CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

After studying the ‘Aspects of Cankam poetry and English metaphysical poetry’, significant parallels and affinities have been identified by the research investigator. In the introductory chapter, the research investigator has enumerated the aspects of Cankam literature and English metaphysical poetry. The Cankam literature consists of the Eight Anthologies and ‘Ten idylls’ in which one could come across literary excellence. The subject matter of these two collections of poetry is classified into akam and puram. The former deals with a structure mode of love career between a young man and a young woman where as the latter with the other aspects of human life. Certain conventions are followed in akam poetry. The characters are not referred to by individual names, real or imaginary. It is clear that ancient Tamil people wanted to hand down a cosmic poetry with universal men and women as characters with the rhythm and joy of human life.

In the first chapter entitled ‘Introduction’, an orientation regarding the aspects of metaphysical poetry and cankam literature has been provided. In Akam poetry, one can find the universal health and vitality, a quintessential expression of the gushing joy of creation. The sexual love has been described as a means by which one could not only save oneself from the despair and monotony of the day to day experience but also attain to the lofty and abiding things in life. Within the corpus of akam poetry, there are a large number of verses that portray the bliss and the pain of passion with great poetic fervour and intensity. But the akam
poetry contains no footnotes to the science of eroticism; nor is it concerned in the least for the depraved mind to feed on. The worlds of men and nature are brought into an organic oneness by investing the latter with human qualities and apprehending it by the same mode of cognition of which the human world is imagined. The beauty of nature has been extolled to a great extent in Cankam literature and it remains as the backdrop to the feelings and emotions of the human beings. In the metaphysical poetry nature finds place rarely.

The phrase ‘Metaphysical poetry’ has long done duty as a term of abuse, or as the label of a quaint and pleasant taste. The question is to what extent the so called metaphysical formed a school and how fair this so called school or movement is a digression from the main current. Not only is it extremely difficult to define metaphysical poetry, but difficult to decide what poets practise it and in which of their verses. The poetry of Donne is late Elizabethan, its feeling often very close to that of Chapman. The ‘courtly’ poetry is derivative from Johnson who borrowed liberally from the Latin; it expires in the next century with the sentiment and witticism of prior. There is finally the devotional verse of Herbert, Vaughan and Crashaw. The poet Crashaw, sometimes more profound and less sectarian than the others, has a quality which returns through the Elizabethan period to early Italians. It is difficult to find the precise use of metaphor, simile or other conceit, which is common to all poets and at the same time important enough as an element of style to isolate these poets as a group. Donne, and often Cowley employ the device which is sometimes considered characteristically ‘metaphysical’; the elaboration of a figure of speech to the furthest stage to which
ingenuity can carry it. Thus Cowley develops the commonplace comparison of the world to a chess-board through long stanzas, and Donne, with more grace, in “A valediction,” the comparison of two lovers to a pair of compasses. But elsewhere we find, instead of mere explication of the content of a comparison, a development by rapid association of thought which requires considerable agility on the part of the reader.

According to T.S. Eliot, the language of the metaphysical poets is as a rule simple and pure. It is a fidelity to thought and feelings. As this fidelity induces variety of thought and feeling, it induces variety of music. Another characteristic of the metaphysical poets is their capacity for a direct sensuous apprehensive of thought or a recreation of thought into feeling which is found chiefly in Donne. Metaphysical poets were at best in trying to find the verbal equivalent for states of mind and feeling. This shows their maturity of mind.

According to J.C. Grierson, metaphysical poetry is inspired by a philosophical conception of the universe and the role assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence. The word metaphysical lays stress on the finer psychology of which the conceits are often the expression, the learned imagery, the argumentative, subtle evolution of the lyrics and above all on the peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination. According to Helen Gardner, metaphysical poetry demands that the readers pay attention and read on. Concentration and sinewy strength of style are the marks of metaphysical poetry. A metaphysical poem remains to be an expanded epigram. An important characteristic of it is its fondness for conceits.
In the second chapter entitled ‘Treatment of Love’, the love poems of the metaphysical poets have been compared with the love poems of the cankam period in Tamil. The Tamil Akam poetry expresses the infinite variety of emotions and feelings of the lovers. Even in the metaphysical poetry, one could come across such infinite variety. In the metaphysical poetry and Tamil Akam poetry all the moods of a passionate lover have been described vividly. One can find a huge number of dramatic monologues written in both the languages so as to indicate the intensified and dignified role of love. Pierre Legouis acknowledges the dramatic power of metaphysical poets. J.B. Leishman also explains the dramatic quality as found in metaphysical poetry. The themes of the love poems in both the languages resemble in many ways. One could also compare the techniques used by the poets. The opening lines begin with shock tactics. Moreover most of the love poems are written in the form of a speech. In these poems the poets have analyzed the human heart psychologically. The poets in general have utilized the psychoanalytic approach in depicting the situation of love and characters. The lovers make use of argument which is conducted in almost syllogistic form. But they are sometimes playful and sometimes serious. In short, the lovers woo by false syllogisms at times. One can come across absurdity and impossible situations in the love poems. A good number of images are drawn from the concepts of state, government and war. Novelty of conceits used by both the metaphysical and cankam poets has been compared.

The poets not only insist on the union of two souls but they have also craved for the fulfillment of carnal desires. In short, human love is enlarged,
intensified and dignified by its cosmic context, as it echoes and is echoed by the activity of sun and moon, seas and floods, tempest and earthquake, the very air itself. In love poems, the names of the characters have not been disclosed both in Cankam and English metaphysical poetry.

In the third chapter entitled ‘Religious Fervour’, the religious poems written by the metaphysical poets and the Cankam poets have been compared and contrasted. In Cankam literature, Paripatal and Thirumurukarrupadai depict the greatness of God. From the verses found in Paripatal, one could realize that the people of ancient Tamilnadu were very religious and they loved to adore their Gods. There seemed to be no religious squabbles in those days.

Lord Baladeva, Lord Murukan and Lord Adiseshen had been worshipped by ancient Tamils. After perusing the religious poems of Cankam poetry, one could arrive at the conclusion that the ancient Tamil people were a great people who had attained a high degree of culture and civilization.

Metaphysical poets have also written religious poems. Almost all the poems of Herbert contain religious meditations, but these religious meditations have been expressed in a truly poetic manner. Vaughan is happiest when he has a glimpse of the white purity of heaven, or of the presence of God in bird or tree or flower or stone. Donne’s religious poems assert the fact that God’s grace would support him enough to hinder the devil’s craft and God, like a magnet, would draw his heavy but responsive heart. In some of his poems he wants to repent for the sins committed by him. In his paradoxical poems, he summarizes the way in which God unites west and East or fall and resurrection, in the little world of man.
At the end of the chapter, the researcher has compared and contrasted the religious beliefs and the conception of mysticism as realized by the Cankam poets and English metaphysical poets.

The English metaphysical divine poems and the cankam poetry delineate mysticism as a relationship between man, nature and God. Paripadal and Thirumurukarru padai which belong to the Cankam poetry find God in nature. Even in the English divine poems, God has been seen in the different forms of nature. In the Tamil divine poems, the greatness of Murukan, Mayon and Indiran has been elaborately discussed where as in the English divine poems, the greatness of Christ has been delineated. Moreover, fear of death has won over the human beings to the faith in God. In the metaphysical poetry one can come across the human beings repenting for the sins and expecting for salvation. In Cankam poetry the wish of human beings to attain heaven after the death has been indicated. In Cankam poetry and English metaphysical poetry, the mortality of human beings is reminded with help of the natural objects. The Cankam poets and the metaphysical poets prayed to God not to get gold and pleasure but to seek His blessings only.

In the fourth chapter entitled ‘Metaphysical imagery and other stylistic Devices’, the researcher has analysed and compared the metaphysical imagery used by Cankam poets and English metaphysical poets. According to Murry style is the personal idiosyncrasy of expression by which one recognizes a writer. While analysing Cankam poetry and English metaphysical poetry linguistically, various features like Apostrophe, Repetition, Rhetorical question, inversion,
paradox, hyperbole, simile, and metaphors could be found. The stylistic devices used by the various poets belonging to the different literatures have been compared and contrasted so as to explain the greatness of the respective poets.

English poets used metaphysical images to decorate their poetry. Two things patently unlike are shown to be alike in single point in such a way that are could feel the incongruity. Similarly the cankam poets have used peculiar images, to adorn their poetry. Both the cankam poets and the English metaphysical poets have also produced dissonant effect by using strange images. They have compared the beauty of women to geographical regions. More over they have used dramatic element in their poetry

Brandenburg who coined the term ‘dynamic image’ compares it to a ballet in which the attention is focused on motion rather than on figures and costumes of the dancers. Both the English poets and Cankam poets have used the dynamic image. They have also produced dissonant effect using metaphysical images. Allen Tate states that there are varieties of ambiguity and contradiction beneath logical surface. This could be seen in both Tamil and English poems.

Even though Tamil culture and English culture are different from one another, one could find similar themes of love in both the literatures and the experience and expressions of the lovers look alike. The names of the character in love poems have not been disclosed both in the Cankam poetry and English metaphysical poetry. One could find similarity in the religious poems of both the literatures where the poets detect and admire God in nature. The metaphysical imagery used by the poets of the two languages could also be compared. One
could also find a contrasting element regarding Cankam Tamil poetry and English metaphysical poetry. Tamil poets use nature as the backdrop for their love poems. But in English metaphysical poetry one could find the description of nature rarely.