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**Woman: her Spiritual Function  
in contemporary society**

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*Función Espiritual de la Mujer en la Sociedad Contemporánea*

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# WOMAN: HER SPIRITUAL FUNCTION IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

## 1. MODERN SOCIETY

Of great rhythms of history and vital developing process in human life, our time experiences essential changes on world-wide scale.

Throughout this century, woman has experienced so fast and deep changes as never before in history: from shy feministic movements to vindicate civic women's rights in the beginning of century, to big masses of women incorporated in labour activities and intellectual training, forty years have hardly passed. After the first feminine revolution, closely related to technological revolution and *social* development in modern age, we confront a quite new second revolution, whose significance and transcendence women did not notice yet; I refer to a *biological* revolution taking place in the very body of millions of women less than a decade ago, precisely when science discovered synthesis contraceptives, of unforeseeable consequences yet. But, along with these social and biological changes, an even deeper revolution occurs in the intimacy of the *feminine soul*.

So, in short time, several changes have occurred:

*Social changes:* shocking traditional patterns of woman's social life.

*Body changes:* silently modifying the hormonal formula.

*Psychic changes:* still in germ, but culminating in the future in an actual modern woman.

## 2. MODERN WOMAN

Today we hear many words about modern woman, and every one of them feels to be an interpreter of this role in her own way. But, *what is a modern woman?*

Is the one who is born in the atomic age, after 1945?

Is the one who *works*, fits for her role, and is liable for her assigned place in society?

Is the one who is liberated from *prejudices* of the past, of a conventional moral, and has conquered sexual liberalism?

Is the one who is liberated from male tutelage, or the one who *rivals* with man, and aims at equalling her rights?

You may conquer all these things, and not as an actual, modern woman.

A modern woman belongs to the *new generation*, and basically her characteristic signs are inner, and their consequent expressions in life, outer.

If we tried to identify a modern woman by her outer habits or usual style we would be wrong; today women dress almost in the same way and, though through different languages, everybody understands each other to handle material things: in practice there is a universal language in the business world, in the world of material love, and in the world of social relations; but we are quite different within, and sometimes speak very different languages, even though we belong to the same time.

Modern woman is an inner fruit; *today this fruit is being born psychically*, intimately in the heart of many women through a process of frustration, which often is painful, and whose meaning many women do not understand; it is a true inner childbirth gestated in the shadows of a past world, still under dim lights and belonging to the world of the future.

### **3. THE WORD OF THE FUTURE**

In fact, a modern woman belongs to the world of the future, and we can understand her by glimpsing that world.

Vain and useless would be any attempt to understand what is happening today in the soul of a woman, if you tried to interpret it just through history of the past, through feminine patterns coming from this past, or through rational schemes in which science tried to sort out women. So, still we lack *objective patterns* to characterise this new woman:

1. Because traditional feminine patterns, which were imitation ideals for women, at the same time were collective archetypes, many of them created for men, and to serve a prevailing male culture.

2. Because present patterns of modern women, which the very women have created, are still insufficient and more particularly characterised by patterns of rivalry with men, of rebelliousness, or of deviationism, than by genuine patterns emerged from the depths of a feminine soul.

3. Because when a woman is characterised by modern science, and especially by materialistic psychology, their assertions are based on rational-partial schemes, and on an analysis of psychological mechanisms, but do not consider the transcendent mystery of the soul.

*Well, but what is the world of the future in order to understand the future woman?*

The world of the future is the world of tomorrow, which exists *right now* today. That is to say, it is not something to come, but something *new* and existent right now.

Apparently, many people have identified the most outstanding events of the modern age with extraordinary technological progress and with social, economic and political shocks affecting the human mass, but they did not notice that we confront whole, deeper changes, and we should seek their source within, in vital and spiritual currents regulating a universal developing life.

Modern age takes form in the silence of the intra-history, in renewed spiritual currents inspiring really *new* ideas and works, and this should not be mistaken for some of their less significant consequences, or for reactions of the past. Who are the interpreters of this mighty current? Who are those who receive its inspiration and translate its word into ideas and concrete works? That is to say, who are representatives of the new generation?:

They are great *masters of modern science*,  
great *messengers of the heart*  
and *simple souls*.

The former –that is, sages– opened the prison of the material world, and released a new energy: atomic energy.

The latter, whom we call great messengers of the heart, through their power of love inspire generous humane assistance movements, better relationships among men, and spiritual improvement.

But apart from these great beings –fathers of the modern age– like in every time of change, there are simple souls who, escaping from sophistication and from a distorted cultural cycle which is about to finish, keep to themselves sufficient freshness, simplicity, and vast vision to be quickly in tune with the new cultural expressions of their time. These men and women constitute the *new generation*, as interpreters of new ideas and feelings, and hope for the future. You cannot identify them by anything external: they belong to several social walks, to different races, and to different cultural level, but possess an essential likeness letting them recognise each other as members of one and the same time, intensely perceive subtle currents announcing the time to come, and are receptive of basic needs of their contemporaries.

What is the characteristic of our present new world? Until yesterday, we moved in the field of material stability and mechanical conceptions about universe and life. Starting from the great revolution of the modern age we move on a field of unitary and expansive consciousness, vision of the whole, liberation from limitation and separateness, and thirst for transformation and transcendence. Today, conventional space-time frames are broken, and man needs a new life to accede a new dimension of being. One should pay attention to these intimate and substantial changes if we want to remain actual, modern men and women, and overlook political changes and collective movements that being today not

too much significant, are nothing more than secondary changes, many of them belonging to the old world of separateness and antagonism for domination.

Today, modern men and women move unsteadily on this just open world: here we do not find tracks to follow: we must make them; we find no pattern to imitate: we should create a pattern or a new bio-type; echoing voices on one's environment are of the past, or vague and anguished voices of the present are just apparently new, while a voice guiding us to the future should be discovered through inner silence.

#### **4. RE-ESTABLISHING THE MYSTERY OF THE FEMENINE SOUL**

At the end of a cycle, and being overwhelmed by history and customs, and by her responsibility for her present social active living, a modern woman is eager for conquering her inner freedom, which consists of feeling life with her own soul. This life of the soul –felt and expressed as a genuine, individual and transcendent value, beyond anything tying an individual being to heritage, society and customs– is what a woman longs for ultimately, and what we name feminine *egoencia*.

Traditionally, *biological, aesthetic and ethical* woman's values have been extolled, and she has responded to these imperatives by transforming them into her ends: so, she is devoted to *reproduction*, to reflect her *beauty*, or do her *duty* as a wife, daughter, mother, professional, employee... These chores may be noble, praised by the finest aesthetics or highest moral, and even quite gratifying, but more often than not we find that, in spite of possessing everything, usually a woman remains dissatisfied with herself: certainly, she has *her* home, *her* husband, *her* children, *her* profession, *her* employment, *her* friends, *her* lovers, but as soon as she stops and looks at herself, discovers that something is missing within, something that cannot be reduced to pleasures, possessions, or duties of ordinary living; it is something ineffable, beyond ordinary life, a *feeling of freedom in her own soul*, the cornerstone in her spiritual life.

In a modern woman, the spiritual life emerges renewed and strong, along with a genuine need of the divine and transcendent, not only as idea, devotion, or definite faith, but also as a live, substantial union between the divine and the human. Today, a woman does not hanker so much for a belief or religious ideology, but for bread of life as her sustenance, in order to be joyful and sure that she is in charge of love and life, and cannot ask such goods of anyone else as alms, but on the contrary, she can be a human fountain irradiating permanent values. A woman aims at conquering this inner value –human and divine at the same time– and through her expanded consciousness, intuitively finds them as the key to a genuine life of her soul.

By instinct, a woman looks for a union, above all with a man, but this biological and social wish, considered as the highest end in her life, and even as an ideal of fullness, perfection and transcendence

through her child, becomes just a secondary end, and now many women of our time begin to understand this. By saying secondary I do not mean an ignoble end; I say secondary because it is connected with contingent aspects of life, media that become ends, neglecting many times the highest value of living, which consists of responding to the transcendent and trans-vital call of the soul.

This call to the transcendent, to the divine, can be felt in the depths of the individual consciousness, as a need of penetrating into the mystery of one's soul, not only into abysses of one's subconscious as some people believe, but also into the mystery of the spiritual root of one's nature, and also as a need of re-establishing a human-divine relationship missing as much as a result of materialism disconnected from the transcendent as ideal religiosity disconnected from definite expressions on level of life.

So, all life of the feminine soul must be re-established through a *new* –not ideal but real– *alliance* and a true inner fertilisation by the Spirit through the feminine soul surrendering to the breath of the spiritual current made mind and body in the *Word*, that is to say, made flesh as individual expression of feminine *egoencia*. This ability to surrender and renunciation in order to give life in her own soul and body to the highest values of the spirit, gives rise to a fruit of higher love internalised in her: through this child of the spirit, she participates and builds the future society in an active way: here is her participation through creative love.

Starting from this alliance, as a primary deed, later secondary alliances can arise through marriage, art, work, or daily living: these secondary alliances will not be any more random choices, but vocational choices inspired by a deep need of achieving the transcendent life of the soul through these contingent media. In short, if this union with a man, with her children, job and possessions, and with culture, becomes the highest ends *per se*, eventually usually they leave a sense of void and individual frustration, but if there is a substantial alliance, a recognition made life about the real needs of the soul, and a glimpse of her transcendent destiny, then the most suitable ways soon are pointed for the achievement of such values, and it is then when even pain and failure become favourable media for existential consummation.

## **5. FEMININE MASTERSHIP. THE HIGHER WOMAN.**

In modern society, the spiritual function of a woman is to re-establish in herself the highest values of life, and to preserve and transmit them through participating action:

1°. Inner *gestation* of feminine *egoencia*.

2°. *Preservation* of intimate values amid confused currents of ideas, passions, fads and deviationism of the modern time.

3°. *Transmission* of this spiritual values to mankind, with a particular seal stamped by the vocation of every woman. This expansive and participating transmission constitutes the *feminine mastership*.

How to achieve this mastership?

1. *Through her spiritual union with a man.*

The instinctive and blind coupling of a human female should give way to a union between beings of light. A woman should learn how to recognise the luminous soul of her male positive, by refining her sensibility and sublimating her sex. Otherwise, unions take place in the shadows, and usually their fruits are of shadows. This is an important point and would deserve an especial lecture. It is one of the most immediate and necessary conquests of a woman: to be aware of the laws on the choice of a mate.

2. *Through irradiation of love not consummated with a man.*

As a fact, the myth about man and marriage in traditional society has led many women, naturally drawn to sexual love consummation, to feel apart from that group of women whose ideal is her man and home; many of them, in their attempts to force a marriage that they do not entirely feel, at the end pick up disappointment and frustration. On a line of greater and greater respect for her individual destiny, modern woman is able to recognise that the destiny of many women does not consist necessarily of marriage, and in this sense, the end of love is not its consummation with a man, but *its irradiation* to customs, art, assistance of the needy, or religious dedication. Sometimes, this is a way of public dedication: a great lady, a great artist; other times, it is a lonely and anonymous way.

3. *Through irradiation of beauty.*

Beauty, irradiated by the Spirit through a feminine soul and body, plays a quite important part in all economy of human society; this fine function, closely connected with sex, is one of many higher values that woman usually handles unconsciously, and quite early loses by materialistic debasement; through higher consciousness of this radiating function, and by being in charge of its exceptional power, a woman –certain women– can accede an arcane that they all try to conquer, but that is fading away constantly: power of charm, seduction and beauty used in a creative way, beyond mere sexual magic.

4. *Through custody and transmission of the spiritual heritage of humanity to future generations.*

It is more and more necessary a feminine mastership which, beyond a mere biological role of perpetuating the species and transmitting social habits, penetrates into the very essence of the human dignity, being able to preserve and transmit such values. According to Erich Fromm in his *Art of Loving*:

*“If we impart knowledge, we neglect however the main teaching for human development: a teaching that just can be given by simple presence of a mature, loving person... If we could not keep alive our vision of a mature life, then it is likely that we should confront the collapse of our cultural tradition. Basically, a tradition not founded on transmitting knowledge of certain type, but human traits of certain kind. If the following generation stops seeing these traits, then five thousand years of culture will collapse, even when knowledge is transmitted and continues to develop”* (Erich Fromm. “*El Arte de Amar*”, Paidós, Buenos Aires, 1960, page 128).

In my view, for a woman is quite important to get a teaching of this kind, not through professionalism, but through her own presence as a mature, loving person. When a woman neglects this role –custody of the holy fire– debased by customs of her time, this is an alarming sign because a cultural cycle perhaps is coming to an end.

Of course, here I do not mention multiple possibilities of the feminine mastership or outline the archetype of a modern woman according to my insights because, as I said above, it is a *germ* of future in woman, which she should develop. On my side, I just try to point its existence and possibilities, but my conviction is that, if eventually the divine should assume a new expression in the body of humanity, and if, as Teilhard de Chardin says, today we need a “new face of God”, this God cannot have only the manly, severe, Omniscient and Omnipotent face of the One who paternally encouraged an entire civilisation that was mainly masculine, but that, from the immanence, *also* we should recognise Him behind the veil of the feminine form, through Her kind, sweet, creative, radiant, beautiful Presence.



