CHAPTER FOUR

THE CIRCUMAMBIENT UNIVERSE
"The business of art is," says Lawrence, "to reveal the relation between man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment"; it is because "our life consists in this achieving of a pure relationship between ourselves and the living universe about us." To him, a work of art which does not portray this relationship faithfully is immoral. What he means is that human life is organically connected with the life of the universe around, and that any artistic representation of the former in its exclusiveness is necessarily an half-truth. In the Laurentian terminology, the circumambient universe denotes an "infinity" of things. Thus one's relationship with the circumambient universe includes "relationship between me and another person, me and other people, me and nation, me and a race of men, me and the animals, me and the trees or flowers, me and the earth, me and the skies and sun and stars, me and the moon." Lawrence sees these relations as constituting three distinct classes: relation of man to the "living" universe, relation of man to woman and relation of man to man. This chapter deals with the first of these relations while the other two have already been examined in the previous chapters.

2. Ibid., p. 528
3. Ibid., p. 529
4. Ibid., 528
Lawrence's treatment of man-nature relationship can be studied under three broad categories. He builds up a fundamental opposition between nature and culture, associating the former with all that is unconscious, and the latter with the cerebral modes of consciousness. At another level, he conceives nature as a matrix of human life. That is, he finds nature as the place and frame of human action and morality. And at a third level, he envisions an impassioned unity of all things in the universe. In other words, a hylzoistic attitude characterizes his treatment of nature.

**Nature vs Culture**

The Laurentian and the Akam literary universes exhibit a radical difference in this aspect. As the ancient Tamils conceived of it, nature and culture are not pitted against each other; on the contrary, culture is essentially a product of nature. As such, it can never be independent of or antagonistic to nature. The Akam poems portray a natural harmony between the human and the non-human worlds, between the lovers, who are sustained and nourished by nature, and the society of which they are an inseparable part. In Lawrence, there is a dialectical opposition between 'natural' characters and characters who are the products of material culture. Lawrence so makes out that the former alone could live a real life, and the latter are inescapably doomed to what he calls a death-in-life existence. The disharmony between the natural faculties of
man and those imposed on him by the economic and mental
civilization is one of the cardinal tenets of his art.
Natural living of man is possible only when we "sweep away
the whole monstrous superstructure of the world of today,
Cities and industries and civilization, leave only the bare
earth with plants growing and waters running," tells Will
Brangwen. He is convinced that what the economic-oriented
culture produces are "naked, lurking savages." He finds
London "the ponderous, massive, ugly superstructure of a
world of man on a world of nature." "Frightened and awed" by
this, he feels that "the whole of man's world was exterior
and extraneous to his own life with Anna." This opposition
reveals its horizons in Sons and Lovers, where Paul's
mother is made to represent the cultured world of ideas and his
father "life itself, warmth." Lady Chatterley's Lover marks
the culmination of the incompatibility between these two modes
of life. The thematic structure of this novel is character-
ized by a powerful diatribe against what Lawrence calls the
'squalidness' of the contemporary social order, and a
passionate advocacy for a return to nature. Sir Clifford
Chatterley and Mellors symbolize the two worlds of culture and
nature respectively. The progression of the plot of the novel
is marked by an intense conflict between the two. The wheel-
chair episode in which the motor-attachment breaks down, and
Clifford is ultimately helped to reach home by Mellors,
symbolizes Lawrence's vision of the emergence of a new social order over the collapse of the present society.

**NATURE AS A BACKGROUND**

Secondly, both Lawrence and the Akam poets find nature a setting for the enactment of the drama of human life. The Akam poets have conceived of the nature's world a living background for the play of human life. It is compulsively evident from the fact that they have classified the land into five geographical regions and assigned to each region a distinct emotional behaviour of the lovers. They have seen poetry as being made of three components namely mutalporul, Karupporul and uripporul. The first two components constitute the world of nature and the last constitutes the world of the lovers, and they, according to Ilampūranar, form a hierarchical order as far as the fixing of tinaı̂ of a poem is concerned. As such, uripporul (the emotional experience of the lovers) is the central aspect; Karupporul (the objects of environment such as flora and fauna) comes next in importance, and mutalporul (place and time) occupies the lowest rung. Tolkāppiyar's codification can be interpreted to suggest that uripporul is indispensable, while the

other two are optional. In other words, an Akam composition may or may not treat of mutal and Karu, but it must deal with an emotional situation in the life of the lovers. This implies that for the Akam poets, the primary concern is human life, and nature is significant in so far as it has a bearing on human life.

However, one finds that nature in the Akam poetry has been treated as an almost indispensable background for the emotions and actions of the lovers. It is hardly possible to see the five distinct love situations—the union of the lovers, the wifely endurance, the separation of the lovers, the grief of the lady in separation, her sulking over her husband’s waywardness—as divorced from their respective landscapes. The nexus the Akam poets have established between the given emotional aspect and a particular landscape is indicative of their deep understanding

8. It is interesting to note that M. Varadarajan and V. Sp. Manickam have taken different stands in interpreting this verse. For the former, it means that is more important than mutalporul, and (pporul) more important than the other two. (T.

treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature, op. cit., p. 5)
For the latter, "In the days of Tolkappiyam, equal importance was given to all the three aspects... in (the) making of an Akam poem. That is to say that every Akam composition described these three elements. The cittiran (949, that is, Perul. 3) is a proof Literary Heritage of the Tamils, and K. Ghad chalam 1981), p. 13) V.Sp. Manickam’s assertion is not sustained by intrinsic evidences in the Akam corpus. For, there are poems which treat of uipporul alone with the other two absent, and again, there are poems in which karuppurul and uipporul alone are treated (Tol. Perul. Ilampuranar’s commentary, op. cit., pp. 21-27).
of the human psychology. Thus, one could not think of a more appropriate background to the emotional togetherness of the lovers than the midnight in winter at the montane region. The lady awaiting her lord's return patiently has the pastoral tract, the rainy season and the evening as her backdrop. The summer season and mid-day time in the arid wasteland region is the most appropriate background for the lady who suffers the pangs of separation of her lord. The agricultural land and the attendant comforts it brings serve as backdrop for sexual infidelity of the husband and the sulkiness of the wife. And the coastal region at sunset is the setting for the grief-stricken heroine. Apart from this broader setting, we have the flora and fauna characteristic of each region that reveal the great effect of the background on human life. The heavy downpour, the flooding rivers, the rutting elephant, the blossoming vamkai flower, the ripened corn, the waterfalls and mountain streams, the mating birds and beasts are all rich stimulants to the coming together and the union of the sexually matured man and woman. In the same way, the roar of the waves at night, the unabated blowing of the north wind, the pathetic cries of lonely birds, the hooting of the owl and so on intensify their sense of loneliness and despondency. The stagnant waters, the dried springs, the eagle, the vulture, the wild dogs, the devouring tiger, the heartless robbers
are some of the visions conjured up as a background for the lady who is afflicted by fear and anxiety during her separation. The fertile agricultural lands, the rivers and ponds that are symbolic of material comfort serve as a background to the wayward husband and the sulking wife. In all these cases, nature is so subtly interwoven with human passions that it is difficult to think of the latter without associating it with the former. It is natural that the very mention of the name of flowers prominent in each region simultaneously brings to one the particular emotional situation assigned to that region. Thus, one sees the Kurinći and the union of lovers as synonymous terms, and so on. At the same time, as M. Varadarajan points out, rightly, "Nature is made subordinate to man in the sense that pictures from Nature are nowhere elaborated or dwelt upon for their own sake... and the poets never express a feeling for the beauties of Nature independent of man. Landscape painting is of value only (in) so far as it helps to make the dominant human interest clearer, to illumine what might be called the landscape of the heart." 9

In Lawrence too, nature is conceived as a living background to the play of human emotions. He observes in his "Study of Thomas Hardy:"

... there exists a great background, vital and vivid, which matters more than the people who move upon it. Against the background of dark, passionate Egdon, of the leafy, sappy passion and sentiment of the woodlands, of the unfathomed stars, is drawn the lesser scheme of lives: .... Upon the vast incomprehensible pattern of some primal morality greater than ever human mind can grasp, is drawn the little, pathetic pattern of man's moral life and struggle, pathetic, almost ridiculous.\(^{10}\)

Here Lawrence views nature as a larger-than-human-life phenomenon, and it is perhaps these remarks that have made a critic conclude that for Lawrence the background "matters more than the people who move upon it."\(^11\) But, like the Akam poets, Lawrence is primarily and supremely a poet of human life, and he has been insistently and even obsessively-concerned with teaching men the way to 'phallic' regeneration. He finds man occupying an exalted place in the order of creation. But the vitality for his superior being comes from the "living creatures lower than ourselves."\(^{12}\) Man's greatness or littleness depends upon his ability to extract life from nature. Hence, for his own well-being man needs to connect himself with all things in the universe,

10. *Phoenix*, p. 419


with man, with woman; and beyond that, with the cow, the lion, the bull, the cat, the eagle, the beetle, the serpent. And beyond these, with narcissus and anemone, mistletoe and oak-tree, myrtle, olive, and lotus. And beyond these with humus and slanting water, cloud-towers and rainbow and the sweeping sun-lims. And beyond that with sun, and moon, the living night and the living day.\(^{13}\)

It is in this sense that Lawrence calls nature a mightier-than-human-life phenomenon, and it is in this conception that he comes nearer to the Akam poets. For him, and for the Akam poets too, human life consists not just in enacting life with nature as the background, but in our living within the framework of nature. In his art, he revels himself in the delight of creation, the delight that manifests in every object of nature. But this delight is only an "objective correlative" of the human world just as it is so in the Akam poetry. Lawrence never fails to relate nature with man. Even in his first novel, where nature, by and large, outlives man in the intensity of living, it is not depicted as unrelated to man. Everywhere the rhythm of nature is made to correspond with the rhythm of human life. Here is the background of nature to a funeral procession:

There is a cry in answer to the peewits, echoing louder and stronger the lamentation of the lapwings, a wail which hushes the birds. The men come over the brow of the hill, slowly, with the old squire walking tall and straight in front; six bowed men bearing the coffin

\(^{13}\) "Aristocracy," *Phoenix* II, p. 479
on their shoulders, treading heavily and cautiously,
under the great weight of the glistening white coffin. 14

George Saxton, who could not get the hand of Lettie, though he is all for finding his life's fulfilment through her, takes a walk with her along the wood. What they see on their way reflects their own state:

Once a horse had left a hoofprint in the soft meadow; now the larks had rounded, softened the cup, and had laid there three dark-brown eggs. Lettie sat down and leaned over the nest; he leaned above her. The wind running over the flower heads, peeped in at the little brown buds, and bounded off again gladly, The big clouds sent message to them down the shadows, and ran in raindrops to touch them. 15

Given the context that Lettie is getting married to another man within the next few days, this image assumes an immediacy and strikingness of appeal. This is the way nature serves as a backdrop to human actions and emotions. It seeks to inform and illustrate the given aspect of human life, and nowhere is it seen as a passive, lifeless setting. A similar kind of background utility, nature has in the Akam poetry. A Kuruntokai poem:

15. Ibid., 241.
My body is growing pale;
my bangles are slipping off
I will have neither very soon:
but my love is so great for that man
from the land where seeds
of wild rice are sown
and grow ripe with water
from waterfalls
in hills touched by clouds. 16

These are the words of the heroine to her maid who consoles her when she is languishing in separation during the pre-marital stage. Here it is the imagery of the land of the hero that conveys the central meaning of the poem. The waterfall helps the ripening of wild rice, just as their secret love consummates in the mountain region. But this rice must be gathered, brought into the house, prepared and served. In the same way, if their love is to come to fruition, they must marry. 17 Again, the image of the hill of the man touching the clouds, that finds repeated occurrence in the Akam poems, is suggestive of the stature of the man himself, at least in the eyes of his lady. Thus it can be seen that nature, as employed both in Lawrence and the Akam poetry, is an effective metaphorical vehicle through which the flow and recoil of human emotions get appropriate expression.

Nature's world, as Lawrence conceives of it in his 'Hardy Study', is a stupendous theatre, multidimensional in

17. M. Shanmugam Pillai and David E. Ludden, op. cit., p. 137.
quality, far surpassing human understanding. But it does not fail to accommodate man and allow him to draw his life's energy from it. His deeper centres of consciousness remain in touch with the cosmic forces and get influenced by them either positively or negatively. A society that involuntarily allows to be influenced thus is the standard of the social order which Lawrence prophesies for man in his works. According to him, it is the ability of the Etruscan "to draw life into himself, out of the wandering huge vitalities of the world" that has contributed to his "natural flowering of life". In *The Rainbow*, after the death of her husband Paul Lensky, Lydia lives a life of depressive solitude. It is almost a death-like existence. She is indifferent to life, indifferent to people. And it is nature that ultimately brings her back to life, restoring in her a passion for living.

Primroses glimmered around, many of them, and she stooped to the disturbing influence near her feet, she even picked one or two flowers, faintly remembering, in the new colour of life, what had been. All the day long as she sat at the upper window, the light came off the sea, constantly, constantly, without refusal, till it seemed to bear her away, and the noise of the sea created a drowsiness in her, a relaxation like sleep. Her automatic consciousness gave way a little, she stumbled sometimes, she had a poignant, momentary vision of her living child, that hurt her unspeakably. Her soul reused to attention.

18. *Etruscan Places*, pp. 146-47
19. R. w.
The Akam poetry abounds in such instances in which the heroine experiences emotional awakening in the teeming, vital presence of nature. She 'loses' her young virginity to her man among the fresh wet branches of the nālal trees. The hero is requested to come to the place of his beloved which is situated among heaps of wasted bamboo tasted by innocent elephants with deep mouths, grazing on tender, crowded bamboo that rub honeycomb on hillsides and help her to her emotional blossoming by his presence.

The sexual overtones of the imagery of the elephant tasting the bamboo are obvious. Kālar, a consummate nature poet, describes the sexual congress of the lovers that takes place in the living background of nature. Nature is conceived not only as a sympathetic background, but also as a fecund stimulant to the emotions and actions of the lovers.

They all day long enjoyed themselves in full Like mating elephants, in flow'ry groves Adjoining caves in which great gods themselves Who have abodes on high delight to live. The wide-rayed sun that drives its seven-horsed car Sank down and disappeared behind the hills. The deer took refuge under trees in crowds, And herds of cows that into commons crowd Called out their calves. The bent-billed nightingale whose voice is trumpet-like called to its mate From broad-leaved palmyras. The snake its gem Disgorge .......
The ambal opened out its petals bright; The priests performed religious rites at eve; ... The clouds around the hills grew dark. Each jungle beast called sharply to its mate.

20. Kurum. 31
21. Ibid., 179 (Trans. Shanmugam Pillai and David E. Ludden, p. 62)
What Kapilar in this context, and the Akam poets in general create for their lovers is not just a dramatic setting of the nature's world; the lovers not only have an intensely felt sense of participation with the rest of the universe; they partake of the life that flows through the entire universe. The atmosphere they find themselves in is not only that of the creative frenzy of the birds, beasts and flowers but also one in which even the gods would take to their cosmic quest of creation. That for the lovers, nature is not only a "natural" background but is a setting of great religious value is evidenced by the fact that they come into union in a place which is capable of being permeated by divine presence. And, in Lawrence, a woman awaiting to be fulfilled of her emotional self by her man is presented against a unidimensional setting of nature, in the place of the multi-dimensional backdrop the Akam poet has created for his lovers:

It was a grey, still afternoon, with the dog's mercury coming dark-green near the hazel roots and the trees making the silent effort to open their buds. In the unconscious one felt it, the heave of the great weight of powerful sap in all the trees, upwards, outwards, to the bud-tips. It was like a tide running out to flood, very full, filling every outreaching twig to surcharge. And over-head, all through the wood, the tree-buds faintly stirred, like bees slowly waking.
The Laurentian concept of the primal *morality* of nature against which is set the pathetic pattern of human living has found vivid exemplifications both in his creative works and in the Akam poetry. Constance Chatterley lives a miserable life, being cut off from the sources of emotional vitality. An "unspeakable depression" consumes the depths of her soul. A "stubborn stoicism" a sense of "nothingness of life" characterize her being. "All the great words, it seemed to Connie, were cancelled for her generation: love, joy, happiness, home, mother, father, husband, all these great dynamic words were half dead now, and dying from day to day." 24 This sense of unlivingness is exacerbated by the aliveness of nature: "how terrible it was that it should be spring, cold-hearted, cold-hearted." 25 And whatever is warm and fresh and alive affects her very being. The chicks of the pheasants amid which she is standing make her painfully aware of her sexual and procreative forlornness:

Then, one day, a lovely sunny day with great tufts of primroses under the hazels, and many violets dotting the paths, she came in the afternoon to the coops and there was one tiny, tiny perky chicken tinnily prancing round in front of a coop, and the mother hen clucking in terror. The slim little chick was greyish brown with dark markings, and it was the most alive little spark of a creature in seven kingdoms at that moment. Connie crouched to watch in a sort of ecstacy.

24. *LCL*, p. 64
25. Ibid., p. 117
Life, Life! Pure, sparky, fearless new life! New life! So tiny and so utterly without fear! Even when it scampered a little, scrambling into the coop again, and disappeared under the hen's feathers in answer to the mother hen's wild alarm-cries, it was not really frightened, it took it as a game, the game of living. For in a moment a tiny sharp head was poking through the gold-brown feathers of the hen, and eyeing the cosmos.

Connie was fascinated. And at the same time, never had she felt so acutely the agony of her own female forlornness. It was becoming unbearable. 26

This is one of the finest images in the whole of Lawrence where the image and the meaning fuse into one another. And here the image is evocative rather than illustrative. The pheasants and their chicks do not reflect the state of Constance; on the other hand, her plight is juxtaposed against the vibrance and vitality of these "lower beings," thereby evoking in her a sense of emotional sterility.

In the Akam poetry too, nature is seen as providing with this kind of evocative background. While in Lawrence the chicks awaken the procreative urge and thereby the sexual impluses of the lady, in the Akam poetry this is done by the miserable call of a pregnant nightingale (April bird) to its mate. 27 A cow grazes with its bull; in the evening it returns to its calf with its udders

26. Ibid., pp. 117-18
27. Kuran, 301
swollen with milk hanging down to the ground. This sight increases the misery of the heroine in separation, and she tells her maid, in a pathetically moving tone, that those women who have their men returned are the blessed ones and that they might have done a great penance. She accuses nature of being unsympathetic to her:

the dark clouds do not know that I am like this, so pitiful; so they thunder to make it rain, and flash lightning to mark my life.  

Whatever is alive and living - the blossoming jasmine, trees in the early spring, the joyous music of the cuckoos, the ecstatic dance of the peacocks serves only to intensify her emotional starvation just as the Wragby wood in spring does to Lady Chatterley. With the advent of showers, the autumnness of nature gets banished. The trees begin to bloom. The beetles extract honey from the flowers, singing joyously. The deer in the company of its mate is lying happily under the cool shades of the kurutu tree all this is unbearable to the lady when she is in her autumnness with her man yet to come back from his material mission and revitalize her.

28. Ibid., 344+  
29. Ibid., 216. (Trans. M. Shanmugam Pillai and David E. Ludden, p. 429) An Akwa poems also (322) portrays the lady in separation as undergoing intense suffering during nights when the clouds bring in heavy downpour with the accompaniment of cleaving lightning.  
30. Kurwa. 221  
31. Akwa. 97  
32. Ibid. 304
There is another dimension to the background utility of nature to man in both Lawrence and the Akam poetry. The characters, when they are faced with emotional crisis in life, tend to seek solace and refuge in nature, and nature provides a compensatory adjustment to the harmony of their being. Sexual starvation, inadequacy and failure that tend to affect the psychic balance of the individuals are, at one level, minimized in their intensity through their being projected on to the objects of nature; at another level, a wholesome contact with nature restores this balance without which they would be driven to insanity and death. That the Akam heroine is often presented as being threatened with death when her man leaves her on his male quest, and yet she manages to remain alive till he returns, is due to her finding in nature a kind of compensatory adjustment. The hill in the hero’s country, the trees and the flowers belonging to it are portrayed as keeping the breath of the heroine going. She tells her maid as to how she could endure the pangs of separation:

My dear!
Isn’t my forehead as it was?
I looked at his hill,
that showers sweep.
And where
the peacocks in flocks
make their calls
among groves thick;
the black monkeys, pale-faced
shiver with their children.33

She seems to establish ‘blood-relations’ with the objects inhabiting the hero’s territory. She sights a Kantal tuber in 33 KURUM 249
the waters of the stream that flows down from the hill of her man. She takes it in her hands, kisses it passionately and plants it in her place.\textsuperscript{34} Again, the north wind so much torments the lady in separation that her companion wonders how she could bear this and remain alive. The heroine replies that it is by looking at the mountain of her lord's country, (wherein the mighty God lives, wherein the monkey plays with jackfruit in its hands in the joyous company of its mate, and wherein the melodious stream flows), that she is holding her breath.\textsuperscript{35} But this cannot be a real cure to her love-sickness, and this cannot prevent her from being eaten away by pallor. Notwithstanding the consolation provided by nature, she remains as much affected as a mighty fort destroyed by an enemy king.\textsuperscript{36} She could be restored to emotional health only by a wholesome embrace of her 'generous' lord.\textsuperscript{37}

A similar kind of conception dominates the thematic structure of The Trespasser, a novel which represents Lawrence's first major break with the conventional nature-treatment in the English literature. Notwithstanding its artistic inadequacies, it has a significant place in Lawrence's oeuvre in that in this novel is sown the seeds

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 361.
\textsuperscript{35} Aka., 328
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 381.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 384; Kurum. 279
of Lawrence's unique nature-philosophy. The sexual passion of man is seen here as an organic element of the boundless energy of nature. Man not only derives his sexual potency from nature, but also goes to nature when his sexual integrity is sought to be thwarted by the human world. When Helena rejects the 'animal' in him, it is the womb of earth from which is Siegmund reborn. He tries to establish a blood-communion with nature in the Isle of Wight. "He lays down flat on the ground pressing his face into the wiry turf, trying to hide. Quite stunned, with a death taking place in his soul, he lay still, pressed against the earth." And as he "looked at the star, it seemed to him a lantern hung at the gate to light someone home. He imagined himself following the thread of the star-track." Every object of nature seems to him to breathe with a female being by which he could replace Helena:

He touched the smooth white slope of the stone gently with discovering fingers, in the same way as he touched the cheek of Helena, or of his own babies. He found great pleasure in this feeling of intimacy with things. A very soft wind, shy as a girl, put his arms round him, and seemed to lay its cheek against his chest. He placed his hands beneath his arms, where the wind was caressing him, and his eyes opened with wondering pleasure.

38. Roger Ebbatsen, op. cit., p. 61
40. Ibid., p. 105
'They find no fault with me,' he said. 'I suppose they are as fallible as I, and so don’t judge,' he added, as he waded thigh-deep into the water, thrusting it to hear the mock-angry remonstrance.

'Once more!' he said, and he took the sea in his arms. He swam very quietly. The water buoyed him up, holding him closely-clasped.  

But ultimately, this 'replacement' proves to be an illusion. "I was mistaken,' he said.  His being thrown "against the inward-curving white rock" points, symbolically, to the Laurentian conviction that a sense of oneness with nature is possible only through fulfilment in a woman.

There is again Rupert Birkin who receives an almost fatal blow from Hermione, the spiritually devouring woman. He walks out of her house, and seeks in the hills an asylum to his shattered spirits. A 'blood-contact' with nature restores his inner health and harmony:

He took off his clothes, and sat down naked among the primroses, moving his feet softly among the primroses, his legs, his knees, his arms right up to the arm-pits, lying down and letting them touch his belly, his breasts. It was such a fine, cool, subtle touch all over him, he seemed to saturate himself with their contact.  

He, like Siegmund, finds in nature more than what a woman could offer;

41. Ibid., p. 111.
42. Ibid., p. 116.
43. ML, p. 111.
To lie down and roll in the sticky, cool young hyacinths, to lie on one's belly and cover one's back with handfuls of fine wet grass soft as a breath, soft and more delicate and more beautiful than the touch of any woman; and then to sting one's thigh against the living dark bristles of the fire-boughs; and then to feel the light whip of the hazel on one's shoulders, stinging, and then to clasp the silvery birch-trunk against one's breast, its smoothness, its hardness, its vital knots and ridges—this was good, this was all very good, very satisfying, except this coolness and subtlety of vegetation travelling into one's blood. How fortunate he was, that there was this lovely, subtle, responsive vegetation, waiting for him, as he waited for it; how fulfilled he was, how happy!

As in the case of Siegmund, nature for Birkin cannot be a substitute for woman, and it is the woman of his heart, Ursula, who could bring his life's fulfilment. What Lawrence suggests through Siegmund and Birkin is that a sense of relatedness between man and his circumambient universe is an important factor in life. Man must achieve a living harmony between himself and the birds, beasts and flowers, the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars. Cut off from them, he is doomed to be snowed up like the "industrial magnate Gerald (Women in Love). But this connectedness with nature can never be a substitute for the love of woman, or the love of another man. The difference

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44. Ibid., pp. 119-20.
between Lawrence and the Akam poets in this respect is that in the former it is men who tend to get their sexual inadequacies and frustrations compensated through nature, whereas in the latter, it is women who do so. Again, in the case of Lawrence's characters, they go to nature when their sexual instinct is sought to be thwarted. As such, it is the frustration caused by the human world that drives them to nature. This is more obvious in the case of Mellors who flees to the Wragby wood when his sexual potency is sought to be disintegrated by his bullying wife Bertha Coutts. As far as the Akam world is concerned, the heroine's efforts to keep her vitality intact through a 'blood-intimacy' with nature are not due to any sense of failure or frustration. On the other hand, it is the separation of her man who would come to her fold again, that makes her seek the world of nature. As such, a sense of intimacy with nature helps her to maintain her emotional poise which is being threatened to be broken down in the absence of her man.

Yet another similarity between Lawrence and the Akam poets is that nature's world is seen as affecting the modes of human life, directing its growth and guiding it towards healthier and saner ways of living. Though Lawrence tends to see nature and man as two independent realities that "meet and cross one another unknowingly," and though the Akam poets have seen nature as a scenic

background to human life, there are references to nature defining and informing human living and relatedness in both Lawrence and the Akam poetry. Lawrence's assertion that "We (man and nature) cannot live near one another as we do without affecting one another" has to be modified a little when it comes to be tested against the reality of his creative works. More often, as is exemplified in both Lawrence and the Akam poetry, it is nature that affects man rather than man's affecting nature. It is only natural that they—the prophets of human destiny—should bring in nature in their art in order to invest human life with a better sense of purposiveness and direction. The difference between them in this regard, as in their treatment of human love, is that in the Akam poetry it is unpremeditated, almost unconscious, whereas in Lawrence it is very much a calculated effort.

When the Akam hero, in his quest for worldly fame and prosperity, tends to subordinate his emotional life, it is from nature that he gets his rebuke and lesson as well. He might become ashamed of and guilt-ridden over his separation from his lady when he sees on his way birds and beasts in the loving union of one another. He might be witnessing in the place of his sojourn a dove tenderly caressing its female, the male deer in the loving conjunction of its female.

46. Ibid.
47. Ball. 11
48. Ibid., 13
the lizard calling its mate, a male and a female dove in inseparable union even in distressing conditions and so on. Again the sight of a dove in miserable solitude calling its mate might make him aware of the pathetic state of his lady languishing at home. There are more obvious messages from nature too. A cuckoo sitting on a tree in the company of its mate seems like telling the lovers not to part with one another during the spring season. The screeching of the peacocks appears as if they were advising the men, who have been away, to hurry back to their wives without prolonging their stay. The Akam poets bring in not only the animal and the plant life to bear upon human living; their vision, like Lawrence's encompasses the whole of the living universe. The moon just rising over the hill reminds the hero of the face of his lady, the suggestion here being that he should hasten his homeward journey. The advent of the rainy season is a warning to the hero that he should no longer prolong his stay and that he should get back into the sweet embrace of his wife.

All this does not mean that nature's is an unbalanced world, standing for the emotional fulfilment alone. The Akam poets do not make nature interact with

49. Kurun. 16
50. Ibid.: 174
51. Ibid., 79, 154.
52. Nag. 224
53. Part. 14
54. Nag. 62
55. Kurun. 282
human life only with this objective. They are a people who have seen life as constituted by two distinct modes, Akam and Puram. Their nature-portrayal is also directed toward guiding and authenticating the balanced development of these two modes. Nature brings home to the hero not only the necessity of keeping his emotional life flowing, but also of remaining faithful to his maleness, and of integrating these two. Thus he comes across not only birds and beasts in loving conjunction, but also those that nourish their young ones with tender care, provide for their sustenance and protect them from external dangers. The sight of a male elephant peeling off the tender branches of a yam tree in order to feed its hungry mate might impress on the hero the need for providing for the material health of the family. The elephant not only caresses its mate affectionately but also offers protection to it from the possible attack of the tiger, which is essentially a male function. There is a male kite that goes in search of food in order to feed its mate which is suffering from hunger after laying eggs. There are the horrid pictures of the vultures picking the eyes of the dead, bringing them home and feeding their young ones with them. These pictures, apart from their suggestions of the cruelty and aridness of the desert tract, might be taken as reminding

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56. Ibid., 37
57. Ibid., 215
58. Akam, 3
59. Ibid., 31, 193, 215
the hero that he has to fulfil his male obligations of protecting the state from external dangers and looking after the material needs of his family, besides making his inner life a wholesome one.

While the Akam mode of sustaining the integrity of man by bringing in nature is highly suggestive, in Lawrence it is often explicit and direct. In *The White Peacock*, Lettie's decision to marry Leslie is mainly due to the lack of male initiative on the part of George, her lover. This she wants to bring home to him when they meet a few days before her marriage. She does it by pointing to an occurrence in nature:

>'The clouds are going on again', said Lettie.

>'Look at the cloud face-see-gazing right up into the sky. The lips are opening—he is telling us something—now the form is slipping away—it's gone—come, we must go too.'

Again, George tries to find in the movement of the clouds a direction, the lack of which has led to his present emotional crisis. He writes to Cyril:

>Sometimes I wonder where I am going. Yesterday I watched broken white masses of cloud sailing across the sky in a fresh strong wind. They all seemed to be going somewhere. I wondered where the wind was blowing them. I don't seem to have hold on anything, do I? Can you tell me what I want at the bottom of my heart?

60. *WP*, p. 248
This kind of man-nature relationship finds still more obvious expression in his poems. Lawrence is convinced that it is man's obsession with the "bitch-goddess of success" and the attendant "money compulsions" and "money madness" that lie at the root of the present-day evils. He wants men to be "free from the terror of earning a living", and to establish their life on a different principle which they could emulate from nature: "And the individual must have his house, food and fire all free like a bird." 62 He conveys this to his "money-mad fellow men" through a simple analogy from the life of nature. A trivial insect like a mosquito has message of immediate relevance to the human beings:

The mosquito knows full well, small as he is he's a beast of prey.  
But after all he only takes his bellyful, he doesn't put my blood in the bank. 63

His "craving for Spring" is one of the finest examples of Lawrence's "superlative awareness of the very soul of nature" and his power of portraying things in their 'carbonness'.

Let it be spring!  
Come, bubbling, surging tide of sap!  
Come, rush of creation!  
Come, life!  

I want the fine, kindling wine-sap of spring,  
gold, and of inconceivably fine, quintessential brightness,  
rare almost as beams, yet overwhelmingly potent,  
strong like the greatest force of world-balancing. 64

62. CP, pp. 87-88  
63. Ibid., p. 446  
64. Ibid., pp. 270-71
But Lawrence, like the Akam poets, does not sing of nature for nature's sake. He consciously strives to discover some meaning or other in nature that is related to human life. Thus, this poem is essentially a craving for spring in human life.

Ah come, come quickly, spring!
Come and lift us towards our culmination, we myriads;
we who have never flowered, like patient cactuses.
Come and lift us to our end, to blossom, bring us
to our summer,
we who are winter-weary in the winter of the world.

Come making the chaffinch nests hollow and cosy,
come and soften the willow buds till they are puffed
and furred,
them blow them over with gold.
Come and cajole the gawky colt's-foot flowers.

Come quickly, and vindicate us
against too much death.
Come quickly, and stir the rotten globe of the
world from within,
burst it with germination, with world anew.

He wants the spring to "surge through this mass of
mortification," to "sweep these exquisite, ghastly first flowers," and to "make havoc on them" so that there is a new world:

It will be spring in the world of the living;
wonderment organising itself, heaidualing itself with the violets,
stirring of new seasons.

Another striking characteristic common to both Lawrence and the Akam poets is the complete fusion of the symbol with what it symbolizes. As far as Lawrence is

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65. Ibid., pp. 272-73
66. Ibid., p. 271
67. Ibid., p. 274
concerned, it is "an ingrained faculty, part of his gift", and this is more so in the case of the Akim poets. They hardly distinguish the human reality from the metaphor by which the former is informed and illustrated. In both, there is a spontaneous identification between image and meaning, between the phenomena of nature and what they stand for in human life. A typifying instance of this extraordinary power in Lawrence can be seen in the dance-like sheave-gathering by Anna and Will on a moon-lit night during their courtship:

"You take this row," she said to the youth, and passing on, she stopped in the next row of lying sheaves, grasping her hands in the tresses of the oats, lifting the heavy corn in either hand, carrying it, as it hung heavily against her, to the cleared space, where she set the two sheaves sharply down, bringing them together. He was coming, walking shadowily with the gossamer dusk, carrying his two sheaves. She waited near by. He set his sheaves with a keen faint clash, next to her sheaves. They rode unsteadily. He tangled the tresses of corn. It hissed like a fountain. He looked up and laughed.

Then she turned away towards the moon, which seemed glowingly to uncover her bosom every time she faced it. He went through the vague emptiness of the field opposite, dutifully.

They stooped, grasped the wet, soft hair of the corn, lifted the heavy bundles, and returned. She was always first. She set down her sheaves, making a pent house with those others. He was coming shadowy across the stubble, carrying his bundles. She turned away,

hearing only the sharp hiss of his mingling corn. She walked between the moon and his shadowy figure.

She took her new two sheaves and walked towards him, as he rose from stooping over the earth. He was coming out of the near distance. She set down her sheaves to make a new stock. They were unsure. Her hands fluttered. Yet she broke away, and turned to the moon, which laid bare her bosom, so she felt as if her bosom were heaving and panting with moon light. And he had to put up her two sheaves, which had fallen down. He worked in silence. The rhythm of the work carried him away again, as she was coming near.

They worked together, coming and going, in a rhythm, which carried their feet and their bodies in tune. She stooped, she lifted the burden of sheaves, she turned her face to the dimness where he was, and went with her burden over the stubble. She hesitated, set down her sheaves, there was a swish and hiss of mingling oats, he was drawing near, and she must turn again. And there was the flaring moon laying bare her bosom again, making her drift and ebb like a wave...

And the work went on. The moon grew brighter, clearer, the corn glistened. He bent over the prostrate bundles, there was a hiss as the sheaves felt the ground, a trailing of heavy bodies against him, a dazzle of moonlight on his eyes. And she was coming near.69

Here the actual landscape melts with the sensual drama enacted by the lovers. The rhythms of nature work in perfect harmony with the rhythms of characters. The lovers become part of the dynamic relationship that governs the universe as a whole.

There is again the image of the hen pecking at a girl's hand which occurs in both *Sons and Lovers* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. In both the cases, the meaning conveyed through the image is more or less the same: the phallic power that torments the deeper consciousness of the girl who stands at the threshold of sexual awakening.

**In Sons and Lovers:**

As he went round the back, he saw Miriam kneeling in front of the hen-coop, some maize in her hand, biting her lip, and crouching in an intense attitude. The hen was eyeing her wickedly. Very gingerly she put forward her hand. The hen bobbed for her. She drew back quickly with a cry, half of fear, half of chagrin.

'It won't hurt you', said Paul. She flushed crimson and started up.

'I only wanted to try', she said in a low voice. 'See, it doesn't hurt,' he said, and, putting only two corns in his palm, he let the hen peck, peck, peck at his bare hand. 'It only makes you laugh,' he said.

She put her hand forward, and dragged it away, tried again, and started back with a cry. He frowned.

'Why, I'd let her take corn from my face, said Paul, 'only she bumps a bit. She's ever so neat. If she wants how much ground she'd peck up every day?'

He waited grimly, and watched. At last Miriam let the bird peck from her hand. She gave a little cry—fear, and pain because of fear—rather pathetic. But she had done it, and she did it again.

'There, you see', said the boy. 'It doesn't hurt, does it?'

**In Lady Chatterley's Lover:**

'I'd love to touch them,' she said, putting her fingers gingerly through the bars of the coop. But the mother-hen pecked at her hand fiercely, and Connie drew back startled and frightened.

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70. *SL*, p. 119
'How she pecks at me! She hates me!' she said in a wondering voice. 'But I wouldn't hurt them!' ...

The keeper, squatting beside her, was also watching with an amused face the bold little bird in her hands. Suddenly he saw a tear fallen to her wrist.

And he stood up, and stood away, moving to the other coop. For suddenly he was aware of the old flame shooting and leaping up in his loins, that he had hoped was quiescent for ever. He fought against it, turning his back to her. But it leapt, and leapt downwards, circling in his knees.

He turned again to look at her. She was kneeling and holding her two hands slowly forward, blindly, so that the chicken should run in to the mother-hen again. And there was something so mute and forlorn in her, compassion flamed in his bowels for her.

Without knowing, he came quickly towards her and crouched beside her again, taking the chick from her hands, because she was afraid of the hen, and putting it back in the coop. 71

Apart from its unobtrusiveness, what strikes one is the effortless translation of the commonplace and the trivial in nature into things of compelling significance, and relate them with the larger meanings of human life. Another striking example of this power is found in Paul-Clara consummation conveyed through the symbolism of the flooding Trent:

71. LCL, p. 119
The Trent was full. It swept silent and insidious under the bridge, travelling in a soft body. There had been a great deal of rain. On the river levels were flat gleams of flood water. The sky was grey, with glisten of silver here and there... (It) slid by in a body, utterly silent and swift, intertwining among itself like some subtle, complex creature... He led her across to the grass, under the trees at the edge of the path. The cliff of red earth sloped swiftly down, through the trees and bushes, to the river that glimmered and was dark between the foliage. The far-below water-meadows were very green. He and she stood leaning against one another, silent, afraid, their bodies touching all along.

The "swirls" and "intertwinings" the "insidious" sweep that characterize the floods are suggestive of the uncontrolled, uninhibited and unresolved passion between Paul and Clara. Though this passion is an aspect of human creativity, it must merge into the larger dimensions of male-female relationship. Otherwise, it will prove to be uncreative, which is exactly what happens in their case.

The Akam œuvre has in it a large number of parallel images. The uncontrolled floods of the forest stream, the wild beasts and the maddening darkness by braving which the hero comes to meet his love symbolize the nature of the premarital love between them. He is spoken of as a ferocious boar who is unmindful of the dangers on the way—the swift, frightening currents of the jungle river that flows dragging

72. [Ref.], pp. 373-76
73. Nar. 414.
even the ruttish elephant, the fearsome darkness during which the thunders so horribly express their fury as to appear like uprooting the hills, and so on. These images that occur in the speeches of the heroine and her maid are meant to bring home to the hero that his passion for the lady (during the pre-marital stage) is so elemental and uncontained that it will undo the emotional integrity of the lady, if he does not enter into marital bond with her. That he is unmindful of these dangers suggests that he is after uninhibited play of his sexual instincts. Thus, the nature-symbolism employed in the Akam poetry is such that it can hardly be seen independent of the particular human situation which it symbolizes.

In fact the predominant foregrounding devices employed in the Akam poetry relate to the nexus between the realms of nature and man. Most of the conceptual as well as structural deviances that have contributed to the originality and greatness of the Akam poetry are those wherein the metaphors and symbols taken from the life of nature lend themselves to define and illustrate human life and relatedness. That the very terms Kuriņci, Mullai and so on have become synonymous with the respective emotional behaviour of the lovers has already been referred to. The Vēnkai flowers of the montane region means nothing if it is separated from its association with marriage. The confidante of the

74. Aka. 18
75. Nar. 104.
lady urges the hero to marry his lady, now that the vēnkai has blossomed. Again, she uses the flowering season to console her lady saying that her lover will return and marry her since the vēnkai has flowered. The lover's presenting his lady with vēnkai flowers means his assurance to her that he will enter into wedlock with her. Not only auspicious occasions, but moments of sadness and grief are also associated with flowers. The erukkalai flowers symbolize disappointment in love. That one abstains from wearing flowers is symbolic of one's suffering, loss, disappointment and so on. In all these cases, there is spontaneous identification of human reality with the objects of nature.

This fusion is felt more intensely at the conceptual level. The waterfall in the cleft of a mountain has unique significance in the life of the lovers. It symbolizes the eternal nature of the relationship between them. "The waterfall indicates that rain fell in torrents the night before. Just like this, their love in this birth indicates love from many births before." The confidants of the lady, when she wants to bring home to the hero that a formal marriage alone will ensure an uninterrupted flow of their

76. Ibid., 206; Aka. 2; Kali. 38
77. Nav. 220; Kurun. 17
78. Kurun. 19
79. Ibid., 42 Interpretation: M. Shanmugam Pillai and David B. Ludden, op. cit, p. 116
life of togetherness, tells him that their house is surrounded
by the blooming vēṅkai trees. In fact, the technique of
ullurai uvamam (implied simile) is a subtle artistic means
by which to establish an organic link between man and his
"circumambient universe". When the heroine wants to rebuke
the hero for his sexual waywardness, she addresses him as one
belonging to a place where the lotus blossoms and feeds the
beetles in the garden-bed meant for cultivating the
sugarcane. What she means is that the prostitute has
trespassed into the domain of her home and seeks to satisfy
her husband's sexual urge. This mode of suggestiveness,
part from enhancing the artistic strength of the poem, is
a way of seeing the various facets of human life in
intricate harmony with the life of nature. There is another
striking example of this unique imaginative faculty of the
Akam poets:

It is not that I
was unfit for him;
I was perfect.
But now it seems I cannot
mold myself
to agree with him:
that man from the land
where vēṅkai trees have broken trunks
because roaring elephants knocked them down;
but the trees still bloom
so Kuravar girls can pick the flowers
standing on the grove
to adorn their hair.

80. Kurum. 395
81. Ain. 45
82. Kurum. 208 (trans. M. Shanmugam Pillai and David
Ludden, p. 170)
In this poem, the heroine tells her maid that her lover is more interested in prolonging the kalawu course and enjoying her beauty than in getting united with her through marriage. It is conveyed not through any explicit statement, but through the image of the elephant knocking down the yenkai tree.

The superior claim of the Akam poetry to be included in the treasure-house of the best world classics rests among other things, on the extraordinary power of the Akam poets in portraying the realities of human life in undifferentiated relationship with the life of the universe around. And it is this kind of image-making faculty that brings the Akam poets and Lawrence still closer to one another.

**HYLOZISTIC ATTITUDE TO NATURE**

At the third level, a hylozoistic attitude characterizes the treatment of nature in Lawrence and the Akam poetry. Hylozoism is a mode of thought—widely prevalent in the pre-Socratic societies—which conceives an impassioned unity of all things in the universe. According to this conception, "all matter is alive, or that life and matter are indivisible. . . . It would encompass a striking and possibly ancient mode of thought as well as a dazzling sense of interpenetration between man and nature conspicuous in the works of certain

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83. An elephant destroying the plants is a sexual symbol, standing for sexual enjoyment. Also refer to Akal. 8, 12, 148; Kurun: 37, 112, 180. (George L. Hart III, op. cit., p. 263).
literary artists and philosophers. And hylozoism is different from animism in the sense that while the latter "endows inanimate objects with animation, or even with a soul", the former envisions an interrelatedness or even interchangeability between the animate and the inanimate not conveyed in the meaning of animism. Again, "whereas animism is in anthropological literature associated with primitive societies, hylozoism could be regarded as a more suitable term for a portion of the religious and philosophical vision of such advanced civilizations as ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the pre-Socratic Greece".

D.H. Lawrence's vision of life, which has unjustifiably been accused of primitivistic, embodies the essential characteristics of hylozoism. Having been convinced that the present phase of civilization has been essentially tragic, Lawrence wants man to return to this hylozoistic mode of life, and to achieve a sense of oneness with the universe:

We must plant ourselves again in the universe.

It means a return to ancient forms. But we shall have to create these forms again, and it is more difficult than the preaching of an evangel. The Gospel came to tell us we were all saved. We look at the world to day and realize that humanity, alas, instead of being saved from sin, whatever that may be, is

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85. Ibid., p. 179
86. Ibid., p. 179
87. Ibid., p. 5
almost completely lost, lost to life, and near to nullity and extermination. We have to go back, a long way, before the idealist conceptions began, before Plato, before the tragic idea of life arose, to get on to our feet again. 86

This relationship is "momentaneous," marked by a "fourth-dimensional quality of eternity and perfection." Lawrence elucidates this in the closing lines of his *Apocalypse:*

We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos. I am part of the sun as my eye is part of me. That I am part of the earth my feet know perfectly, and my blood is part of the sea. My soul knows that I am part of the human race, my soul is an organic part of the great human soul, as my spirit is part of my nation. In my own very self, I am part of my family. There is nothing of me that is alone and absolute except my mind, and we shall find that the mind has no existence by itself, it is only the glitter of the sun on the surface of the waters.

So that my individualism is really an illusion. I am part of the great whole, and I can never escape. But I can deny my connections, break them, and become a fragment. Then I am wretched.

What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family. 89

88. *Apocalypse,* p. 126
What he proposes here is nothing less than a reunification of man with the whole of the universe that surrounds him.

Lawrence passionately holds that everything in the universe has a gem-like singleness, and there can be no fusion or merger of one thing with another. They are, on the other hand, held in a sort of delicate, fluctuating balance.

F.R. Leavis, who displays a felt understanding of Lawrence's art in his 'recognition-winning' work, D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, remarks that the Laurentian genius in its "intensity, constancy, and fulness of intuition" lies in his conception of the "oneness of life; the separateness and irreducible otherness of lives". As such, everything in the universe has an independent being, and the harmony of the universe lies in their interrelatedness. This vision of the oneness of the universe and the fecundating intercourse of all things in it is portrayed with an extraordinary impressiveness in the opening pages of The Rainbow where the Brangwens where the Brangwens live in blood-intimacy with nature and their modes of being are dictated by and correspond with the rhythms of nature:

They felt the rush of the sap in spring, they knew the wave which cannot halt, but every year throws forward the seed to begetting, and, failing back, leaves the young-born on the earth. They knew the intercourse between heaven and earth, sunshine drawn into the breast and bowels, the rain sucked up in the day-time.

nakedness that comes under the wind in autumn, showing birds' nests no longer worth-hiding. Their life and inter-relations were such; feeling the pulse and body of the soil, that opened to their furrow for the grain, and became smooth and supple after their ploughing, and clung to their feet with a weight that pulled like desire, lying hard and unresponsive when the crops were to be shorn away. The young corn waved and was silken, and the lustre slid along the limbs of the men who saw it. They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men. They mounted their horses, and held life between the grip of their knees, they harnessed their horses at the wagon, and, with hand on the bridle-rings, drew the heaving of the horses after their will... the limbs and the body of the men were impregnated with the day, cattle and earth and vegetation and the sky, the men sat by the fire and their brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation from the living day... So much warmth and generating and pain and death did they know in their blood, earth and sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood, staring into the sun, dazed with looking towards the source of generation, unable to turn round. 91

His poems realize this sense of "consubstantiability" of man and nature, and the intertwinedness of man's life with that of the encircling universe in more intensely felt terms:

91. 80, pp. 7-9
There is rain in me
running down, running down, trickling
away from memory

There is ocean in me
swaying, swaying C, so deep
so fathomlessly black.²²

This sense of belonging is much more important than one's individuality:

The stars that open and shut
fall on my shallow breast
Like stars on a pool.

The soft wind, blowing cool,
Laps little crest after crest
Of ripples across my breast.

And dark grass under my feet
Seems to dabble in me
Like grass in a brook.

Oh, and it is sweet
To be all these things, not to be
Any more myself.²³

The same sense of cosmic unity underlies his evocative study
of the Etruscan consciousness. He finds the Etruscan having
conceived the whole of the cosmos as a living being with
every constituent of it including man interacting with one
another:

To the Etruscans all was alive; the whole universe
lived; and the business of man was himself to live amid
it all. He had to draw life into himself out of the
wandering huge vitalities of the world. The cosmos was
alive like a vast creature. The whole thing breathed and
stirred... The whole thing was alive, and had a great soul, or
anima; and in spite of one great soul, there were myriad
roving, lesser souls: every man, every creature and tree

²² CP, p. 472
²³ Ibid., p. 194
and lake and mountain and stream, was animate, had its own peculiar consciousness.94

It is not surprising that Lawrence has had such a conception of life. For, from his very early days, he had developed a profound attachment with nature, and it was nature with which he could be more at home. J.D. Chambers, the youngest member of the Chambers family recollects Lawrence's "direct and free" contact with nature in the Haggs Farm and his "perpetual wonder and genuine excitement of whatever is alive in nature." 95 His pictures of nature give one the impression that his senses, his intuitive faculties are the co-sharers of the life of nature that is described. Writes Edwin Muir:

They (his senses) reach far downwards and upwards, and they drink joy from everything they touch. The sun, and moon, the sea, trees and flowers, animals, sex, instinctive love and hatred—of all these he has written in a new way, and as if he were not their observer but a mystical sharer in their being. They absorb him into themselves while he writes, but having absorbed him they give him all their riches, suffusing his senses...96

This kind of 'mystic sharing' of the life of the universe is revealed in his first novel itself, which even such an ardent

94. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places, pp. 146-47
admirer as F.R. Leavis finds "painfully callow". He perceives in the objects of nature an unceasing flow of life and a dignity and grandeur in their every movement of living. He finds the water "sleepy", the butterflies "trifle" from flower to flower, oaks "bow over and save us a grateful shade", the rats "wipe" their faces and "stroke" their whiskers, the oat sheaves "whisper" to each other, the "breasts" of hills "heave", the leaves "chatter", the trees "shudder and moan" and so on. Everywhere in nature there is life, nothing but life. Every object of nature is throbbing with the zephyr of the living moment. By investing the non-humans in the universe with human passions and feelings, Lawrence makes his art one in which there is an "undifferentiated oneness" of the living universe. And this life of nature is always kept in juxtaposition with the life of man. The clouds travel "like pilgrims" and Cyril, the narrator of the novel appeals to them to help unfetter himself of his "rooted lowliness". The "thrill and quickening" which is the characteristic of nature in early spring is compared to what "a woman must feel when she has conceived".

Lawrence's hylozoistic vision of life gets its more vivid realization when he presents man as remaining

98. WP, pp. 18, 182, 252
99. Ibid., p. 151
within the image of nature and as coming to terms with the autonomous rhythm of the natural world. A striking example of this is Mrs. Morel's delirious wandering in the moon-lit garden, having been shut out of the house by her husband.

The moon was high and magnificent in the August night. Mrs. Morel, seared with passion shivered to find herself out there in a great white light, that fell cold on her, and gave a shock to her inflamed soul. She stood for a few moments helplessly staring at the glistening great rhubarb leaves near the door. Then she got the air into her breast. She walked down the garden path, trembling in every limb, while the child boiled within her.... She must have been half an hour in this delirious condition. Then the presence of the night came again to her. She glanced round in fear....

She became aware of something about her. With an effort she roused herself to see what it was that penetrated her consciousness. The tall white lilies were reeling in the moonlight, and the air was charged with their perfume, as with a presence. Mrs. Morel gasped slightly in fear. She touched the big, pallid flowers on their petals, then shivered...

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Given the context that Mrs Morel's emotional life has been witnessing an increasing strain with her husband, this scene is symbolic of the phallic power of nature with which she is made to come to terms, which is indeed a painful process. The "immense gulf of white light" has been a great stress for her, leaving her to "panting and half-weeping".

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101. SL, pp. 34-35
The beautiful petals of the lily make her shiver. She feels "forlorn" and gets a "slight feeling of sickness" over the white-rosebush, over whatever is tender and beautiful in nature. There is again the emotional awakening of Paul and Miriam in the same novel, which is shown as a matter of their awakening to nature. One evening they take a walk along the fields.

He followed her along the nibbled pasture in the dust. There was a coolness in the wood, a scent of leaves, of honey-suckle, and a twilight. They two walked in silence. Night came wonderfully there, among the throng of dark trunks. He looked round expectant.

She wanted to show him a certain wild-rose bush she had discovered. She knew it was wonderful. And yet, till he had seen it, she felt it had not come into her soul...

By the time they came to the pine-trees Miriam was getting very eager and very intense. Her bush might be gone...she wanted it so much. Almost passionately she wanted to be with him when he stood before the flowers...

It was very still. The tree was tall and straggling. It had thrown its briers over a hawthorn-bush, and its long streamers trailed thick right down to the grass, splashing the darkness everywhere with great split stars, pure white. In bosses of ivory and in large splashed stars the roses gleamed on the darkness of foliage and stems and grass. Paul and Miriam stood close together silent, and watched. Point after point the steady roses shone out of them, seeming to kindle something in their souls.102

102. Ibid., pp. 197-98
A similar kind of hylozoistic conception of life seems to pervade the Akam poetry. As is represented in it, the ancient Tamil society embraced a hylozoistic vision. Western scholars like Beschi, Ellis, Bower, Caldwell and Pope have testified to the hoary culture of the cankam Tamils and their glorious cultural and literary tradition comparable to that of the ancient Greek, Latin and Chinese. Their poetry, especially the Akam division embodies a kind of life in which the realm of man and realm of nature were almost undifferentiated, notwithstanding their conception of nature as a backdrop of human life. The Akam poets see man as part of society, and society as embedded in nature, all being governed by a cosmic order. What Donald Gutierrez says of the civilized ancient mode of living with reference to Lawrence's advocacy of it, by and large, applies to the life represented in the Akam poetry: "For them nature and man did not stand in opposition, and did not, therefore, have to be apprehended by different modes of cognition... natural phenomena were regularly conceived in terms of human experience and...human experience was conceived in terms of cosmic events".

The meaning of love the Akam poets define not in terms of human conventions but in-terms of natural phenomena. It resembles the mingling of the red soil and the rain water. The Akam lovers' circle of life includes not only the members of the human world but also trees, flowers, water, insects,

104. Donald Gutierrez, op. cit., p. 189
fishes, birds, creatures, sun, moon, rainbow, and mountain. True to their hylolozistic conception, they view the phenomenal world as a "Thou", while for the scientific mind it is primarily "It". 105 Such a conception is a part of the poetic conventions of the age. Tolkâppiyar, while formulating the thematic tenets of poetry, writes that the heart and mind of the human characters, and the objects of the non-human world such as the sun, the moon, the sea, groves, animals, trees, birds, and also the time of the day and the seasons of the year can be treated in poetry as if they speak and hear of their own accord. What he implies is that poets should portray man and the "circumambient universe" as interacting with one another, and that the latter should be seen by the poets as a "Thou". 106 The poets of the age seem to have faithfully adhered to this code. Thus, the nocci tree, 107 the millet crop, 108 the jasmine creeper, 109 the parrot, 110 the owl, 111 the cock, 112 the crow, 113 the bee, 114 the crab, 115 and also the larger beings of the

105. Ibid., p. 180
106. Tol. Perul. 501
107. Puranânuṟu, 272
108. Nar. 251
109. Puranânuṟu, 242
110. Nar. 376
111. Ibid., 83
112. Kurun. 107
113. Ain. 391
114. Nar. 277
115. Aka. 178
the nature's world such as the mountain, the river, the sea, the rain, the sun and the moon are addressed by the human characters as if these objects were as much living and responsive to their feeling as the human beings. That the heroine considers a pumaisi tree her sister and becomes shy of love-play under it, because it has been grown by her mother is a representative example of the kind of connection the Akaam characters have established with the universe around. The venkai tree has been a living companion for the lady during her desolate moments. She finds in the restless waves of the sea a co-sharer of the agony of separation. She inquires of the sea if "she" (the sea) also has been loved and deserted. She requests the crab to act as her messenger and to convey her distress to the hero. With the heroine having eloped with her lover, the foster mother requests the crow to foretell their return. The heroine accuses the cock, that makes its regular morning call, of disturbing her sleep in

116. Puranānūru, 113
117. Aka. 398
118. Kurun. 163
119. Nar. 139; Kurun. 158
120. Puranānūru, 11
121. Kurun. 47
122. Nar. 172
123. Kurun. 266
124. Kall. 129 "empēl kātal ceitū akaŋrārai uṭaiāiyō"
125. Aka. 170
126. Ali. 391
the embrace of her man. When languishing in separation, she blames the north wind as being unsympathetic to her, and requests it not to add to the misery of her soul. She tells it deridingly that the return of her lover will undo its power. In another context, she requests it to blow through the country where her lover has gone to seek wealth, and thereby make him aware of her misery. The hero, on the other hand, having felt its adverse effects on them in separation, requests it not to blow through his lady's country. In all such cases, the desire of man to establish a blood-contact with nature is evident. Again, these instances reveal one of the functions of hylolozism to intensify and symbolize the plights and inadequacies of man "by engaging nature in a special way."

Another complementary function of hylolozism is the use of images belonging to nature to symbolize the deeper feelings and states of the characters. While this function has been fulfilled in Lawrence only at the conceptual level, in the Akam poetry, it extends to the non-conceptual level also.

127. Kurun. 107
128. Mar. 193
129. Aka. 125
130. Ibid., 163
131. Kurun, 235
132. Donald Gutierrez, op. cit., p. 183
133. Ibid.
Thus, the overwhelming affection of the hero to his lady while he is returning home is brought out by the sight of a stag which makes its pregnant mate graze the aruku grass and sleep quietly on the bank of a brook.\textsuperscript{134} The blossoming of the mullai buds in early winter seems to convey to the lady the message of her lord's promised return.\textsuperscript{135} The pinning heroine's complexion is brought out through the image of the pir blooms which wear a pale-like colour.\textsuperscript{136} At another level, nature serves as an effective symbolic mode by which to convey the intended meaning. The confidante of the lady specifies a place, where the honeycomb hangs, the trees are full of ripe fruits, and where the Kāntal has blossomed in abundance,\textsuperscript{137} for the meeting of the lovers. Through the description of this place of meetings, she conveys to the hero two messages: her lady in the full bloom of her youth will give him a wholesome enjoyment; and at the same time, since this place will be frequented by people being attracted by honey, ripe corns and the flowers, it is not safe for their meeting, and the wise course left to him is to marry the lady. Again, her fixing a place, where the anril bird, sitting alone on the palmyra tree, makes pathetic cries,\textsuperscript{138} is meant to impress on the hero the pathetic condition of the lady in his

\begin{itemize}
\item[134.] Aka. 34
\item[135.] Kurun 358
\item[136.] Ibid., 98
\item[137.] Aka. 18
\item[138.] Ibid., 160
\end{itemize}
absence and thereby the need for early marriage. She wants to know whether the hero is really serious about marrying her lady. When the hero is in an audible distance, she asks the cloud whether it will really bring showers and protect the crop or it will just roar with thunder and disappear. The rapturous mood of the lover while returning home after the fulfilment of his mission is conveyed through the pictures of gold like konrai blooms, the sapphire like kayā blooms and the blooming törri flowers in the pastoral region. Besides, there are a large number of images of nature to describe the human physiognomy which are noted for their appropriateness and sensuous appeal.

However, the more striking manifestations of hylozoism in the Akam poetry can be sought in the attempts of the poets to invest the nature's world with human traits and thereby apprehend it by the same mode of cognition with which they have conceived the human world. Thus the ripples of the backwaters 'sing' a lullaby to the crow. A crane hearing the cries of pain of the beetle rushes to the spot and releases it from the crab. A cennây in the company of its mate refrains from attacking a female deer with its young one by its side. And it keeps itself away when a young pig comes on its way. When its mate

139. Ibid., 360
140. Ibid., 360
141. Ibid., 163
142. Mar., 35
143. Ibid., 394
Ibid., 397
is killed by the hunters, a female deer denies itself food and suffers in solitude. There is the moving picture of a grieving female elephant and its young one with the male elephant killed by a tiger. When its male is caught in the net spread by the boys of the fishermen, the female crane abandons its food and makes pitiful cries with its young ones from the palmyra tree. There is another picture in a Puranānūru poem in which a stag is devoured by a tiger, and its mate does not go to grazing, but like widows, prefers eating vēlai flowers. Such portrayals of affection and tenderness in the non-human world are as much striking as the representation of the human world. We have already referred to the loving conjunction of beasts and birds which the purposive hero comes across on his way. There is again the touching scene of an affectionate and wise female elephant. Its male slips down and falls into a pit. It uproots a tree, breaks its branches, throws them into the pit so that they may serve as steps for its male to come up. The human characters view the beings of nature's kingdom as their fellow beings. The heroine pining in separation tells the thundering rainy

145. Aka. 371
146. Nar. 47
147. Aka. 290
148. Puranānūru, 23
149. Aka. 8
cloud that its behaviour is unbecoming of noble persons. 150

The cloud appears to be laughing at her state through lightning and ridiculing her through its roaring thunder. 151

A male dove fans its soft wings over its female and thereby tries to relieve its sufferings in the scorching heat of the sun. 152 A stag offers its own shade to its mate in the arid tract. 153

Thus we find that the sense of hylozoism is more intensely felt in the Akam poetry than it is in the writings of Lawrence. Also the Akam poets have realized in their poetry the meaning of this concept in its larger dimensions. There might be two reasons for this relatively greater variety and intensity. First, in the case of the Akam poetry, it is a collective effort with a number of matured poets contributing to the oeuvre; on the other hand, Lawrence has single-handedly, and that too in the most unfavourable circumstances, has attempted this kind of literature. Secondly, Lawrence had to live in the midst of formidable mechanistic and material forces, and create a hylozoistic atmosphere in his works, whereas the Akam poets seem to have enjoyed a congenial atmosphere for creating such a kind of literature. That there is a specific codification in Tolkāppiyam as to the

150. Nar. 238
151. Ibid., 214
152. Nali 11
153. Ibid. 11
relatedness of the human and the non-human worlds goes
to prove this. 154

**NATURE AND BEAUTY**

And finally, there is the conception of the
inseparableness of nature and beauty. As far as the Akam
poets are concerned, seeing human sex as an organic part of
the life of nature has been an integral component of their
conception of man-nature relationship. Their quest for
love comprises their quest to connect nature with man, the
emotional being. The cause and effect of such a quest have
been examined in the chapter "Sex and Beauty".

The Akam poets perceive an eternal glow of beauty in
every object of nature. Their nature portrayal is, in
essence, a portrayal of beauty that permeates the whole of
the living universe. In fact, the relationship between
nature and beauty in the Akam literature is the relationship
between body and soul. 155 They see nothing but beauty in
nature, the kind of beauty that has an immediate relevance
to the sensual being in man. Thus the mountain streams
are described as brightness incarnate, 156 and the flow of
stream along the mountain resembles the melodious notes of

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154. *Tel. Perul. 3*

155. Thiru V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Murukan Allatu Alaku*
(Madras: Arasi Book Depot, 1971), p. 15

156. "vayamku vellaruvi" Aka. 202 "valilanku
aruv" Ibid, 278
the musical instruments. This music is such that it will send an elephant to sweet slumber on its banks. The beauties of the budding flowers, the elemental beauties of the sun, the moon, the sea and the beasts all have found expression in the Akam poems. Even the fire that descends on the earth when the thunder roars, appears to the Akam poet as the red flowers dropping from the ilavu tree. Such is their conception of nature and beauty.

And the woman is the embodiment of all this beauty which nature possesses. The word woman is synonymous with natural beauty. In her can he found the fragrance of the flowers, the flowers, the music of the cuckoos, the beauteous dance of the peacocks, the shyness of the deer, the brightness of the sun, the coolness of the moon, and above all the abounding grace and loveliness of Murukan, the god of beauty. She is the heroine in the Akam poetry. After a wholesome embrace of this woman, the hero is prepared even to die. The Akam poets have invariably depicted the beauty of the heroine as resembling the beauty of nature. Her forehead resembles the crescent moon on the eighth day, her tresses are linked to the black layer of sand in the rivers, and to the dark clouds

157. Iblis 25
158. Kali 42
159. Aai 320
160. Thiru V. Kalyanasundaranar, op. cit., pp. 18-19
161. Kurum. 280
162. Iblis., 129
163. Aka. 35
descending to rain, her eyes are compared to the neythal blooms at dawn, to the pair of kuvalai flowers, her teeth appear like mullai buds arranged in rows, her shoulders are bamboo-like, her māmāl is likened to the tender leaves of acōkē and the blossoms of kuriṇci. Her body resembles a sprout freshened by rain drops. Even the paleness that creeps in her while languishing in separation is compared to the colour of natural objects. It is like that of konrai blooms.

Such is the beauty of the heroine in the Akam poetry. In all these cases, the poets have established a nexus between her 'natural' beauty and her sexual vitality and vigour. The hero tells his heart:

When you saw the natural beautuy of her thick, black hair, you were like a cart full of salt on a muddy river bank... ruined, as the great rains poured down; and, like a happy drunkard who wants but more and more to drink, you crave just that which you have already craved so much.

164. Ibid., 126
165. Aṭṭi. 188
166. Ibid., 167. Aka. 21
168. Ibid., 47
169. Kṛṣṇ. 244
170. Ibid., 301
171. Kūrūn. 222
172. Aka. 398
173. Kūrūn 165 (Trans. M. Shanmugam Pillai and David E. Ludden, P.)
Kapilar brings in a series of well-wrought images of the universe around to describe the physical beauty of the heroine which overwhelms the hero: "Your forehead does not wane, hence it is not a crescent; your face is unblemished, hence it is not a moon; your shoulders are bamboo-like, but you are not a forest; your eyes resemble the flowers, but you are not a spring; you have the rhythmic movement, but you are not a peacock; your words come out in patches, but you are not a parrot". Saying thus, the hero behaves like a rutting elephant, and the lady hails this behaviour as a 'saner' one on his part.\textsuperscript{174} Again, the lady with her eyes resembling that of the deer, her movements resembling that of the swan, her looks resembling that of the peacock, her bamboo-like shoulders, her breasts resembling the tender buds of konku flower, gives him a death-like torment.\textsuperscript{175} Thus, the hero views the beauty of the lady as a product of nature. When he is attracted by her, he is simultaneously attracted towards When he is attracted by her, he is simultaneously attracted towards nature. Such a conception points to the kind of attitude the Akam poets have towards the question of human sex. It is not only an experience of beauty, but also an expression of natural beauty, uncontaminated by the products of material culture.

\textsuperscript{174} Hali. 54
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 55, 56, 57.
Lawrence too wants to see the sexual experience as an experience of beauty in its natural fragrance. He traces the degeneration of sexual life of the contemporary society to its loss of contact with nature and the consequent inability to integrate the human emotional life with the rhythms of nature. He makes his men and women achieve their sexual fulfilment, with nature as a vitalizing background. Siegmund and Helena, Paul and Miriam, Will and Anna, Anton and Ursula, Birkin and Ursula, Mellors and Constance all have their relationship flourishing in the world of nature. However, the association of the beauty of human physiognomy with the beauty of nature has not been treated in Lawrence in the way the Akam poets have done. This might be due to the fact that while the Akam poets sing of the beauty of human sex both in its inner and outer manifestations, Lawrence concentrates on "that which is non-human in humanity," the carboneess of life. As such, while the Akam poets talk of the beauty of the externals and relate it with the inner beauty, Lawrence goes straight into the hidden realms of human psyche and reveals its eternal glow.

As in their treatment of the emotional life of mankind, Lawrence and the Akam poets have an immediate and compelling relevance to the present world in their conception of man-nature relationship. In the modern world everyone intuitively feels a lack of something in life. In our quest
for material fulfilment, we have created

an artificial environment from which nature has been excluded to the greatest possible extent... The domain of nature has become a 'thing' devoid of meaning and at the same time the void created by the disappearance of this vital aspect of human existence continues to live within the souls of men and to manifest itself in many ways, sometimes violently and desperately. 176

More than that, we have denatured nature by trying to dominate it for economic motives, and we have disembodied ourselves of our pristine connections with nature. The Akam and the Laurentian ways of perceiving the unity of the cosmos, their conceiving nature as a creative background for the fulfilment of man's inner life, their quest for a natural harmony between man and the "circumambient universe" might rediscover for us the lost values of our life. Besides, their portrayal of man-nature relatedness brings home the fact that man should not try to judge nature in terms of worldly utility and convenience but should try to live by accepting the rhythms of the cosmic order.