CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The foregoing study, therefore, has been an attempt to examine the modern novel in the context of three leading writers - Aldous Huxley, L.H. Myers and D.H. Lawrence - in whose hands the novel has acquired a rich spiritual dimension. Modern man has ceased to be ontologic and erotic, for he has lost the sense of Being and the ability to enter into a satisfactory emotional relationship with his fellowmen and the universe at large. In the hands of these novelists, the novel remains not only a social document and a medium of cultural communication but becomes an instrument of exploration into the very nature and meaning of human existence and its ultimate destiny.

Insatiable curiosity, body-mind dualism and the knowledge explosion of the present century have done irreparable damage to the western soul. The modern divided self longs for an integral experience which embraces the body, mind and spirit and leads to the triune peace. So long as a religious hypothesis can answer most of our questions, we feel a sense of identity and solidarity with the community which shares same system of belief. It is only in religion that the human body is given a specific place. Body has been regarded as the temple of the spirit and all its actions are meant to be spirit-oriented. The collapse of Christianity in the West led to a spiritual crisis for the body and the mind fell apart and
led to the basic disjunction of personality. As the traditional ethics became problematic, it became difficult to reconcile the body and the soul.

Moreover, the disappearance of the folk-loristic culture and traditional ways of life created a sense of rootlessness and isolation in modern man. In a world where technique rules over lyrics, the spirit suffers spiritual atrophy and man becomes a mere mindless machine. These sensitive novelists not only suffered from the spiritual malaise of modern life but also made a genuine attempt to discover a philosophy of existence that can restore joy and peace which are missing in modern life.

They turned towards the East not merely to cover their metaphysical nakedness with gorgeous trappings of the East but with a genuine desire to know the beliefs and practices of the holy-men of the East who pondered over the mystery of existence in huts and hamlets, caves and monasteries, forests and mountains. Some of them advocated an esoteric doctrine to mean to be conveyed only to the initiate, not to the public at large. In fact, esotericism is not restricted to a particular land or a particular people. In one form or the other it has been a part and parcel of early man's life. C.G. Jung and G.S. Fraser point out how most of our religious practices are rationalisation of ancient customs and beliefs. A systematic study in Anthropology and Psychology has revealed that many of early religious cults had a kernel of truth in
and that after the failure of present religions, we could return to the systems of the past to overcome self-division and stay and attain unitive state of mind. Dionysian cult was thus, one of the modes of worship that could lead to the ecstatic experience - the goal of human life. For the purpose of this study, the term Dionysian has not been used in the strict and limited sense but in a broader perspective that embraces not only intoxicants but body-mysticism which forms an important thematic concern in modern literature. Urbanisation and industrialisation have produced men who have lost the sense of wonder and romance of life and have degenerated into mere cogs in the wheel. To use Sinclair Lewis' term 'they have become 'babbits', It is against this babbitry that Huxley and Lawrence raise their revolt and advocate that to become human and spiritual modern man must turn to religion. To use L.H. Myers celebrated phrase they direct their tirade against- "deep seated spiritual valgarity of our times."

Failure of organised religion in the West accounts for the revival of mysticism particularly sex-mysticism as a means of spiritual experience. Huxley was fascinated by Tantric ideal which emphasize maithuna (sex-mysticism) as valid means of transcendence. His encyclopaedic mind ranges over orphic mysteries, sexual practices of the Karezza community and Tantrism of Bengal and Tibet. In his last novel Island which is a sincere attempt to give his last message to mankind, he advocates maithuna as an ideal way to self-transcendence. The
inhabitants of Pala Island practise maithuna as a mode of worship to realise the Upanishadic Truth 'Tat-Tvam-Asi' 'That-art-Thou' the goal of man's mystical search. In fact, the quest for an ideal relationship runs in entire Huxley's canon and finds its realisation in Island.

L.H. Myers like Aldous Huxley had not sufficient familiarity with Indian Tantrism, for in his tetralogy, he uses the Indian political background and social milieu to dwell on the theme of renunciation versus indulgence. Though Raja Amar, a significant character in The Root and the Flower turns towards renunciation, leaves the palace and joins a group of monks wending their way to the monastery, it is, however, through Prince Jali, the major protagonist of the tetralogy that Myers suggests sex-mysticism as a means of salvation. It is through the mouth of Yogi that he propounds "Left hand Way" ......... "Religion of Sex". Gunevati the most dominating female character in the novels, has association with strange old woman who gathers herbs to make medicines suggestive aphorodisiac. While camping in the forest, Gunevati attracts attention of both the prince Jali and his Hindu Guru. Born of a Christian Mother and a Buddhist father Prince Jali finds himself in a spiritual predicament. He comes under the tutorship of Hindu Guru who is well versed in Veda and Upanishadic wisdom. To the Hindu mind asceticism is the great ideal and abstaining from sexual indulgence is considered conducive to spiritual perfection. Gunevati's behaviour both attracts and repels them she is associated with the Goddess
Kali for she, said to have taken part as a "yogini" in one of her secret rituals of Devi worship. She convinces the Guru and the prince Jali that to attain Salvation one need not run to forests and shun women, for woman, to use Lawrentian phrase is "door to the beyond'. Prince Jali realises that the way to attain salvation through sex is not an easy one. A man who has fully controlled his passions and attains to the status of Veera (hero) is fit to attain salvation through sex. Moreover, L.H. Myers could not give more space to sexual mysticism because the political events form the major theme of the book. Moreover, the royal decree issued by Emperor Akbar value of such practices could not allow full-scope to the flowering of sex mysticism in the book.

D.H. Lawrence also conducts the search for the lost God outside the Christian tradition. He concedes that he is "passionately religious man" and has written novels from the "depth of my religious experience". He declared that God or Jesus never stressed one way of salvation for ever. He believes that solitariness of modern existence which he defines as "the cruel sense of finished aloneness" can only be overcome in a transcendental experience. It was perhaps this spiritual ideal that earned him Sri Aurobindo's remark that Lawrence was a "yogi" who missed his way and came into a European body to work out his difficulties.

Though there has been no dearth of critics who dismissed sex mysticism as a valid means of mystical experience, the fact remains that it is a means of self realisation. It is not
an easy path and is perhaps more difficult to practise than the ascetic ideal. It is not just the ordinary sex act but a mode of worship which requires strict discipline of thought and action. It is not open to everyone but to the adept who passes the various tests of the Guru to become fit to experience the bliss of Maithuna as the embrace of Shiva and Shakti - whose union symbolises the creator and the creative impulse. Thus, a close study of these novelists reveal that they do not employ sex as a means of sensationalism and have absolutely no pornographic intentions. Sex-mysticism has certainly lent a spiritual dimension to the novel and has enriched its tone and texture.