

The Primal Polarity of Man and Woman

By Sir George Trevelyan

There are a number of great problems to be solved and adjustments which must be made if man is to enter the new age with anything like a civilised society. Achieving of true harmony in the relation of man and woman is among the most significant. Unless we succeed here we shall tear ourselves to bits in strife, greed and war. If we do succeed it will be recognised as one of the major achievements of social evolution. England shorn of her imperial pride and power has become that country from which great vision and social imagination can rise. She should be leading the world in new age thinking, for veritably we are entering a New Age and this country has a spiritual task of leadership and constructive thinking.

The movement for equality of women and the general raising of her status is no longer merely about politics or social reform. It is a symptom of a living impulse right and ripe for our time. It is a conscious or unconscious recognition of a great law of life. Man / woman (male / female) equality is a law of nature and the balanced relationship of man and woman, male or female, is basic to the whole of life. Nature divides in to opposites which need to be maintained in balance. Balanced rhythmic interchange between opposites is the secret of the working of life. This is obvious in all the generation of living beings as typified by the entry two by two in to the Ark. It is basic to the manifestation of all electricity. There are two poles, positive and negative, which attract each other while two positives or two negatives repel. 'Negative in the scientific sense can be considered the receptive or responsive pole. This can be seen as female, the positive as male and it holds good throughout the whole range of life. Harmony is disturbed when balanced rhythmic interchange between the poles is lost. The whole of nature has divided in to polarities which need to find their affinities and unite in relationship with them. The man / woman relationship is the archetypal or primal polarity.

The soul of man presumably is neither male nor female, not sexless but including the attributes of both sexes merged within its being, hence the rightness of the frequent artistic representation of angelic beings of in-determinate sex. Descent of the soul into the limitations of the physical world involves, by divine plan, the split in to two halves which need each other if both are to be truly and fully creative. When rightly united, undreamed of creative possibilities arise. However, human thinking has for centuries lost this truth. Man has degraded woman in to being a mere chattel, plaything or creature without a soul, or an inferior being or idealised on a pedestal. Rarely in recent centuries has the true polarity been recognised. Society has been man orientated in almost all cultures, notably our own in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is tacitly assumed that men run all aspects of society and hold power. It was only after bitter strife that man granted women's suffrage in the 1920's, but this after all was no more than women's right to vote for men. We need before we can establish women's rights, to think ourselves in to the vision of the whole and the law of balanced polarities which is basic to all life.

We have been violating a law of nature century by century, and now we are paying the price in the disintegration of world society. The male aspect of the soul is active, aggressive, ready to fight, passionate to possess, to hold power, create and organise. All wars are made by

men. The feminine principle is creative of life, is receptive, inward, loving. Since 'woman' is the mother of all life she cannot by nature be a killer. She is the protector of life. So long as man alone rules there will always be wars. If equality between men and women were achieved the concept of war would be almost unthinkable since the feminine principle cannot take life.

This great change of emphasis would not mean the rushing of women in to all the high places of government. Men and women must come to work in intimate relationship. Men must recognise that they cannot be fully active and creative unless they are backed by their feminine counterpart. Freely the door must be opened to women to enter in to all branches of life and work. Furthermore we must recognise the basic truth in modern psychology that everyone is double sexed. The complimentary elements of male and female are in us all. Obviously some women are aggressive, some men sensitive and receptive. It would be naïve to think that, as such, it is any criticism to point to any of these qualities. They are all essential for the working of our society.

Our public school system, shaped for young empire builders, almost wholly aimed at building 'maleness' in men, resulting in what has been called the "taboo on tenderness". But man is also the artist, the creator, the poet and this needs the support both within his own personality and among his friends of the sensitive feminine principle. The potentiality of love, gentleness, sympathy and compassion, have often been stamped out of the young male in encouraging him to be manly. Be it remembered that the 'hardy Odysseus' often wept "big tears".

Inevitably this repression of the feminine in man and the over-emphasis on the rights of the male in society have led to the unbalance in sex in our time and the immense over-emphasis on the on the physical sex experience as opposed to the love flow between two human units. From this too often follows the sense that one partner has possessive rights over the other and may demand their being different from what they are. How many marriages break on this?

A love based on a true recognition of equality will value the other soul as a unique divine creation, and will learn to cherish, support and unite with the other, yet without demand for possession. Infinite respect for each unique individual will change the emphasis in love relationships. The compassion shown for each individual soul entity by Jesus is surely the model or benchmark we should aspire to reach. The divinity in him showed of course the perfect balance of masculine and feminine elements, and those religious teachings that speak of a Father-Mother God are probably nearer the truth.

Blessed are they when a man and a woman come together in love so that they can work in absolutely balanced polarity. Some rare marriages show this possibility, which may in the New Age become much more general. Some pairs will come to this unity in love, some in work, some in meditation, some in creativity. Our new society must recognise that where this is achieved a human unit of priceless social value is born whether it be in marriage or outside it. "Whom God has joined, no man can put asunder". This is apparently the correct translation of the line in the marriage service. It states a psychic and spiritual fact that two eternal souls, separated by birth, who find each other again can never be separated even by death. Love is the great force of attraction, the gravity force of the new society.

We may expect new groups to form as a major factor of vital social development in the coming years. They may appear in all walks of life, education, industry, religion and art. They will be recognised by the love that binds perhaps a dozen men and women in a vision of service to a greater ideal. There may be married pairs among the group but a new un-possessive love relationship will hold them all together so that they begin to act as a real unit, out of what can be called a 'group soul'. Essentially these groups will show the workings of the male / female polarities, each soul contributing from its own nature to the whole. Out of the coming together of such groups, larger groupings will come and a new society will be born, itself inspired by what has been called the folk soul of a nation. The national folk souls are themselves to be seen as a great family grouping each with a great cultural contribution to make, and thus we can see in imagination how the whole of the human race could become a great family. It is in truth already one great family though in our ignorance, blindness and avarice we allow diversion and conflict. This is not just so much wistful thinking.

The great hope rises when we consider for instance, the teaching of Teilhard de Chardin, scientist and seer. He points out how nature in evolution has developed 'complexification' an incredible complexity of balanced opposites. Now however he sees evolution taking a new step. The 'Noosphere' the realm of thinking intelligence which envelops the living earth, takes a step towards conscious unity. He calls it planetisation, or divination of the earth. Teilhard is fired with a conviction shared by many great thinkers, that in our time an immense inner change is happening on our planet. A force or impulse of awakening love appears to be pouring through life and society, an inner fire that can light every atom and every soul and start them on the path to unification. It appears that man may well bring cataclysm upon his planet through his failure to wake up to the fact that all life works as a great unity and that the earth is a living creature which we should serve rather than exploit. In this age of threatened disaster a new and great hope comes that a fresh cosmic impulse of love may unite and fire human hearts. The eternal feminine principle is contained in this impulse of love.

Teilhard writes in his book 'Building the Earth';

"Love is the most universal, formidable and mysterious of cosmic energies".

"From the point of view of spiritual evolution, it seems that we might be able to give a name and a value to this strange energy of love. Could it not be, in essence, the attraction which is exercised upon each conscious element by the centre of the universe? The call toward the great union, whose attainment is the only real business in nature...? In this hypothesis under which (in conformity with the findings of psycho-analysis) love is the primitive and universal psychic energy, does not everything around us become clear to the intelligence and obvious to the action?"

"It is really the Universe which, through woman, is advancing towards man"

"If man fails to recognise the true nature and the true object of his love, the disorder which follows is profound and irremediable. Stubbornly trying to gratify a passion which opens on the Infinite with something that is simply inadequate, man fundamentally tries to make up for a fundamental disequilibrium by constantly increasing the number of his experiences, or by

making them more material in character. Vain attempts and in the eyes of anyone who partly perceives the inestimable value of the “spiritual quantum” of mankind, a frightening waste.

Man must instead perceive the universal reality which shines spiritually through the flesh. He will then discover what has so far frustrated and perverted his power to love. Woman is put before him as the attraction and the symbol of the world. He can unite with her only by enlarging himself in turn to the scale of the world and because the world is always larger and always unfinished and always in advance of us, to achieve his love man finds himself embarked on a limitless conquest of the Universe. In this sense Man can reach Woman only through the consummation of the universal union.

Love is a sacred reserve of energy – and the very blood stream of spiritual evolution; that is the first discovery that we make from the sense of the Earth.

All this suggests that the present interest in woman’s status and rights is much more than a political move and is perhaps part of an immense and deep spiritual change. We must wake up to the fact that in our man-orientated society we have been violating a divine law for century after century. We must stop holding back this true impulse to balanced rhythmic interchange of opposites. The new love will flow, new sensitive relationships will develop. Men in true relationship to women in all fields of life, recognising the real unique value of their partners in marriage, love or work, will become creative as never before.

What do we mean by entry in to a new age? There is much evidence to suggest that ours is a declining culture to be compared with the end of the Roman Empire, and that seeds of the new culture are growing like the coming of a new spring. New age thinking is indeed a living creature, a living organism to which mankind is an integral part. It is interesting to realise that almost every culture but our own has accepted this fact and has also had the feeling for the great unity of life. It has only been lost in the last centuries with the development of our acute ego-consciousness, our highly intellectual thinking. This has bought us marvellous mastery of matter and power (masculine), assertion (masculine again). Men have a sense that they have a right even duty to get the better of their neighbours. The price has been loss of sense of the spiritual living whole, the sensitive love that nourishes the whole of life. This is the “eternal feminine” (Goethe’s *Ewig Weibliche*). The price of our mastery of matter is the loss of inner vision. Ours is an outward looking culture. This is a good a definition as any of a materialistic culture in which all values are on what you can get for yourself, your family, your country (masculine). We have lost the (feminine) faculty of looking inwards, not introspectively but imaginatively, knowing that true inward vision looks through into the eternal worlds of spirit.

Blake writes – “I cease not from my great task; to open the eternal worlds; to open the immortal eyes of man inwards in to the realms of thought, into eternity, ever expanding in the bosom of God, the Human Imagination”.

Keats wrote – “I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the hearts affection and the truth of imagination”. These quotations open the possibility of worlds of understanding which involve the balance of the true inward looking feminine principle nurturing the creative male power.

We now in our age of three dimensional thinking tend to assume that the world of nature is made up of separate units. There are doctrines which would have us believe that Matter is

the only reality and that the whole build up of human thought, art and religion is just a superstructure on matter.

The Elizabethan world view is well presented in Jean Paris's "Shakespeare". "In the beginning there reigned that unity which was called 'Ain Soph' (one wisdom) – the nothingness, the unknowable, the absolute. All creation derived from it by a series of divisions, the first of which engendered Being. God, having materialised from the Void, reveals Himself to Himself and enigmatically separates the two principles that religions describe: the 'Voluntas', as active luminous masculine principle, and the Nolunta's, a passive shadowy feminine principle. From the marriage of these opposites whose distinction preceded time is born primeval matter, chaos, and by progressive differentiations the four elements and finally; the beings and things which form the reign of the multiple. Nature, animals and man make up the lowest level of a reality whose summit is lost in the eternal. Whence the necessity for a saving metamorphosis: death, which, dissolving matter, frees the divine fire which dwells therein.... Creation, fall, resurrection are thus the three acts of a universal drama everywhere re-enactedThis is why man seems endowed with an essentially historic mission; to assume here below this movement from a fallen state of redemption"

Not only does this (a timeless theme) give us a sense of the deep significance of the movement for man/woman equality, but it gives us the clue to the allegory hidden within Shakespeare's plays. It is basic to his whole philosophy and cosmology and is typified symbolically in every play, particularly in the comedies. He shows us an ideal unity, undivided in to complexity, then thrown in to confusion by human greed, self will, and the great task, whether in family or state, is to re-establish the lost harmony. The thesis is clearly stated in his very early play "The Comedy of Errors". This is anything but a farce which it appears to be at first sight. It is an allegory of precise, almost mathematical, sub-division in to pairs and re-establishment of the ideal unity pictured in the opening scenes. Play after play illustrates the same truth. The heroines (Portia, Rosalind) can be taken as symbols of the higher spiritual self in man, which his personality (Bassanio, Orlando) has to win and marry. "As you like it" turns out to be a complete morality play concerning the mystic path and every character and situation falls in to the pattern. But in his period Shakespeare dared not write such esoteric doctrine. Therefore the hidden allegory has to be unravelled and interpreted. When the will, intellect and emotions, represented by the three brothers, Oliver, Jacques and Orlando, have been brought in to true relationship, the marriage with Rosaline, the Higher Self becomes possible. Four marriages are then made together representing different facts of the integrated and the heavenly Being. Hymen says –

"Now there is joy in Heaven,

When earthly things are made even,

Atone together." – (at-one-ment)

Every great myth and every fairy story in all lands in some way tells us the same truth. The inner core of man belongs to an eternal plane, descends from the primal unity in to the earth plane, takes a male or female body, goes through a perilous allegorical journey of trials and ordeals until he can restore soul unity (mystical carriage with the heroine) and return with enhanced consciousness and deepened experience of the realm from which he descended.

Our age of materialist thinking has largely forgotten these truths. This is why the interpretation and re-telling of myths, fairy stories and the great dramatic allegories is so important for our time.

Many now feel that the materialistic world – view is inadequate and are again coming to see that the old knowledge of the Oneness of Life may be the true picture. To forestall a possible misunderstanding, let it be said clearly that the more spiritual world-view is obviously not yet very widely accepted. It is presented here because it illumines most clearly the issue which we are discussing and leads inevitably to the acceptance of the vision and ideal of man/woman equality. In no sense however is there any attempt to constrain belief. Let us, therefore restate the “Law of Oneness”. Imaginative thinking comes to see the kinship of all life in the great whole. It is recognised that the material world is an image of the eternal world of the creative divine imagination, that the soul when released from the limitation of the body moves on and out in to a realm of wider consciousness and understanding, that life is eternal and that love is indeed the binding force, the very gravity of higher worlds of the Kingdom of God on earth. Into our darkened world comes this vision, understanding and knowledge. With it comes the conviction that if men will surrender their dominant position and recognise that they are but half of the picture, allow the feminine, both within their own natures and in the women who are their partners to come right in to all aspects of life and society, then a transforming change could take place. This generation would then be recognised as one which had lifted mankind a great step forward. Initially the change is and inner one. It is and evolutionary change in thinking, infinitely deeper than any spiritual plan. It involves a recognition of a spiritual law. Stop breaking nature’s most fundamental law and a flood of love and creativity would pour in to our lives. Recognise that the “longest stride of soul men ever took” could be merely allowing natural law of work. Merely stop stopping it and the feminine / masculine polarity would begin to act in creative harmony. Thought has far greater creative force than is usually admitted. We must take the effort of imaginative thinking to grasp this great picture of the oneness of life and realise that we could open veritable floodgates of life and light if man/woman equality could be allowed. This is a task in which England can lead the world since we have both the social and political genius for creating new forms in society, and the basic idealistic and imaginative vision that can take on a great spiritual task. If, we fail, the prospects are dark indeed, because man alone unchecked by woman’s love of life , will plunge the world in to death, just a Hamlet rejecting Ophelia, and with her, his intuitive nature, entered the downward path of death by following only the masculine logic of his intellect. “Except ye change your thinking ye shall all likewise perish”. This is the real translation of the word ‘Metanaia’. The word “Repent” gives the wrong emphasis.

Yet even if our generation is faced by cataclysm and calamity, let it be urgently stresses that this may prove to be a great clean-ing process which will burn out that which is negative, cruel, greedy, power loving, war loving (the dark aspect of the unbalanced male) and in the young emerging world allow a new society to form, drawn by the affinities of love and creativity in to groupings which recognise man and woman as equal partners in the forward march of mankind.

Further information about the lectures and life of Sir George Trevelyan can be found at www.wrekinforum.org and www.sirgeorgetrevelyan.org.uk