CONCLUSION

The study of the love poetry of the three poets, Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti and Kamala Das has revealed that there are marked similarities in their views regarding both sacred and profane love. These similarities are evident in spite of their being historically and geographically distant from each other and belonging to three different cultures. One can possibly attribute the affinities between Rossetti and Dickinson to the fact of their being contemporaries and to the close correspondence between their lives as spinsters, apart from their common Christian background. But Kamala Das's affinities with the two poets are interesting and significant, because she is a poet of contemporary India with a very different cultural/religious background. We have noticed that the affinities between the three poets are there largely because their writings are informed by a distinct female consciousness shaped and determined in each by the culture in which she was born and the social environment in which she lived.
Although their cultural backgrounds were different, the poets found themselves in almost similar conditions and faced similar problems in their respective environments. This is reflected in their views about woman. They think that a woman's life is of limited opportunities; she is denied freedom in every sphere of life, as society not only puts restraint on her but also expects her to cultivate certain refinements to please men. She is even denied her identity as a woman. One can venture a generalization that the condition of the women of India in the twentieth century is similar to that of nineteenth century women in England and America—probably one of the several manifestations of culture-lag.

Dickinson, Rossetti and Das believe that love is a sacred vocation that demands its fulfilment on the spiritual plane. In its profane aspect, they visualize such fulfilment in the physical union of lovers, but it violates the sanctity they attach to love. For Dickinson and Rossetti, profane love has significance because it pre-figures divine love: although it has no value in itself, it is a pointer to spiritual fulfilment in heaven. True to the Christian tradition, both see profane love as anticipating divine love. Kamala Das's attitude to profane love is, however, different from that of Rossetti and Dickinson. In accordance with the
Hindu religious thought, Das finds profane love devoid of significance. While attaching sacramental significance to love, she cannot overlook its physical/profane aspect which she considers of little value, rather degrading in character. Profane love in her view neither pre-figures nor symbolizes divine love.

The three poets see a close connection between love and pain/suffering. Love to them is as much an experience of pain as of joy. Their love poems are, accordingly, poems of aspiration and hope as well as of penance and pain. They use the spousal analogy to convey the delights and pangs experienced by the beloved in her pursuit of the lover. The suffering experienced during the separation of the lovers is seen by them as the sacrificial, essential to the attainment of higher love. It brings about the purgation of the soul - a step towards spiritual regeneration. All the three poets thus invest pain with religious significance.

Rossetti, Dickinson and Das attach transcendental significance to death; they consider it as an outlet to a higher, spiritual life in so far as the pining beloved is concerned. This is related to their belief in the dichotomy of body and soul; real fulfilment is possible only after death. Their conspicuous concern with the beloved's craving for union with the divine makes them seem akin to the
mystics. Judged in this light their love poems remind one largely of the purgative stage of the Mystic Way. This is not to deny that in some of their poems we also get hints of the stage of illumination. Here, however, Das differs from Rossetti and Dickinson in one important respect: being rooted in a different tradition, she envisions a complete merger of her soul with the divine lover, Krishna. The Indian mystical tradition, as is well known, sees union with God as the soul's identification with Him. As against this Rossetti and Dickinson see this union in terms of the soul's exulting over the constant presence of God.

Although the three poets share similarities in their attitude to love, each of them has a style of her own, revealed particularly in the way she uses language. All of them shape their medium in accordance with the particular needs of the experience they want to communicate. Rossetti differs from both Dickinson and Das because she uses simple language and writes mostly within the poetic tradition she inherited. We do not come across any striking innovation in her use of language. Her manner is simple and straightforward, and her poems do not present any complexity in terms of ambiguity or obscurity. Every mood is expressed in simple, ordinary, common day diction or at the most in the biblical diction. This keeps her language free from
ornateness. Unlike her, both Dickinson and Das do not wholly conform to the conventions of language use, but go beyond them. They consciously twist or bend it to the dictates of the creative impulse. Both practised the principle that the poetic process is a self-conscious one in which craftsmanship of the poet plays a vital role. Both often resort to similar poetic devices, but they serve different ends in the two poets. For instance, Dickinson uses syntactic ellipsis for giving compactness to thought and rendering the urgency of the message she wants to convey. But in Das, syntactic ellipsis has a different function: it serves to suggest the futility of the kind of experience she is waiting about. Also both use analytic syntax, but for different purposes. In Dickinson such a syntax gives elevation to her thought and language; on the contrary involved syntax in Das is more frequently met with in her poems projecting a sense of waste which she associates with love of the profane type.