delve deeper into these concepts and attempt to synthesise in greater depth the points of similarity between the Western and Eastern traditions.