IV

MAN AND THE UNIVERSE.

Man is great according as his relation to
the living universe is vast and vital.

Lawrence believed that God is immersed in creation, and it
is futile to separate or distinguish Him from His creation. His
concept of God can, thus, help us to understand his view of man's
position in the universe. In *Struscan Places*, he observes:

"All emerges out of the unbroken circle with its
nucleus, the germ, the One, the god, if you like
to call it so. And man, with his soul and his
personality, emerges in eternal connection with
all the rest." 2

In order to come to his fullness of being, man must have authentic
relations with his fellow human beings and with the whole universe.
The individual lives in polarized relation to other individuals
and the external universe. Pure relationship between man and the
universe around him helps him to achieve fulfillment in life:

This, if we knew it, is our life and our eternity:
the subtle perfected relationship between me and
my whole circumambient universe.3

In fact, "a wish for pure, unadulterated relationship with the
universe" is the deepest wish of man. This wish comes from his

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1. *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine, and Other Essays*,
   p. 467.
Soul. It is, thus, the wish of God Himself. But due to the habits of his mind, man, sometimes, establishes false relationships with other human beings, which result in suffering all around. Similarly, false relationship with the forces of Nature and the universe results in sufferings and disaster. Often, even men and women living amid Nature fail to establish true rapport with it.

Lawrence's first novel, The White Peacock, describes life in a rural community of England. The whole novel is, as Dr. Chaman Nahal beautifully puts it, "vibrant" with "the joy and the music of the created world." Yet, we find most of the characters in the novel unhappy. Annable, the gamekeeper, confronts Leslie for trespass in the wood. Cyril, Emily and Leslie's girl friend, Letti are also with him. They have an interesting altercation. In the end Annable 'advises' Leslie to tell his female companions not to come in a wood till they can look at "natural things" so that they "might see something". But, Annable himself is too much preoccupied with his past to see much in Nature. He prefers Nature to human society. But his retreat in Nature is only escapeism. He lives in the lap of Nature, but he cannot forget his past. He cannot forget his bitter experiences with women. His mind has become a store-house of bitter experiences. His heart is full of hatred for womanhood. For him woman is "Vanity". In the heart of his hearts he is not happy in the wood, and he knows that

7. Ibid., p. 178.
he will not live long. Nature, on the other hand, does not brood over the past. In Nature, there is no before and after. There is only Now. Nature 'sympathises' with man and other living creatures. It may also be 'furious', sometimes. It may be fierce or gentle. But it never nurses a 'grudge'. Nor does it mourn the dead for long. The soul never dies. The joy of life that is in Nature never comes to an end. The description of Annable's funeral illustrates these facts admirably:

It was a magnificent morning in early spring when I watched among the trees to see the procession come down the hillside. The upper air was woven with the music of larks, and my whole world thrilled with the conception of summer. The young pale wind-flowers had arisen by the wood-gale, and under the hazels, when perchance the hot sun pushed his way, new little suns dawned, and blazed with real light. There was a certain thrill and quickness everywhere, as a woman must feel when she has conceived. —

Till the heralds come — till the heralds wave like shadows in the bright air, crying, lamenting, fretting forever. Rising and falling and circling round and round, the slow-waving peevits cry and complain, and lift their broad wings in sorrow.——

The pheasants are frightened into covert; they run and dart through the hedge. The cold cock must fly in his haste, spread himself on his streaming plumes, and sail into the wood's security.

There is a cry in answer to the peevits, echoing louder and stronger the lamentation of the lapwings, a wail which hushes the birds . . .

The bearers lift up the burden again, and the elm-boughs rattle along the hollow white wood, and the pitiful red clusters of elm-flowers sweep along it as if they whispered in sympathy — 'we are so sorry, so sorry —' always the compassionate buds in their fullness of life bend down to comfort the dark man shut up there . . .

In a while, I too got up and went down the mill, which lay red and peaceful, with the blue smoke rising as winsomely and carelessly as ever. On the other side of the
valley I could see a pair of horses nod slowly across the fallow. A man’s voice called to them now and again with a resonance that filled me with longing to follow my horses over the fallow, in the still, lonely valley, full of sunshine and eternal forgetfulness. The day had already forgotten. The water was blue and white and dark-burnished with shadows; two swans sailed across the reflected trees with perfect blithe grace. The gloom that had passed across was gone.

George’s tragedy begins with the breaking away of his connection with the land that he was cultivating. When he is cut-off from his land he feels that he is slowly “crumbling away” from his foundations. He likens his condition to that of a sycamore tree, the leading shoot of which has been broken off. He shows the sycamore tree to Cyril. It was spoilt, even though it was still growing. George’s final alienation is as much the result of the breaking off of human relationships as of his losing touch with the soil:

Across the empty cornfield the partridges were running. We walked through the September haze slowly, because he (George) was feeble on his legs. As he became tired he ceased to talk. We leaned for some time on a gate, in the brief glow of the transient afternoon, and he was stupid again. He did not notice the brown haste of the partridges, he did not care to share with me the handful of ripe blackberries, and when I pulled the brony ropes of the hedges, and held the great knots of red and green berries in my hand, he glanced at them without interest or appreciation. ....

Like a tree that is falling, going soft and pale and rotten, clammy with small fungi, he stood leaning against the gate, while the dim afternoon drifted with a flow of thick sweet sun-shine past him, not touching him.

Man can enrich his life by establishing right relationship with Nature. The _White Peacock_ is full of passages, like the following

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one, which emphasize the relationship of man to the land where he lives.

Over the hill, the big flushed face of the moon poised just above the treetops, very majestic, and far off—yet immanent. I turned with swift sudden friendliness to the face of elm-towers spread over my head, dotted with soft clusters winnowly. I jumped up and pulled the cool soft tufts against my face for company; and as I passed, still I reached upward for the touch of this banded gentleness of the trees. The wood breathed fragrantly, with a subtle sympathy. The firs softened their touch to me, and the larches woke from the barren winter-sleep, and put out velvet fingers to caress me as I passed. Only the clear, bare branches of the ash stood emblem of the discipline of life. I looked down on the blackness where trees filled the quarry, and the valley bottoms, and it seemed that the world, my own home-world, was strange again. 10

The separation from one's native land is as painful as the separation from a loved one:

Lottie was wedded, as I had said, before Leslie lost all the wistful traces of his illness. They had been gone away to France five days before we recovered anything like the normal tone in the house... It was time for us all to go, to leave the valley of Nethermere whose waters and whose woods were distilled in the essence of our veins. We were the children of the valley of Nethermere, a small nation with language and blood of our own, and to cast ourselves each one into separate exile was painful to us. 11

Much of the suffering in the world today is due to the lack of harmony between man and Nature. The image of Australia that emerges from the reading of Kangaroo is that of a dual world—the world of Nature and the separate world of man. The world of man is full of conflicts and strife. The world of Nature is full of beauty and joy. By discarding his self-consciousness and egoism, man can share this joy and beauty with Nature.

10. Ibid., pp. 178-79. 11. Ibid., p. 273.
Lawrence believed that every living thing has a soul of its own.

This belief is close to the Hindu Sāṅkhya. Man should have reverence for every object of Nature. But, one must beware of those who romanticise Nature. Romanticising Nature is only a sort of egoism. We must not deny a tree or a flower a soul of its own. We can establish a relationship with a tree, a flower, or a bird. This relationship can give us satisfaction, but real joy is only possible when we respect the individuality of the flower, or the tree, or the bird. Lawrence wrote in his essay "Love Was Once a Little Boy":

"And we must always beware of romance: of people who love nature, or flowers, or dogs, or babies, or pure adventure. It means they are getting into a love-swing where everything is easy and nothing opposes their egoism. Nature, babies, dogs are so lovable, because they can't answer back?"

The so-called romantic lovers of Nature are often incapable of healthy human relationships. Helena in The Trespasser and Miriam in Sons and Lovers are such romantic lovers of Nature. Helena's 'romanticism' drives Sigismund to suicide. The love of Miriam and Paul starts with "their common feeling for something in Nature." But, Miriam's love of Nature, like her love of her little brother of four, is possessive and egoistic:

So to Miriam, Christ and God made one great figure, which she loved tremblingly and passionately when a tremendous sunset burned out the western sky, and Ediths, and Lucys, and Rowenas, Brian de Bois Guilberts, rob boys, and Guy Mannering's, rustled the sunny leaves in the morning, or sat in her bedroom aloft, alone, when it snowed. She madly wanted her little brother of four to let her smother him and stifle


him in her love,--- and she held not her father in high esteem because he did not carry any mystical ideals cherished in his heart.15---

Once, when she is "lavishly" fondling daffodils, Paul rebukes her for wanting to "pull the heart out of" things:

"Why must you always be fondling things? ----
Can you never like things without clutching them as if you wanted to pull the heart out of them? ----
You wheedle the soul of things... You don't want to love—your eternal and abnormal craving is to be loved." 16

However, openness to the influences of Nature and the universe around us can change our very psyche for our own good. A scene in Aaron's Rod describing the railway journey that Aaron undertakes in Italy brings home this truth effectively:

Aaron started out of the window, and played the one single British role left to him, that of ignoring his neighbours, isolating himself in their midst, and minding his own business. Upon this insular trick our greatness and our predominance depends—such as it is.---

It was a lovely day, a lovely, lovely day of early autumn. Over the great plain of Lombardy a magnificent blue sky glozed like mid-summer, the sun shone strong. The great plain, with its great stripes of cultivation—without hedges or boundaries—how beautiful it was! ---

Sometimes the vine-leaves were gold and red, a patterning. And the great square farm-homesteads, white, red roofed, with their out-buildings, stood naked amid the lands, without screen or softening. There was something big and exposed about it all.--- It was all exposed to the sweep of plain, to the high strong sky, and to human gaze. A kind of boldness, and indifference. Aaron was impressed and fascinated. He looked with a new interest at the Italians in the carriage with him—For this same boldness and indifference and exposed gesture. And he found it in them too. And again it fascinated him. It seemed so much bigger, as if the walls of life had fallen. May, the walls of English life will have to fall. 17

(Emphasis mine)

The men and women of the first generation of Brangwens, in The Rainbow, are wedded to the soil they cultivate. They live an integrated life with the surroundings in which they live. Tom and Lydie live a satisfied life. They attain a great measure of fulfillment in their lives. The life of Will and Anna, of the second generation, is not a miserable failure; but their fulfillment in life is only partial. There are streaks of falsehood in their mutual relationship and their relations with their surroundings. However, both of them gradually learn to view their relationships in true perspective:

She had got free from the cathedral, she had even destroyed the passion he had... That which had been the absolute, containing all heaven and earth was become to him as to her, a shapely heap of dead matter...

They went home again, both of them altered. She had some new reverence for that which he wanted, he felt that his cathedrals will never again be to him as they had been.---

But now, somehow, sadly and disillusioned, he realized that the doorway was no doorway. It was too narrow, it was false.---

He listened to the thrushes in the garden and heard a note which the Cathedrals did not include, something free and careless and joyous,--- and the bath of yellow glowing was at once so sumptuous and so fresh, that he was glad he was away from his shadowy cathedral. 20

It is after a long struggle for self-discovery that Ursula Brangwen, of the third generation, discovers a soul even in a living cell under her microscope in the laboratory. 20 The rainbow in the sky

that she sees towards the end of the novel symbolises not only the hope in her own life but also the promise that man will ultimately emerge out of his self-conscious corruption.

The earth and the living beings of the earth, including man, are the parts of the cosmos. The great heavenly bodies like the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars exert great influence over the life of the earth and the creatures of the earth. There is vital correspondence between man and the sun, the moon and other planets. Lawrence wrote in *Apocalypse*:

"We and the cosmos are one. The cosmos is a vast living body, of which we are still parts. The sun is a great heart whose tremors run through our smallest veins, the moon is a great gleaming nerve-centre from which we quiver forever. Who knows the power that Saturn has over us, or Venus? But it is a vital power, rippling exquisitely through us all the time." 22

This is the language of the astrologer. The planets and the stars guide the destiny of man. But, too much of self-consciousness vitiates man's relationship with these great cosmic bodies. These heavenly bodies exert malefic influence over men and women who are egoistic and self-centred.

The great sun, like an angry dragon, hater of the nervous and personal consciousness in us. As all these modern sunbathers must realize, for they become disintegrated by the very sun that bronzes them. But the sun, like a lion, loves the bright red blood of life and can give it an infinite enrichment if we know how to receive it. 23

Mrs. Morel, in *Sons and Lovers*, is a terribly self-conscious woman. Her communion with the moon, over which the western critics have waxed so eloquent, is a vitiated intercourse. She is, to use the astrologer’s phrase, under the influence of ‘a malefic moon’. In contrast, Juliet in Lawrence’s short story,*Sun*, loses herself in the naked embrace of the sun. A ‘beneficent sun’ restores her to health and vitality. In some of his poems Lawrence sings of the inner sun that is within every man and woman. Men and women who are really aware of this sun within can have communion with the outer sun of the Cosmos which gives real life, vitality and morality.

It is not without significance that the sterile and mutually destructive encounters of love between Anton Skrebensky and Ursula in *The Rainbow* take place twice under the full moon. Both of them are self-conscious and egoistic at the time these love-encounters take place.

The pelting of the image of the moon in water with stones by Birk in *Woman in Love* has been given fantastic interpretations by western critics. The scene, however, simply suggests that he is emphatically

25. See Chapter II, pp. 64-65.
27. See Chapter II, pp. 83, 91.
rejecting the self-conscious and egocentric love between men and women.

The 'ritual' of Gerald's death in *Women in Love* is 'presided over' by the bright moon, symbolising his cold mind:

To add to his difficulty, a small bright moon shone brilliantly just ahead, on the right, a painful brilliant thing that was always there, unremitting, from which there was no escape. ....

Lord Jesus, was it man bound to be — Lord Jesus! He could feel the blow descending, he knew he was murdered.

The modern man has lost touch with the mystery of life. Kate in *The Plumed Serpent* goes to Mexico in search of the mystery of life, she thinks that back in Europe life is "all politics or jarring or slushy mysticism or sordid spiritualism". She wants to escape from the mechanical life of Europe and "let the sun rise world steal across to her and add its motion to her, the motion of the stress of life, with the big sun and the stars like a tree holding out its leaves". She cries: "Give me the mystery and let the world live again for me!" (Lawrence's emphasis)

29. *Women in Love*, pp. 497, 498. A parallel may be drawn between Gerald's tragedy and that of Siegmund in *The Trespasser*. Gerald had noticed 'a half buried Crucifix' in the moonlight a few moments before his death. Siegmund in *The Trespasser*, who, like Gerald, is in the vicious grip of death-wish and finally commits suicide, notices a carved Christ under a bright moon. (See Chapter II, pp. 44, 64.)


31. Ibid., p. 138.

32. Ibid., p. 139.
The modern industrial society has destroyed the joy of work for the common mass of men. Lawrence wrote to Earl Brewster:

"All we possess is life — weaving, carving, building — this is the flow of life, life flows into the object — and life flows out again to the beholder. So that whoever makes anything with real interest, puts life into it, and makes it a little fountain of life for the next comer. Therefore a Gandhi weaver is transmitting life to others — and that is the great charity." 33

But the modern industrial civilization has reduced man to a mechanical unit of the society. He has lost his individuality and personal freedom in work and has become like a nut or a bolt of the great industrial machine. For Gerald, the industrial magnate (in *Women in Love*), a worker is just like an instrument or a machine-tool:

> The sufferings and feelings of individuals did not matter in the least. They were mere conditions, like the weather. What mattered was the pure instrumentality of the individual. 34

Fulfilment of his own life depends on the efficiency and the effectiveness of his role as the director of industry:

> Gerald himself, who was responsible for all this industry, was he a good director? If he were, he had fulfilled his life. The rest was by-play. 35

In his short span of life he gives practical shape to his vision of an industrial empire:


35. Ibid., p. 232.
so far his power ramified. He looked at Baldover, at Selby, at Whatmore, at Lethley Bank, the great colliery villages which depended entirely on his mines. They were hideous and sordid; during his childhood they had been sores in his consciousness, and now he saw them with pride. Four raw new towns, and many ugly industrial hamlets were crowded under his dependence. He saw the stream of miners flowing along the causeways from the mines at the end of the afternoon, thousands of blackened, slightly distorted human beings with red mouths, all moving subjugate to his will. 35

(Emphasis mine)

This is an evil empire peopled with soulless men. What industrialism has done to man and his environment has been described poignantly in The Rainboy:

She saw the stiffened bodies of the colliers, which seemed already encased in a coffin, she saw their unchanging eyes, the eyes of those who are buried alive... she saw the dun atmosphere over the blackened hills opposite, the dark blotches of houses, slate roofed and amorphous, the old church tower standing up in hideous obsolescence above raw new houses on the crest of the hill, the amorphous, brittle, hard edged new houses advancing from Baldover to meet the corrupt new houses from Lethley, the houses of Lethley, advancing to mix with the houses of Rainor, a dry brittle, terrible corruption spreading over the face of the land.... 37

Indiscriminate industrialization is defacing the earth and creating ugliness everywhere. Man has been left no privacy. The atmosphere has been polluted. There is air pollution, water pollution and noise pollution. The rhythm of the day and the night has been disturbed. Industrial noises and sharp electric lights turn the peaceful night into an uneasy day:

. The fault lay there, out there, in those electric lights and diabolical rattling of engines, there, in the world of the mechanical greedy, greedy mechanism and mechanized greed, sparkling with lights and gushing hot metal and roaring with traffic, there

lay the vast evil thing, ready to destroy whatever did not conform. Soon it would destroy the wood, and the blue-bells would spring no more. All vulnerable things must perish under the rolling and running of iron.  

Industrialism has dehumanized the workers and denatured the soil. Men have been reduced to the state of "elementals". The coal miners serve the elements of coal. The metal workers serve the elements of iron. Men are no longer men, but "anima of coal and iron and clay."  

In "The Risen Lord" Lawrence writes:

"I love to see a squirrel peep round a tree, and loit to you, Mammon, there will soon be no squirrels to peep."  

Mellors (in Lady Chatterley's Lover) identifies Mammon with "the mass-will of people". Man is connected with the cosmos through his soul. Modern man has lost touch with his soul and is dominated by his will. The will-directed and will-dominated man has become greedy. Too much money is poisoning him and the lack of money is starving him.

38. Lady Chatterley's Lover, p. 123.
39. Ibid., p. 136.
40. Ibid.,
42. Lady Chatterley's Lover, p. 315.