Chapter VII
Conclusion

An attempt has been made in the foregoing chapters to study the novels of Hardy from the viewpoint of the Rasa-Theory of Bharat. It is believed that a great work of art should stand a critical test of the aesthetic theories of the Indian and Western cultures as such evaluation surfaces the merits and shortcomings of the critical theories of both cultures. In the same manner a poetic or literary theory worth its name is supposed to be useful in the evaluation of the creative writings of any other culture or period. Judging a writer in the background of the critical discourses of his language and culture is certainly profitable but the writer’s claim of universality is fully justified only when his/her works are analysed and elucidated in the light of the aesthetics of any other culture. Since Indian aesthetics is widely acclaimed, the temptation of applying one of its theories, the rasa-theory to Hardy’s novel is irresistible as no such endeavour has been made so far. The more this work progressed, the greater was the realization that western aesthetics is inadequate in exploring the spectrum of emotions in a novel.

This critical endeavour has religiously adhered to the hypotheses formed in the beginning. The first hypothesis—Hardy’s emotive world is developed out of his own experience, is put to test in chapter one; and it is discovered that his novels are an epitome of his own thoughts, feelings and emotions. This view has been validated by numerous biographical probings. The writings of Thomas Hardy, “the portion of the sun or gloom in them, depended much upon his felicity or frustration in finding a mate: it was an in herited, it was an individual crisis” [Blaunden 28]. The views of some modern critics of Hardy, especially of John Paterson and Elaine Showalter
who think that neither the events of Hardy's life nor the literary tendencies of his age influence his novels, are found to be inadequate because Hardy "was quick to see the pathos involved in events and scenes resulting from the countryman's uprooting, which increased during his life time, and of which he himself was partly a victim" [Evelyn 4]. There is an indelible imprint of his own emotive crises on the impulses his prominent characters represent; and in this, the first hypothesis is found to be true.

A study of the structure of emotion is the basis of the second hypothesis. Most western aesthetes and critics have analysed emotions objectively. In ancient time, it was pioneered by Plato and Aristotle and in the modern age by Benedetto Croce and his followers. In English literary criticism this approach was advocated by I.A. Richards and T.S. Eliot.

To guard against a cultural bias, the western theories of art and literature have been briefly but minutely examined in chapter two to bring forth the idea that Western and Indian aesthetics are complementary; and when they are brought together, the scientific intelligence of the West will be wedded to the spiritualism of India. For instance, Aristotle's insistence on the arousal of pity and fear in a tragedy and his doctrine of tragic pleasure are revitalized by Bharat's emphasis on cosmic bliss leading to oneness with the creator - Brahmasahodartva. Alaukika Anand or Brahmanand is the terminating point of the rasa-theory. On the other hand, Aristotle is concerned only with the "Pleasure", which "Comes from pity and fear" and this quality "must be impressed upon the incidents" [Poetics, XIV, para1]. "The incidents" are material in nature and this view of a work of art is confirmed in Herbert Spencer's Principles of Psychology [1855]. Spencer maintains that "The aesthetic feeling arises from the overflow of exuberant
energy in the organism” [Croce 389]; and quite contrary to these conceptions, Bharat’s rasa theory results in “a deeper form of appreciation and yields a higher kind experience; and in this discovery, we may say, consists one of the chief contributions of India to the general philosophy of art” [Coomarswami, Art Experience, 42]. What has emerged from these discussions is that the rasa-theory illumines the idea of cosmic bliss, hence it makes possible a useful interpretation of Hardy’s novels.

Chapters III, IV and V respond to the successive hypotheses—the application of the rasa-theory to Hardy’s novels will reveal the novelist’s vision of life in Wessex in a phased manner; there is continuity and development of emotions; and the novels must have emotive climaxes. In the first phase, it is found that the novels of Hardy reflect the emotions of the men and women of rural England in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The early novels—Desperate Remedies [1871], Under the Greenwood Tree [1872] and A Pair of Blue Eyes [1873] are replete with emotive scenes, sights and sounds but they fail to mature the emotions they create. The world of Cytherea Gray in Hardy’s first novel is full of violence but it neither arouses genuine pity nor does it stimulate fear. For the first time we discover Hardy’s maturity in delineating characters with their emotions in Far From the Madding Crowd [1874]. It matures the Sringeraraasa but very soon this vein is given up and Hardy comes out with his tragic vision of life in The Return of the Native [1878] and The Mayor of Casterbridge [1886]. Both the novels brood over the gloomy side of man’s life and they arouse and sublimate the Karunarasa.

The later novels, discussed in chapter four, are remarkable for ravaging emotions and concentrate on two art emotions—Bibhatsa and Karuna. The
first novel of this group, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* [1891] projects the tragic life of a young girl, Tess and through her the Karunarasa becomes a real experience. Hardy concentrates on the atmospheric details to heighten the reader's appreciation of what is terrible and yet beautiful. The white hart in the novel is a symbol of innocence exemplified in the emotion of Tess. Darkness and inner agony rule everywhere in the novel – When Tess is seduced; when Angel Clare deserts her in the symbolic sleep – walking scene; when Tess murders Alec D'Urbervilles and when she is hanged. Angel’s sleep – walking scene represents “a double truth of his psyche that he feels tenderly for Tess and that she is dead for him” [Hall, 429]. Karuna is saturated in the emotions of Tess and there will hardly be a reader who will not cry in pain with Tess, “I wish I had never been born” [Tess 92]. In addition to Karunarasa, *Tess* is also remarkable for vātsalya, a variant of the śringāraraṇa in her love for her child, Sorrow; and vātsalya gives way to soka the moment Tess apprehends the death of an unbaptised child:

> In her misery she rocked herself upon the bed ... She thought of the child consigned to the nethermost corner of hell as its double doom for lack of baptism and lack of legitimacy [Tess 109].

Certainly, Tess’s faith in the Christian God is perceptible here and the critics who over-stress Hardy’s atheism must read this passage.

The second novel, *Jude the Obscure* [1895] addresses those “into whose souls iron has entered, and has entered deeply at some time of their lives” [Florence 272]. The emotive matrices of *Jude* are subtle as they incline towards reflections of modernity in the matters of sex. Jude’s innate tenderness is visible when it is pointed out by the omniscient author that “he
could scarcely bear to see trees cut down or lopped, from a fancy that it hurt them” [Jude 36]. His relations with Arabella produce *jugupsa* [disgust] as the *sthāyībhāva* of Bibhatsa grips his heart and soul. Arabella is sordid in her thoughts and feelings; she is of earth, earthly, making the *bibhatsarasa* a visual experience. Jude, on the other hand is in search of beauty and true love yearns for both Sue Bridehead and Christminster [Oxford]. Intellectually disconted, Jude becomes an emblem of disgust and Sue’s relations with the undergraduate, her hurried marriage with Jude’s teacher, Phillotson, and her coming back to him only to go back again are the episodes that swing the action of the novel towards the intensity of Karuna. Srīnārā, Bibhatsa and Karuna are the dominant *rasas* of this novel. Jude seems to be Hardy’s Hamlet in his utter disgust of the world and its ephemeral attractions. Hamlet dies of the wound of a poisoned sword and Jude draws his breath in till the last and dies a lonely man without any *horoṭiyo* to tell his Karuna story to the world.

The *Well-Beloved* [1897], Hardy’s fourteenth and last novel is devoid of intensity as we experience in the major novels of Hardy. In it there is no turmoil of emotions. Pierston, the hero of the novel is haunted by phantoms which keep on eluding him and he follows them to satisfy his ego. He is “doomed to live on” in an ageing physical frame of body “with a youthful heart perpetually torn by adolescent love [Evelyn 258]. Even “divine punishment for his idolatories” [WB 178] fails to produce Karuna. It is a tale of broken sensibility. Supposed to be autobiographical in its content it is filled with a *melange* of emotions but none of them is brought to consummation.
These analyses of the novels of Hardy tend to show the prominence of two art emotions the Śringāra and the Karuṇa. Haśya and Bhūhatsa reinforce love and compassion. The Hardyan world is thus modestly explored in the backdrop of aesthetic experience or rasanubhuti.

Chapter V on "Major Emotive Climaxes" is looked upon as an efflorescence of all earlier discussions because it selectively encompasses the emotive intensity of Hardy's major novels. The climactic scenes depict the artist's power to heighten a particular art-emotion. Such scenes are dominated more by the thrust of impulsiveness than by reason. How the primitive instinct of man comes into play is witnessed in the climaxes. Living under the shadow of terror both natural and human, Gabriel Oak and Bathsheba are finally united and the scene is soaked in the sringararasa and Far From the Madding Cloud brings Hardy's ideal of love to fulfilment. Clym's love for his mother is the root cause of the conflict between him and his wife, Eustacia Vye, who thinks that clym's mother comes in the way of their conjugal happiness. It is in this central context that the climax of the story is reached in the death of Mrs. Yeabright, Clym's mother. Since the death of Eustacia and Wildeve is outside the mainstream of The Return of the Native Mrs. Yeobright's death is the most moving event in this novel. Vatsalya [Mother's love for her child and vice versa] gives way to Karuṇa. Henchard in the Mayor of the Casterbridge is the axis of all emotions. His wayward passion and his indomitable spirit ebb away and he becomes a miserable sight - "But he did not gain strength, for you see, ma'am he couldn't eat - no, no appetite at all, and he got weaker; and today he died" [MC 268]. It is a heart-breaking scene, described by Abel Whittle. Hardy's epic of tragic emotions, of Śringāra and Karuṇa, Tess of the d'Urbervilles
reaches its climax in the sleep – walking scene of Angel Clare. It is a superbly wrought scene as it miraculously fuses Šringāra with Karuna. Jude in his death-bed is a pitiable sight and in this scene the climax of Jude the Obscure is reached.

Chapter VI, ‘Rasa – experience and philosophy of life embodies the ideas that are latent in or that serve as the foundation of the rasa – theory. It holds the sixth hypothesis valid and true. To have knowledge of one’s own self, one must know one’s emotions; and to know emotions is to be aware of a maturing attitude. Much has been said about Hardy’s ideology, his philosophy of life but, perhaps, no attempt has been made to see the evolution of his ideas through his emotions. This chapter stresses the philosophy of life as it is squeezable from aesthetic experience. The progress of and saturation in emotions carry a transforming value. Good and Evil, the Beautiful and the Ugly are experienced only in terms of emotions. The Good and the Beautiful make life worth living and evil and ugliness bring disgust in their train. Under the tragic curve of thoughts, feelings and emotions in Hardy’s novels, there flows a refreshing Stream of laughter and love. Unfulfilment in love and the burial of ambitions in Hardy’s fictional world does not deny their existence. This is what the Rasa Theory signifies, for rasamāyā makes us wiser and nobler human beings. It brings to us the moments of the illumination of self, which amounts to the cosmic bliss of beatitude. And in this blissful moment, the reader or the cahārīdāya rejoices in the Eternal Being. All discourses of fatalism and Hardy’s deterministic philosophy seem to evaporate in Hardy’s firm faith in the innocence and goodness of humankind. Hardy has recreated Anand [Joy] through the texture of emotions; has visualized moments of unsullied joy to face gloom
and resultant pessimism. The moments of joy may be fewer — “happiness was but an occasional episode in a general drama of pain” [MC 270]; but they are there.

To sum up, the application of the ‘Rasa – Theory’ to the novels of Hardy has proved rewarding because the essential Hardy has emerged in these discussions. I am now filled with a new awareness of his emotive concerns, which have become incandescent in the warmth of rasas.