CONCLUSION

As discussed in the Introduction (1.9, P.41) the aim of this research was to approach the problem of teaching literature in the Indian context as a 'principled problem-solving activity' (Widdowson : 1990 : 7); the reason for this being the fact that one cannot hope to find a 'universal solution' (p. 25) especially in a teaching situation. This approach was adopted also because 'the validity of research findings is always relative'. The relativity was concerned with both conditions which defined the research methodology and 'the conceptual coherence of the theory that empirical investigation is designed to support'. (p. 25).

Adopting this approach, therefore, necessitated a systematic study and definition of the problem and the evolution of a solution. (a) The study of the problem involved the following:

(i) Study of the situation in the Indian classroom

English literature still has an important
place in undergraduate syllabuses, and this is not likely to change in the foreseeable future.

The teaching of literary texts follows the traditional literary approach, which consists of lecturing on the text by the teacher with students as a passive audience; interpretation of the text by the teacher; giving greater weightage to things like biographical details, historical and sociological aspects of the age of the writer etc. rather than the text itself; and, almost no activities involving the students in directly interacting with the text.

As yet there has not been much change effected in the teaching methodology. Any change that there is, has been made by individual teachers in small pockets. The reasons advanced for this fossilization in literature teaching are classroom constraints and lack of a viable alternative methodology.

(ii) Study of the theoretical work in stylistics

A study of the work on the theoretical aspects of stylistics provides rich and varied insights into the usefulness of practical
stylistics. For example, the study of stylistics from a discoursal point of view opens up a range of new concepts and techniques.

These insights, however, are not really developed in a sustained manner to evolve into a definitive school of stylistics, but remain as ideas which have been explored in a discrete manner. The fragmentary analysis of literary texts (except lyric poetry) is a reflection of this approach in stylistic studies.

(iii) Study of the work done on language-based approaches to the teaching of literature

Most books/courses on language-based approaches to the teaching of literature have not worked out a clear framework for the teaching of literature. More often than not, some features of language use are added on self-consciously to the existing literary approach and this is considered a 'language-based' approach.

In recent years, books by Carter and Long (1987) and Collie and Slater (1987) focus more particularly on the classroom and the teaching of literature; where tasks and techniques for the
teaching of literature are suggested. These books are excellent, but they are meant primarily for Ll learners of English or learners with an almost Ll competence in English or learners of English in an English speaking environment. This assumption of a high level of competence is the reason for the authors concentrating on vocabulary and not syntax, for it is taken for granted that the students have internalized the syntax of the language.

Secondly, these authors also take for granted small classes and large resources (OHP's, duplicating facilities etc.). Classes in Indian colleges are large and few have/can afford anything more than the basic chalk and blackboard.

Another point worth mentioning here is the mis-match between the theoretical work in stylistics which focuses mainly on the syntactic aspects of literary composition, and books on language-based approaches which concentrate on vocabulary.

Widdowson's *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature* (1975) is a practical and useful book dealing with methodological aspects of the
teaching of literature, and is perhaps the only full-length work on stylistics as a methodology for the teaching of literature.

The basic premise of this research was that each teaching problem had to be viewed individually and an apt solution to that particular problem had to be found or evolved. This principle was applied to the development of a methodology for the teaching of literature in India.

Keeping in mind the various aspects of the problem with regard to the theoretical aspects of teaching literature as well as the actual classroom situation in Indian colleges, an alternative methodology was constructed and tried out in various classrooms in order to evaluate its validity.

(b) The development of the methodology involved the following:

(i) Selection of Genres

As wide a variety of texts as possible was selected. The important literary genres, Poetry, Drama, and Fiction were chosen as well as the Essay. It is amazing but true that though the
Essay is taught extensively, it is almost totally ignored as a genre by stylisticians and course book writers. Perhaps it is not considered 'pure' literature. In this research, the Essay was taken as a literary genre and taught using a framework of stylistic analysis.

(ii) Evolution of a framework for analysis and identification of stylistic features of each genre

The features focused on in the analysis of texts were, in order of priority

Syntax: since syntax is a problem in most L2 learning situations, the teacher's analysis concerned itself mainly with the syntactic features of the text to be taught. The focus on syntax was especially sharp in the case of poetry and the essay, as the analysis and understanding of the syntactic features led directly to the interpretation of the texts. Clause structures were focused on with particular emphasis on the verb phrase. Syntax also played an important role in the short story Salvatore for this is a deliberately crafted story and depends on the language used for effect.
Lexis: Description of lexical features is important in descriptive pieces and literary texts which attempt to create an 'atmosphere'. This aspect was focused on mainly in Lawrence's *The Last Laugh* where the connotational aspects of the lexical items are vital to some of the themes in the story, e.g. the Christian-Pagan contrast.

Discourse: Aspects of discourse were focused on to a greater or lesser degree in all the texts. Discoursal aspects were highlighted in the short story *The Blind Dog* where the author skilfully weaves together descriptive and narrative strands. The function of questions and their illocutionary force formed the basis of the analysis of the drama *The Rising of the Moon*. The use of comment clauses/phrases in the essay and their description formed the basis of the analysis of Bertrand Russell's *Ideas that Have Helped Mankind*. The use of the pronoun 'we' and 'I' was highlighted too as it was an indication of speaker attitude.

(iii) Selection of Texts

The types of texts chosen were not totally dissimilar from the type of texts prescribed. For example, R.K.Narayan was one of the authors
chosen. Most college texts have a story by this author in their selection. Similarly, Mirror, the poem chosen, is included in the Std.XII text 'book of Tamil Nadu. Plays similar to The Rising of the Moon are included in undergraduate texts. The aim here was not to choose texts which were amenable to stylistic analysis, but rather select texts which students could be expected to encounter in the normal course of their academic work.

(iv) Methodology

A three stage methodology was evolved: Before the Reading, During the Reading, and After the Reading.

Different activities were identified under these three broad heads. For example, under Before the Reading, two types of activities were identified, viz. language oriented activities and content oriented activities. Depending on the type of text and the type of class, the teacher chose one or the other, or both. While doing poetry at the Home Science College, the teacher opted for content oriented activity as the students were good at English. On the other hand, functions and illocutionary force of questions
were discussed with the students who did drama, as it was felt that this was an area which needed to be focused on for the students to be able to handle the analysis of drama.

Similarly, during the Reading, while doing the short story the narratological aspects of the story (in particular, story paraphrase) were done before stylistic analysis. In other cases, students were asked to do a stylistic analysis of the text straightaway.

The same strategy was adopted during the third stage, after the Reading, where according to the text and class, students were asked to give their personal response either orally or in writing. In some cases, similar literary pieces were given to the students for working on independently.

In other words, the needs and lacks of the students as assessed by the teacher dictated the activities done during different stages under different heads.

(v) Findings

Three important factors are vital for the effective use of this methodology, as the research
1) The first relates to the amount of critical information to be given and the stage in the lesson when this should be given. Since this methodology does not banish critical information of the traditional literary approach, it becomes important to know how much of this should be given and when it should be given. Too much critical information given too early in the class can act as a deterrent to the students' interaction with the text. On the other hand, not giving any information at all can result in the students not perceiving the place of the text in the general scheme of things among other literary texts. There can be no hard and fast rules for this as students react differently to different texts and at different levels.

For example, the structure of the drama, The Rising of the Moon, could be discussed with the students of Kendriya Vidyalaya, as their interaction with the text indicated to the teacher that the students could appreciate
this information.
The students of the Government Arts College, after the poem by Abse was taught, wanted to know when the poem had been written, to which country the poet belonged etc. They felt the need for this information as they saw that this poem was 'different' from the poems they had done so far (which according to them, generally had 'nature' themes).
In this respect the teacher has to be the sensitive arbiter in the class.

2) Since the research was done in classrooms and since students were the focus, the teacher had to keep an open mind throughout, especially with regard to student response. Without this, this methodology cannot work. The teacher has to make a conscious effort to do this in Indian classrooms, for the temptation to put across one's own interpretation to a passively receptive audience is very strong.

3) Another factor relating directly to the teacher but outside the classroom concerns preparation. This is at three levels:
a. the academic level which involves a thorough
reading of the text and a detailed analysis. This also involves the choice of the features of the text the teacher wishes to highlight to enable students to understand and interact with the text.

b. the methodological, which involves the selection and preparation of activities to be done in the class and the order in which these have to be done.

c. the psychological, which is the mind-set of the teacher in approaching the class. It also means a willingness to be flexible in the classroom and choose whatever activity is appropriate in the given circumstances.

Teacher's Observations.

The teacher's observations were based on the tape scripts, written work of the students as well as the notes made during or just after the lesson.

It was important to use all these to come to a conclusion about the methodology because many non-quantifiable aspects of teaching were involved here, like the establishment of rapport with the students, creating an atmosphere for learning etc.

The methodology tried out succeeded to a
large extent in all classes. Whatever be the level of their linguistic competence, all students got involved in decoding the text. This very involvement made them respond to the text. A free, relaxed and non-critical atmosphere was conducive to students responding individually and personally. Often, they come up with unusual insights. This was a very rewarding experience. The validity of the hypothesis that a stylistic approach to the teaching of literary text would be effective in Indian classroom was established quite clearly.

Comments by teachers who sat in on different classes in different colleges were both interesting and relevant. One teacher said that she did not know that her students could do so much in class (referring to the text analysis and response). The other commented that this method was 'provocative' - it provoked students to think. Generally, teachers who observed the classes remarked on the possibilities of this method, but they also realised and commented on the fact that the teacher would need to
a) prepare thoroughly for the class and b) keep
an open mind when it came to accepting student response.

In informal chats after the class, students expressed their satisfaction about the way the class was conducted. Questions many of them asked were: Will what you are doing have any bearing on the way lessons are taught in 'normal' circumstances? Will there be a change? Will a similar sort of method be adopted by schools/colleges? There could of course, be no definite answer to these questions.

Future Directions

This method was tried at the undergraduate level, but with suitable adaptations it could perhaps be tried out at the High School level or the Post-Graduate level. The level of students would determine the amount of critical input to be given in class. A post-graduate class would require much more critical input than a high school or an undergraduate class. Basically, the method would be the interpretation and evaluation of literary text through a study of different stylistic features.

An area which needs researching into is that
of evaluation of student responses, especially written responses. This is relevant to the theme of this research, for a change in methodology is always reflected in the type of responses students make. At the end of a teaching course, these responses are evaluated in examinations. If examination papers are such that they encourage student interaction with texts there is bound to be a strong backwash effect and teaching methodology will also change.

To conclude, this research set out to find a specific solution to a specific problem. The solution was formulated on the basis of a theoretical framework and applied to a specific situation. The validation of the hypothesis put forward has been satisfactory in pedagogic terms. The work has been in the words of Widdowson (1990:8)

a kind of operational research which works out solution to its own local problems....... the nature of the solution is (has been) determined by the prior definition of the problem that goes with it.