D.H. Lawrence repeatedly talks in terms of return to the pre-Socratic, pre-Christian modes of living in his creative as well as critical writings. He is convinced that the atmosphere of the contemporary society is hardly conducive to a healthy, wholesome living. He wants us to "prepare now for the death of our present little life" and "return to ancient forms". He sees that at present there is no "Deed or life", and that most of the basic human values are almost lost. Hence, "We must go back, a long way, before the idealist conception began, before Plato", he writes in his "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover". He feels himself intuitively one with the ancient people like the Egyptians, the pre-historic Greeks and the Chinese, who, he believes, lived a real life, true to their deepest instincts and feelings. Their science and arts, according to him, were all conceived in terms of life, and their life-structures were characterized by a "marvellous innate beauty and life-perfection". What he thinks is wanting in the moderns is the glow of living sex, the marvel of being alive, alive in the flesh. "If only our civilization had taught us how to let sex-appeal flow properly and subtly" he yearns. What we find in his Etruscan Places is a recreation of the kind of life which he wishes to find in the present. His Birkin (Woman in Love) is presented as
going back and reliving this kind of pre-European consciousness. His Don Ramon and Cipriano (*The Plumed Serpent*) found a new religion that could accommodate these values.

I, who have also been a student of the cankam literature of the Tamils, have all along wondered during my study of Lawrence, whether Lawrence is "through an extraordinary sensitiveness to what Wordsworth called 'the unknown modes of being'" recreating the life embodied in the Akam poetry. A repeated reading of both literatures convinced me that there are striking similarities and parallels between the kind of life portrayed in the Akam poetry and that Lawrence envisions in his art. I had been discussing this with my respected Professor Dr. V. Sachidanandan even before I could register for Ph.D, and his response was positive and encouraging. And the present thesis is the offshoot of my systematic study of these two literatures for the past five years.

A solid ground for this kind of study was prepared by Prof. V. Sachidanandan, a pioneer-comparatist, who has secured for the discipline of Comparative Literature a more respectable and beneficial role in this part of the world. His *Whitman and Bharati: A Comparative Study* is a pace-setter in this regard. Dr. K. Kailasapathy’s *Tamil Heroic Poetry* and the various essays he had written comparing
Tamil Literature with different national literatures could be rich stimulants to the students of this discipline. His untimely death is a loss to this discipline as much as to the Tamil studies. And, Xavier S. Thani Nayagam's *Landscape and Poetry: A Study of Nature in Classical Tamil Poetry*, where he compares the nature treatment in the classical poetry of the Tamils with that in Latin, Greek, Sanskrit and English, is an example of the creative uses of the tools of comparatism toward winning an international recognition to the Tamil Literature. The contribution of these three scholars in making Comparative Literature a respectable academic discipline cannot be exaggerated. Apart from these, I was particularly benefited by Chaman Nahal's *D.H. Lawrence: An Eastern View* which brings out the deep affinities between Lawrence's approach to life and that of the Hinduism. And, Dr. M. Varadarajan's *The Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature* and V. Sp. Manickam's *The Tamil Concept of Love*, had been of great help in understanding the cankam works.

II

As the title of the thesis indicates, a comparative study of Lawrence's works and the Akam poetry is made on the basis of their themes, and it has been done under five heads.

The first chapter introduces Lawrence and the Akam poets with particular reference to their themes. No attempt
is made here to give a biographical sketch of Lawrence or the history of the ebbs and flows that his literary career witnessed. A comprehensive and sssiduously documented study of Lawrence's life, personal and literary, is found in Harry T. Moore's _The Priest of Love: a life of D.H. Lawrence_. And I have not attempted an elaborate introduction of the Akam poetry here, since the various facets of this poetry, as also the codifications that govern its composition have been examined in appropriate places in the succeeding chapters. However, a beginning student of the Akam poetry may read T.P. Meenakshisundaram's essay on the caikam poetry included in the _Collected Papers of Prof. T.P. Meenakshisundaram_, Jagannatha Parthasarathy's "The Love Poetry of Old Tamil: A Literary Appreciation" and the introductions of M. Shanmugam Pillai and David E. Ludden in their translation of _Kuruntokai_, among others.

In the second chapter, an attempt is made to relate the Laurentian conception of Being and Knowing with the Akam-Puram conception of the classical Tamil poets. The aspects of Akam and Puram as formal categories governed by certain literary codes have not been examined, as they are beyond the scope of this study. On the other hand, Akam and Puram are seen here as conceptual terms, pointing to the ancient Tamils' approach to human life. It is shown
that Being and Knowing as elucidated by Lawrence in his expository writing and exemplified in his novels and short stories are largely similar to the modes of Akam and Puram as conceived by the ancient Tamil mind. I have tried to prove that these two modes are exemplified in the Akam poetry itself where the hero tries to achieve a balanced development of his emotional and worldly lives, the "night-time self" and the "day-time self.

The third chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part, it is shown that the conceptual foundations of the Akam poetry are built largely on principles similar to Lawrence's conception of "blood-consciousness." I have tried to establish that both literatures are attempts at creating and sustaining the confidence of man in the life-generating and life-vitalizing potentialities of sex, in the divine nature of the life of the flesh, and in male creativity and female tenderness. The second part of this chapter deals with the seminal importance that Lawrence and the Akam poets have attached to marriage based on sexual harmony, their abiding trust in the institution of marriage and their conceptions of husband-wife relationship. In the third part, it is shown that both Lawrence and the Akam poets have realized the experience of sex as an experience of beauty, thereby making sex a "tremendously desirable" experience with no trace of anything secretive or depraving.
The fourth chapter is devoted to the study of nature-treatment in Lawrence and the Akam poetry. Man-nature relationship as portrayed in both is analysed at two levels. At one level, Lawrence and the Akam poets have conceived nature as a matrix of human life, seeing it as informing and illustrating human life and relatedness. At another level, they have envisioned a hylozoistic relationship between the human and the non-human worlds. Man and the "circumambient universe" are brought into a fecundating intercourse. It has been demonstrated that Lawrence's vision of man as being sustained and nourished by nature and his need to establish a blood-communion with nature has close parallels in the Akam poetry.

In the concluding chapter, some of the fundamental differences between Lawrence and the Akam poets are examined. It is made clear that these differences matter as much as the similarities and identities, and that a comparative study of two different national literatures must examine their distinctness as much as putting them in an international perspective.

III

The main sources of this study are the totality of Lawrence's creative and critical output excluding his plays where he has hardly anything to say which he has not said in other works, and all the 1842 poems that belong to the Akam corpus. In the examination of the Akam poetry, references to the grammatical treatise Tolkāppiyam are
confined to those aspects in it which define and inform the concepts of human life as embodied in the Akam poems. Cross references to the Puram poems and Tirukkural are made in so far as they conform and authenticate the Akam concepts. The translations of the Akam poems quoted in this thesis are, unless otherwise mentioned, mine, rendered in free verse. In these translations, I have brought in the typical Laurentian terminology in places where I thought it could convey the meaning of the poem more effectively. Thus, the term 'vinai' in such contexts as "vinaiyē ātavarkkuyir" is rendered as 'purposive self' or 'day-time self', and the term 'āṇmai' is translated as "maleness" or "male purposiveness". And "kāmam" when it is used in juxtaposition with 'āṇmai' is rendered as 'night-time self', and in other contexts it is rendered as sexual passion. In the interpretation of the Akam concepts too, I have, in appropriate contexts, made use of certain Laurentian terms like knowing, being, cerebral consciousness, blood-consciousness, physical mind, polarity, cosmos, phallic consciousness, life-in-death, death-in-life and so on which, in my view, are not only necessary in the context of this study, but also lend themselves more effectively to the interpretation of the Akam poetry.