CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION
The instinct to love is the most overpowering instinct in man and it has been so in all times and climes and the only other instinct which matches it in intensity as well as universality is the instinct to be loved. Poetry is the most natural medium for the expression of love and love must have figured as a theme at the very formative stages in the evolution of poetry in virtually every language. Indo-Anglian poetry, obviously, could not have been an exception. There were clearly discernible romantic shades in the whole body of Indo-Anglian poetry from its very outset in the beginning of the nineteenth century right up to the dawn of Independence. The Indian poet used his background of English literature as the model for creating poetry. In the process he would imitate the style, the lilt, the idiom of the English literature, pepper it with Indian landscape and a few 'desi' words and lo, a poem is made.

After the Independence a few determined iconoclasts attempted to charter a new path for themselves. They, discarding the "fragile euphony of Toru Dutt, the monotonous onomatopoeia of Manmohan Ghosh and the resounding ludicrousness of Sri Aurobindo's bugle blasts," tried to create a poetic idiom, a vital and living
language to portray the chaos and the hubbub of life in the post-Independence period. P. Lal and Nissim Ezekiel professed that poetry must deal in concrete terms with concrete experience. Yet it may be noted that for a long time the professed aim of using a living language to express a concrete experience remained unattained because the first rebels were still not able to disassociate themselves completely from the shadow of the past and depended upon their private voice as against the collective consciousness of a liberated nation which expected the creative artists to reflect its new-found ambitions, hopes and dreams, and nightmares. In this way "Indian poetry in English turned to be imitation pearls worn by a certain section, flashed on special occasions, offered or accepted on chosen moments to chosen beings." Nonetheless, in this crowd of these imitation pearls there emerged some really sparkling gems like Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das and Pritish Nandy, who waded through the marshes of their own agonised souls, charting adventurous journeys in an endeavour to define themselves in the context of their immediate social milieu with the help of concrete, tangible experience and an abstract yet attainable vision of love. Like the innumerable bards
singing the songs of heart and love, dealing with kaleidoscopic hues of love, Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das and Pritish Nandy, the poets under study, are also in their own individual manner, affected by the mysterious alchemy of love. Their reactions take shape in their poetry which, dealing with the same theme of love, acquires the tone of their private manifestos detailing their sense of painful ecstasies and ecstatic pains and, in the process, seemingly give them an insight into the darkest recesses of their souls-in-flux.

Nissim Ezekiel, a sensitive by-product of a three-fold bi-cultural alienation, reacts to the experience of love as a Voyager would to The Holy Grail. He swings on the see-saw of the body and the spirit. For the poet the body of the beloved is as important as his quest to understand himself; in a way, he tries to reach the objective by floating in the realm of the flesh. Analysing, dissecting and scrutinising the body of the female partner and the love experiences in a gentle, objective yet ironic manner, Nissim Ezekiel attempts in his own individual cerebral manner to find the meaning of his life. As a voyager Nissim Ezekiel comes to realise that his partner-in-love, whether within the frame-work of marriage or beyond it, is symbolic of sin and he cannot, inspite of all his willingness and anxiety to go beyond
the realm of the physical, achieve a sense of poise and balance. He, in the course of his experience and experimentation with love in its concrete and irreducible manifestation, comes to realise that all his intellectual forte is not sufficient to ferry him across; there are vistas beyond the magnetic field of intellect. He now realises that the "myths and dreams" of life cannot be deciphered with the help of "irony, paradox and metaphor" and have to be realised only by surrendering to them on the plane of intuition. With the help of this realisation, the poet, comes to underline the significance and the beauty of things ordinary. He now celebrates the "ordinary" and "the ordinariness" which give him a sense of human balance, poise and a sense of fulfilment. Nevertheless, in the later poetry of Nissim Ezekiel once again is discerned tilt for the female form, particularly, in the "Nudes: 1978", "Passion Poems"; and "Poster Poems" wherein he seems interested, nay, immersed in the body with the ostensible pretension of perceiving form in the shape not only of the human body but in poetry as well.

Kamala Das too reacts to the strange and mysterious experience of love in her own singular manner. Adopting a defiant posture against the patriarchal feudal stance of the society where the male takes the female for granted
in the matters of love and sex, Kamala Das tries to define her own identity as a woman and as an individual through her vibrating and honest utterings voicing her interpretations of love-experience in all its myriad manifestations. Highly subjective and confessional, the love-poetry of Kamala Das is flooded with the out-pourings of her agonised heart where love is wanted but is wanting. Without doubt, on many occasions, the reader finds Kamala Das celebrating the body in all honesty, nevertheless, on most others, her poetry, subjective and honest, takes a vitriolic flavour and is turned into a kind of censure against her husband, lovers in particular, and all male-kind in general. The male body is projected incessantly with the help of negative metaphors. In the corpus of her poetry and her autobiography, Kamala Das appears to be a tormented soul which pours her anguish in all its tribulations with the help of an ever-growing dissatisfaction with the physical love where she is taken to be merely as a doll, a body, used for the selfish sexual fulfilment of the male partner. Under these circumstances, she identifies herself with a "cistern" which goes on emptying and refilling itself mechanically. Love for her, in this sense, becomes a swivel-door through which people pass mechanically, without ever batting an eyelid, and not an experience where the body serves merely as a
door allowing the partners-in-love a transcendence from the realm of the bodily desire and carnality to something where it becomes a fulfilling experience for the partners, where the satiation of the bodies leads to the submerging of the souls. The sense of unfulfilment, and incompleteness creates in Kamala Das's wailing soul a yearning to disentangle herself from the realm of the bodies, and move to the eternal peace of death where the body would "discompose" allowing the soul to move in a world of freedom. Alternatively, Kamala Das seeks refuge in the domain of a non-tangible, abstract, nevertheless, ideal love where the divine lover would embrace her body and soul. She seeks to create a cocoon for herself where the strings of the body, even if they exist, will not hinder her final and absolute union with her eternal lover allowing her to disentangle herself from the "hooded hand" of the corporeal lover who is interested only in her body.

Having the capacity to comprehend a great variety of experience and the ability to drink the spontaneous spring of life, Pritish Nandy emerges as a truly romantic poet inundated with the feeling of love in all its manifestations. Seeking the help of metaphors of nature to present the multifaced experience of love - romantic and the carnal - Pritish Nandy delves deep, particularly, in the physical aspect of love which he finds highy
satisfying as a means to break the mundane walls of physical and spiritual isolation. His male perspective is fully discernible which writes and comments on various experiences of love. A special quality of Pritish Nandy's poetry lies in his highly evocative use of words and metaphors which create "a magic of the midnight mist." As a dreamer and a true romantic, Pritish Nandy weaves torrential yet intricate pattern of words which accentuate the feeling in the reader that Pritish Nandy is an escapist who sings merely the songs celebrating the body, and in the process, forgets the larger, social reality which envelops him and his dream. Nevertheless, a serious perusal of Pritish Nandy's poetry demonstrates effectively that he is not a mere connoisseur of the female flesh but is equally conscious of the pitiless social context where not love but violence, social injustice and exploitation happen to be the watch-words. In an altogether different shade, Pritish Nandy's love-poetry takes the shape of disturbed dreams where love in its romantic connotation is denied and the tormented souls of the lovers are ever-conscious of the shadow of the sun always looming on "the dusky loins" and the "midnight river" in the eyes of the beloved. The element of violence, hopelessness of social situation leading to frustration, generate in Pritish Nandy's poetry a strange flavour of protest whereby
using "unsayables" he endeavours to startle the ever-complacent psyche of the society with the help of his staccato utterings. Nevertheless Pritish Nandy, in the ultimate analysis, seems to have loved and lost. His later poetry seems to acquire a speculative touch where he seemingly comes to realise that "loving and unloving" are the same. At this stage, the poet seems to be moving in an opposite direction where after a hectic life of "wheeling", "double dealing", a life of turmoil and turbulence, he finally comes to realise that he is truly "lonely".

Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das and Pritish Nandy, thus all seem to be concerned with love in spite of their individual and different sensibilities and perceptions about the various aspects of love. There are some common grounds which they seem to tread together, however, they have distinct voices, reflecting their diverse physical, psychological and spiritual needs and aspirations. Love in its various corporeal aspects where bodies play a significant role fascinates Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das as well as Pritish Nandy, all of them celebrate the human form while they engage themselves in the cauldron of simmering passion involving the sexual urges. Nissim Ezekiel and Pritish Nandy, however, flaunt their typical male stance and seem to accept the concept of love in the narrow
frame-work of the female body without ever, even for a moment, pausing to ponder about the specific requirements, physical or spiritual of their female partner. They are unusually free and frank in the use of words like "breasts" and "thighs" and thus make manifest the unassailable position of the male in the society. Kamala Das reacts to the human body in an altogether different manner. While there is no doubt that as a person in love, she too underlines the significance of the body in the overall pattern of love experience, she nevertheless comes to acquire an understanding that she is not accepted by her lover as an equal participant, and is taken as a mere instrument in the mechanical game of "this physical thing." Nissim Ezekiel seemingly endeavours to define himself and his situation by communicating through love with his beloved in particular, and the world at large and in the process sheds his three-fold, tailor made as if, sense of alienation, through the experience of love. For this he dons the cloak of a voyager and tries to achieve his quest for self by passing meanderingly through "desire labyrinthine." He uses a confessional, yet objective and ironic stance to look at the experience of love in its myriad shades and flavours, but comes to realise that in spite of his poise of idiom reflecting his conflicts with the self in the context of love-experience, he cannot
understand and complete the zig-saw puzzle of "myths and dreams" and settles for the "ordinariness" of things, at last. Kamala Das, on the contrary, gives expression to the volutions of her fragmented soul in her poetry while she too makes an in-depth analysis of her position as a female viz. a viz. her male partner. The "psychic striptease" which one becomes witness to while going through the body of Kamala Das's poetry reveals her strong yearning to be loved not only in the physical sense but in the sense of love uniting not only bodies but souls as well. Her utterances acquire a scintillating confessional tone reflecting her rebellion against the traditionally subordinate position of the female. Her poetry, subjective to the core, exhibits her sense of unfulfilment and her yearning either to go to the folds of death or in the arms of an ideal, divine lover like Lord Krishna. Pritish Nandy presents himself as "a true romantic" at core and with a capability to command words at will in strange, evocative combinations. He too seems to be in search of an ideal love experience first through the abstract idea of being in love, then through the concrete irreducible experience of bodies in love. Simultaneously, his poetry presents the social angle where he realises that in the violent, blood-spattered, fear-stricken, exploitative world of
marauders, the people can never love naturally. Raising a voice of protest against all this, Pritish Nandy attempts to bring about a social order where lovers can engage in love in an unafraid manner. His confessional tone and his fervent anger lead him nowhere and he realises that he has not been able to acquire the poise that fulfilment brings about. He finds at last that only in loneliness can he attain peace.

The study of Indo-Anglian love poetry in the context of the body of poetry written by Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das and Pritish Nandy clearly indicates that love as a theme holds a place of pride in their corpus of poetry. The poets under study seem to be fellow-voyagers in quest of an oasis of love in the desert of their spiritual lives. Adopting stances, sometimes common, at others different they grope on, having the taste of joy in union, occasionally, but, generally, frustrated and grumbling, nevertheless holding the talisman of love in their hands and always chanting the fevered hymns of love. Nissim Ezekiel seems to settle for a quieter charm of "ordinariness" in the things, though his fascination for the female form does not fade altogether. For Kamala Das wading through the "puddles of desire", love till the last remains
a chimera, sharpening her yearning for an ideal, divine lover in whose arms she would find lasting peace, fulfilment and love. Pritish Nandy in his quest for love seems to halt at a juncture where he can stoically mumble that "loving and unloving" mean the same to him and decides to drop his "gypsy satchel" for a siesta in the arid realm of loneliness.