



TO RANSOM THE FEMINE in order to reanimate the earth

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SOME DIRECTIONS TOWARDS DIALOGUE

NOTES

Manliness and femininity

For each strong woman tired of feigning weakness, there is a weak man tired of seeming strong.

For each woman tired of having to act silly, there is a man weighed down by having to feign he knows everything.

For each woman tired of being classified as an “emotional female”, there is a man whose right to weep and to be delicate has been denied.

For each woman catalogued as not being feminine when she competes, there is a man obliged to compete so that no doubt arises about his masculinity.

For each woman tired of being a sexual object, there is a man worried about his sexual power.

For each woman who feels herself tied by her sons, there is a man who has been denied, the pleasure of fatherhood.

For each woman who hasn't had access to a job or a satisfactory salary, there is a man who has to assume the economic responsibility of another human being.

For each woman who doesn't understand the mechanism of a car, there is a man who hasn't learnt the secrets of the art of cooking.

For each woman who takes a step towards her own liberation, there is a man who rediscovers the way towards freedom.

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1. TO RESCUE THE FEMININE

“Today more than ever, the women’s cause is the cause of all the Humanity” (B. Boutros Ghali)

In our case and using Jung’s terminology, to *re-animate* has to do with *anima*, with the feminine, with what is present in every human being, man or woman, although of course in different proportions. In the same way, *animus* is related with the virile, but it is also present in all human beings. Animus and anima shape the human being and definitively mould Humanity.

1.1. TO RE-VIVE THE EARTH

But the feminine has been enormously undervalued and oppressed as much for men as for women, though in a very different way; and this damages the whole human being: “We have a science full of male pride, a basically masculine society and misogynist churches. That is why we live in a society truly poor, without the irradiation of the *anima*. And women have been the greatest victims of this sort of life”¹. Of course this is true, but, besides, it is certain that the *animus* has also been manipulated and given a disproportionate importance in, at the time as it has been oppressed and “suppressed” in women. The *animus*, too, needs to be rescued and balanced.

This disarrangement has led to an impoverishment which touches all humanity; our way of being, the very identity of men and women, and, of course, it affects the relations between people and definitively disturbs the balance of society. In our world, personal structures, political, social and even ecclesiastic ones lack “soul”.

To *revive* the Earth suggest something like a task to rescue our planet that at the same time makes possible a revitalisation, a different mode of development so that Humanity changes and grows spiritually and personally in a new way, developing an inwardness and invigorating love, so that, it reaches fullness, and so that our relationship with the world and with life is modified.

In an evocative and simple way we may say that our world, cultures, structures... lack *anima* and have a surfeit of concrete ways of living the *animus* and, thus, the whole is unbalanced. This imbalance is the foundation of unfair and hierarchical relations, excessively based on power, which devalue the feminine dimension and over-valorise manliness. To understand all this inevitably leads to the desire for a deep transformation.

Women began to have an intuition of this and created the feminist liberation movements, partly because they felt –and still feel asphyxiated under the weight of the narrowness and the injustice they experience.

Of course this experience of oppression brought to general consciousness, is decisive; it awakens women and gives them the impetus to struggle for liberation.

But besides they were convinced that: “The world of humanity possesses two wings: one is woman and the other one man. As long as the two wings are not equally

developed the bird cannot fly. If one of the wings remains weak, flight is impossible'². We really need a new Humanity; we want to fly.

1.2. A HUMANITY WHICH IS IN THE PROCESS OF BECOMING

That is why, when the well-known anthropologist Margaret Mead was asked about which were, in her opinion, the most decisive moments of human development along time, she answered with conviction:

“There are four periods after which nothing was again the same: a) the moment of evolution (the leaping life-spirit), b) the glacial period, c) the age of industrialisation, d) and the one of *feminist movements*”.

Not many men and women are yet involved, but nevertheless there is a slow but steady growth in the number of thinkers and sociologists, etc... who hold this same viewpoint and who, more specifically, assert that it refers to the influential events and the ideological advances of our century. They point out that if we must consider something to be significant for the future of humanity, it is precisely this growing and deepening of feminist thought and action in the world. It affects the whole human being, the way of being man and woman, our identity, and global relations. This matter of “woman” is not something transitory, it is not an interesting “theme”, neither is it something more or less marginal in human existence. It is part of the foundation and it deeply affects all existence, the very “framework” of the world, where all problems are interrelated. The economy, politics, education, work, language, sexuality... all are repositioned by the presence or the absence of the women.

What does it mean to rescue the feminine?

It is a way of being and of feeling life and relationships, of reconstructing the world; it is concerned with the roots of justice. It goes deep within to find a new *paradigm*, a different model; it indicates a path which leads from hierarchical and pyramidal relations to others more equalized. And it has repercussions on the totality of our life; not only because everything is interrelated, but also because, it affects humanity, in its profoundest configuration as person, in both the ways of being fully woman and the ways of being fully man, in the *anima* and, also, the *animus* of the world. It affects *relationships* and it is fully integrated in the evolution of human *consciousness*, the world-wide *conscience* which is gradually emerging, clarifying itself amongst difficulties, and is gathering momentum with real “leaps” forward.

As we move forwards, we become more and more conscious that we are doing it globally; that all us are involved in a process of cosmic unification and of joint clarification. It is very important this integral perception of reality, as well as the understanding of the global nature of women’s oppression and liberation. It is discovered on all fronts and it influences everything. Everything is interconnected; yet everything is provisional and it forges ahead slowly. It is the same with Humanity.

There are key moments in this global advance and, as Margaret Mead rightly pointed out, *feminism* is fundamental to the change. It is fully integrated into evolution and it

implies a real transformation of humanity, of the totality, not only for women, but also for men.

On this depends in a big way the revival of the world; it is a consciousness which has scarcely begun to show up slowly and insistently, but whose repercussions are yet unforeseeable.

From this perspective must be contemplated the starting of the feminist movements and of feminist consciousness, inserted into other movements of liberation and of human conscientization, as well as in liberating praxis. Historical memory is not only an act of justice towards person and achieved efforts, but is also a powerful motivation for the present: it sheds light and “revives” the present, and helps us to understand today, it vivifies this present time and it pushes us towards the future.

1.3. IN “A STATE OF SUBMISSION ”

“The minor must serve the major”

Women’s oppression is *age-old* –in the sense that it permeates history indefinitely through time–; it is *integral*, because it contains all the ambits of existence; it is *multi-cultural*, *multi-religious* because it is omnipresent in all cultures and religions of the world... and, often, it reaches unsuspected extremes.

In our western culture the “state of submission”, the “state of servitude and subjection” of women has been scrupulously defined and constantly demanded by Graciano, Saint Thomas Aquinas and other laymen and religious thinkers of Middle Ages. They deduced “the inferior nature” of women and, accordingly decreed, that “the lesser must serve the greatest”, “the inferior, the superior”... all “as a natural order of humanity”! (Graciano).

But these thinkers took the social organization inherited from the past time, they strengthened them, they found the strongest support in the society of their own time and they projected it with incredible strength into the future. By the XVI century the jurist Tiraqueau already observed –and besides approved!– the fact that both Church and State, *in all ages and in all cultures of the world*³, were in agreement about this state of total submission for women.

This “state of submission” doesn’t only concern women, but it is specially overpowering for them because it fixes them at a perpetual “minority age”, at radical subordination, at absolute legal and real dependence and incapacity, as much in civil law as in the penal code, in canon law and for all the other codes and laws: family, labour, educational, etc., at both civil and ecclesiastic levels. Furthermore, this state of submission betrays clearly the vertical, pyramidal and hierarchic connections, androcentral and of dominance, which spread to all orders of existence.

Hierarchics relationships grade the stepping stones which distance the human being from “the other”, from nature, animals, etc. They promotes dominion and possession and we feel their repercussions even on the ecological balance. But furthermore the grading classifies persons and separates them brutally in social classes, superior and inferior races, villages more or less developed, true and false religions, first class

citizens and those of lower standing... And, of course, perhaps less consciously, but no less destructively, *into sexes*: one over the other, for the benefit of “one”, “in a state of submission”, “the smallest at the service of the greatest”.

Let us examine a clear example to understand better the extent and the enormity of how the “state of submission” affects the human being, the very nature of women. For St. Thomas Aquinas, the most powerful reason why women can’t be ordained priest is precisely because of this “state of submission”, and for the same reason neither can a slave. But if it happens that both be ordained, the slave’s ordination would be illicit, while the woman’s, besides being illicit, would also be *invalid*, because *this submission is due to nature*. That is why she must *submit* always and in everything to the man⁴ and therefore “she can’t signify an eminent dignity”. This is only an example of the discriminatory extent of such a definition.

This submission is so decisive and it justifies so well the inferiority of woman that it even asserts that “the image of God is in man in a way that it does not exist in woman”⁵ ... Beings “deficiens”, “imbecilior sexus” in Aristotelian-Thomist language... in all times and in all places, because she “is in all aspects, of lesser value than the man” (Flavio Josefo).

Man’s ownership of woman

This definition also justifies masculine possession and dominion. Nietzsche explained it afterwards in a way as both concise and brutal, although in fact he was not original in his judgement: “The man must consider the woman as property, a good which is necessary to be put under lock and key, a being made to be in domesticity and which doesn’t tend towards its perfection except in this *subordinate position*”⁶.

In the Old Testament we already discover this sense of women as property which men had in Israel, the same as in other countries. The woman belongs to the man, together with the house, the asses, the cows... (Ex.20,17;22,19...), and even adultery is a sin *against property*. That is also why she is obliged to obey her husband as her owner and master: “rab”, in Hebrew. The same attitude is visible in other cultures. The greatest sin for a Moslem woman is to disobey her husband who is her owner.

I think it is very important to underline this state and this *hierarchical* and “natural” situation of relations which lead to the most absolute appropriation and that, of course, it did not only happen in ancient times, but it is strengthened through time... and it involves all cultures. There is still much internalised baggage to be discarded. We are still very far away from really changing human relationships. The women of the whole world go on suffering in a state of oppressiveness and of humiliation. The instinct to uncontrolled dominance ravages the world.

Rough treatment

Today, one of every three women receives rough treatment; each eight seconds a woman is physically ill-treated and in many cases she is the victim of her own husband.⁷ For each man who emigrates to Indonesia, three women do it. 80% of the

displaced and the refugees of the world are also women. The violations, the repercussions on “sexual tourism” and the abuse, the buying and selling of women... are countless everywhere, but the increase of these practices amongst the women of the Third World is chilling.

Some cultures practise clitoridectomy and/or the sewing of the vaginal lips which the bridegroom will open with a knife on the wedding day, thus affirming the “taking” of her. There are 110 million women and girls with the genital organs mutilated and each year 2 millions more are mutilated. In China, India, Bangladesh, South Korea... infanticides and selective abortions abound and 99% of the victims are girls. As a consequence, for example, China has 52 million more Chinese men than women of marriageable age. In many countries and in some cultures, even today, repudiation and polygamy are allowed. The Islamic culture renders women invisible compelling them to wear a veil and thus confirming their status as possession.

Poverty and culture

In the same work conditions, the woman’s salary is from 30 to 40% less than the man and even, in countries like Japan and Korea, sometimes it is 50% lower. The women’s “stoppage” is much higher than the men’s. Three quarters parts of the poor in the world are women. 70% of the 960 million illiterate are women, in contrast to the 30% who are men. In the Third World women constitute 80% of the rural labour force. In every possible way, women execute 2/3 of the work done in the world, but they only receive 10% of world profit and they only possess 1% of crop land.

Today we can speak of the “feminization of poverty” because it is a fact real and unfortunate... The inhabitants of the Fourth World and the victims of social exclusion are women.

Inequalities with regard to law

500.000 women die each year due to pregnancy complications and 500 of them die every day due to abortion badly performed... In some parts of India the woman is killed when she is left a widow. There are still countries in the world where’ in case of pregnancy due to violation and/or adultery’ the woman is killed –In Egypt she is thrown into the Nile after death–. In war, women continue to be booty, strategy and interchange... Of course, in all countries the law protects, excuses and is more acquiescent with men, although it is well known in all of them that it is men who use violence upon women... And we could go on adding information and examples about the humiliation and violence that women suffer today in all the world and how these facts speak of submission and injustice.

The anthropology, the practice and the generalised culture of feminine inferiority, and of feminine possession and submissiveness, go on through history and affect all humanity. It concerns women, but, whether consciously or not, also men. The repercussions are flagrant. Today we can recognise the “feminine face of oppression”.

2. WOMEN'S AWAKENING

There have been always women who have been strongly aware of this state of dependence, of being shut in and of this physical and psychical silence to which they were submitted due to their "sex and condition". Some of them, in one way or in another, have written about it or have spoken more or less openly of their reactions and resistances: Sappho of Lesbos (625-580 b.C.), Eleanor of Aquitaine (XIIth century), Christine of Pisan (XIV-XVth)...

Violante of Montcada (XVth), like many other abbesses of her time, opposed energetically the imposition of enclosure that was "perching upon their Rule" and customs. Margaret of Navarre (XVIth) was ridiculed in Boccaccio's "Decameron" and she answered back in the "Heptameron". Mary of Gournay (XVIth), adopted child of Montaigne, published a treatise on "the equality of men and women" in which she protests energetically about the situation.

Sister Joan Agnes of the Cross (XVIIth), being besides an excellent poet, claimed for women the right to do theology. Mary Ward (XVIIth), founder of the "English Ladies", had very many difficulties with the men of the papal Curia, due to her ideas about religious life and she resisted being always treated with reference to men: "As if in everything we were inferior to another creature which I suppose must be man!"⁸ Anne Mary von Schurman (XVIIth) defined herself as a feminist and she founded an Anabaptist sect. These are only a few women better known in the western culture, though from different countries and ages, in different circumstances and life conditions.

2.1 IN PROLONGED SILENCE

There were many more; many more than the ones we actually know and those whom we discover every day. There is yet much to be done in data retrieval in this field! Other women complained and grieved remaining in anonymity... Undoubtedly, all them must be recognised as authentic "germs" for later liberation history. Nevertheless, society, the passage of time and, of course, history (always written and interpreted by men) had seen fit to ignore, minimize or deform drifts and persons that tried to avoid or to protest about situations which they considered unjust: even their works and insights were forgotten.

But explicitly nonconformist women were always the minority. The majority respected and internalised, over the centuries, the limited vital, ideological and moral frame which was assigned to them, as well as the "feminine" roles and stereotypes. They considered normal a fixed way of being and of feeling "inferior", and they moved carefully in the reduced space which was imposed on them, and thus, in silence, suffering was accumulated and they endured a frustration of which sometimes they were not fully aware. Men, as the Jesuits rightly said at their last General Congregation, always tried and try to think "that the problem didn't exist", without realising either their own complicity or their part in the cause...⁹ A heavy cultural baggage of centuries, from which it is very difficult to get free!

We must turn to the end of the XVIIIth century to find a bigger number of women who although not organised, had the courage and the conscientiousness to start attempting to

make publicly evident sexist oppression and to claim their rights. This was the title of Mary Wollstonecraft's book: "A vindication of the rights of women" which, as was to be expected, was badly received.

2.2. INSERTION IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION

To some persons the quick run-through that follows may seem useless, but I think it is important to contextualize the feminist movement amongst others in its time and to understand it from there. This gives us a necessary perspective.

It is not a matter of chance that feminism, as such, began to unfold incipiently already towards the end of XVIIIth century and during the XIXth. It did so inserted in the social movements of liberation: racial, politic, labour, colonial, economic... sexual (which also participates in the other oppressions), because, all these contests aim at a common objective which is liberation. In fact, all of them are part of a unique plural movement and of a search for relations less hierarchical, more egalitarian and less based on "submission" in all the aspects which we previously recognised: races, social classes, nations, religions, cultures, sexes...

New values begin to emerge, a new sensitivity in ways of making contact, of sensing the world and Humanity, a new conscience which is yet not entirely new.

The movement goes on developing, with steps which come from far away and then suddenly are visible. And if we know how to look them from a global perspective, we realise that all belong to the same human evolution which goes on discovering and needing new more dignified ways of relationship, and which is walking altogether towards a liberation.

History must be understood and contemplated with perspective, if we are to discover its core.

The struggles for liberation

Let us try to understand the context by taking a quick look at history, or rather at some movements and ideologies which inspired and mobilised the epoch.

None of them is isolated; they are steps which must be understood and felt in their entirety and the women's movements are involved in them.

The XVII and XVIII centuries find European culture in a different position with regard to science, philosophy, industry and the cosmos; there seemed to be an advance in the matter of the autonomy of the human conscience autonomy.

Humankind was discovering a new way of being in the world, a "Copernican" revolution of the autonomy of the conscience, and the deconsecration of the world, etc...

The French Revolution formulated the incipient aspirations of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity", which point to a programme still unfulfilled, but which already drags along

a history of effort towards attainment, of these ideals, a history that has also reaped its achievements...

The first Declaration of the Human Rights (1789) is a milestone which is a landmark in history and human relations.

These rights were corroborated, enlarged and declared universal in 1948, and today we are going on reporting their non-fulfilment in so many places and circumstances, but the step is undoubtedly of importance.

The progressive clarification about their own identity and dignity lead many colonised countries to fight for their independence. Antiracists and antislavery movements also began as a desperate shout for human dignity and human conscience.

They attained much in this sphere of action, although we are still feeling their limitations, wounds and inflictions.

During the XIX century, social and political revolutions extended through all Europe, attempting to discover ways of political participation, distribution of power and greater civic involvement. Democracies, constitutions, parliaments etc...gained ground. The middle-class was strengthened in contrast to the nobility. The origins of the working-class movements, their struggles to attain a more equal society and a more just sharing out of goods and work are also significant.

The positive sciences, the profound psychology, the industrial and technical advances... place humanity in other parameters and perspectives. The socialist movements, the minority social and utopic trends etc. etc... set in.

Already in the XIXth century, ecumenical and interreligious uneasiness and a quest for dialogue had begun in some areas, though these were still in a minority.

These initiatives must be noted because they indicate a desire for change in relationships that were dogmatized and damaged.

These different movements are intuitions with the same root and in the same direction which point towards the transformation of this world, the clarification of the human conscience, and they support the search for a different kind of human relationship, no longer so pyramidal and hierarchical, but more just. From different aspects of oppression are arising liberating movements, They are still only broken promises, but they offer humanity a guide.

In this framework, the feminist movements

Within this framework, the *Feminist Movements* arise too, demanding their own rights, running into many difficulties and contempt in their path such difficulties enhance the outrages and the unjust relationships between the sexes... Never has there been a more scorned, disparaged and discredited drift as this one.

In this time there are already traces of what was to become the pacifist movement: the "International Council of Women" created in 1899 a committee for peace, "Peace and

International Relations”, an important step though little known. We need *to notice that women were pioneers* in this area.

Likewise we must remember women’s contribution to the Quaker pacifist movements in the United States. Already in the XIXth century, there are connections between pacifism and women’s liberation.

All this must be seen as part of a movement towards conscientization, clarification and a search for change and for real human relationship, in spite of everything, in the midst of the ambiguities of what is called progress and of practical and structural difficulties. They are minor steps but in the same direction to promote different relations between races, nations, social classes, sexes, religions, in politics... They are incipient aims, not yet attained, they are still germinating, towards relationships more egalitarian and sharing. Seen in their proper perspective, no step forward is isolated.

2.3. AN OUTLINE OF THE ORIGINS OF FEMINISM

The beginnings

The ideas of the Enlightenment, of the encyclopaedists, etc., furnished women with important ideological material to help them to reflect on their situation and to begin to organise themselves and to react.

Groups of French women, from different parts of the country, protested energetically about not having been convoked to the Estates General (1788) and, moreover, they included claims that were educative, family, legal... the right to the vote, concern about prostitution, health, heritage or dowry... Of course they were not listened to, but their courage is set down in the annals of the feminist movement.

The best known feminist during the French Revolution was Olimpia Gouges. She drew up “The Rights of the Citizeness” before those of the citizen were proclaimed; she wrote against the death penalty; she worked tirelessly for the cause of peace and of women. She knew that her death was unavoidable and, before it took place, she decided to print a pamphlet entitled “three urns or the rescue of Paris”: The one for the noblemen and the middle-class, the other one for the working-class and the third one for women. She was accused of having written against the Republican Government, of being rebellious and conservative and, besides, of wanting to restore the monarchy... In fact, the real reason was stated by the attorney Chaumette on the day of her death: “Remember this butch, this mannish woman, the shameless Olympia Gouges who left behind all the cares of her house, she wanted to dabble in politics and she committed crimes... *This oblivion of her sex* has led her to the scaffold”. Or, as it was published on a newspaper: “she had wanted to be an statesman and, as it seems, the law has punished this woman conspirator for having abandoned *the virtues peculiar to her sex*” The reason is clear.

Women went on working and claiming their political and social rights while they fought for the revolutionary aims. In 1792 they again prepared another manifesto directed to the French government deputies. In vain! The ideology and the feminist fight went on spreading to other countries, always joined also to other causes and just claims: in the

United States to the anticolonialist and independentist issues, as well as to antislavist and antiracist ones; afterwards to working-class claims, finally being opposed to all kind of injustice... The same thing in England, in France and in other countries. Flora Tristán, Eugénie Niboyet, Ella Wiggins, Ella Wheeler, Vera Figner, Louse Michel, Emmeline Pankhurst and her two daughters, Christabel and Silvia, Emily Davidson, Rosa Luxemburg, Alexandra Kolontai, Emilia Pardo Bazan.... these are some outstanding names from the long list of feminist of these ages, in different European and North American places. They deserve to be held in our memories.

There were also a few men who contributed to the cause. Obviously only a few, enough to corroborate that “the exception proves the rule”. But it is only fair to recognise them and to name some. Condorcet helped his wife to work on the equality of sexes and on the defence of the woman worker; Stuart Mill married to the feminist Harriet Hardy, wrote “The Woman’s SLAVERY” and immediately lost his seat in the English Parliament. The utopian socialists Saint Simon and Fourier, Jacob Brigt, Engels and other’s wrote in defence of women, but their action didn’t go further. Nevertheless it is important not to forget that although in a very symbolic way, some men also added their voices to women’s claims.

Surmounting difficulties and disappointments

At the same time, women were catching on to painful contradictions in the new systems and ideologies. The French Napoleonic Code which was progressive in nearly everything, nevertheless, was absolutely discriminatory in what related to the family and to the woman: it continued treating her as a “minor” and it left her incapacitated for almost all economic and public duties. It reached the point of affirming terrible things and even shameless ones, although neither were original. As for instance: “Nature wanted women to be our slaves... They are our property... They belong to us as the tree that gives birth to the fruits belongs to the farmer... The woman is nothing but a machine to produce sons”... The disappointments continue...

Moreover, on triumphing over the bourgeoisie, women saw quite clearly that the egalitarian statements which at first seemed to exclude nobody, in fact continued doing it with regard to sex as well as to power, money, colour, etc... Women didn’t even have the right to vote. The Citizen’s Rights, the men’s ones, seemed universal; but in fact, women had to wait till 1993 –two hundred years!– when at the ONU Conference in Vienna and as a very important achievement, it was stated that they are equally women’s rights and this same fact was only ratified in the Beijing Conference (1995)...

Besides the working conditions changed enormously; with the Industrial Revolution women lost their prestige as craftswomen, they left for the factories, as is well known, in conditions of inhuman work and always disastrously underpaid, of course, much worse than the men; they were the proletarians among the proletarian men... The contradictions of the industrial society in England and in USA increased the endless chain of difficulties. As André Léo will say (1870): “the democrats have never taken women into account. Neither did others.

Well then, all filled with revulsion a minority of women who reacted and began to get organized. They specially focused on the fight for the vote, for the right to be authentic citizens. This was the *suffragist movement*, which left the matter of labour equality in second place, and because of this, the movement was branded as bourgeois. But one must not forget that one fight was related to the other because the workers couldn't vote and neither could the Negroes. "Do you believe that the black race is only composed of men?", asked Elisabeth Stanton to the leaders of the movement. But only, workers or Negroes who were men, got the right to vote.

In 1848 was celebrated in New York the first convention on woman's rights. It was rights of equality in marriage, in sexuality, in salaries, education, in the care of sons and daughters and in the possibility of having at one's disposal one's own economic resources, etc... and, of course, the right to vote. There passed the Bill of Rights of Seneca Falls, a basic text about suffragism and about the feminist ideology in the United States.

In England the Sheffield Assembly (1851) was very significant and extremely attended by women... In 1899 the second International Assembly was held in London, at which were present 5.000 women representing more than 600.000 feminists.

1868 was an important year for French feminism, amongst other things because they dared to create clubs and discussion circles, as well as to publish feminist newspapers.

Emancipation concerns the whole of humanity

Women always understood that their liberation was linked with and ought to be attained together with the one of the other oppressed of this world, answering thus a holistic vision of life and of justice. Nevertheless, while men received willingly women's help for social, political, racial, etc, causes, they always forgot and even despised the feminist cause.

As Anne M. Käppeli says: "When socialist feminists try to push their male comrades to put their promises into practice, then ambivalences and conflicts crop up".¹⁰

This happened in all the fields: in the independentist, antiracist, antislavist, antifascist, pacifist movements... Liberation was understood from all ambits, collaboration was achieved, and in all of them women were forgotten.

Almost nobody wanted get to know the feminist message as a whole, although it was clear and forceful: "we need to show that women's emancipation is not only something that is of interest to women, but also to the whole of humanity. Women's emancipation will also be that of men"¹¹. And it seems to me very important to underline this fully. As we said at the beginning' quoting Boutros Ghali: "Today more than ever, the women's cause is the cause of all humanity". It is essential to understand women's work in this light.

But the movement's history is long and costly, full of sufferings and of lack of understanding... The women were cruelly derided, they were insulted, eggs were thrown at them at mass meetings and at public functions... There is nothing more painful than the incomprehension, the scorn and the distortion of messages... They were wounded in

excess. And as, when somebody speaks and is not listened to, this person shouts, and if still not heard, shouts more, thus in some moments –not always– the feminist movements radicalised themselves and they lived a total lack of understanding.

There has not been a more scorned and stigmatised drift. It tried to walk always by the legal way, but faced with the impossibility of obtaining results, in the year 1903, in England, women decided on more direct, ruggle through strikes, mass meetings and other public disturbances, although never done in a bloody way. I believe *this is the unique social grievance achieved in a bloodless way.*

The last years

The two world wars changed, up to a point, some aspects of the women's situation, especially in what refers to work necessary to replace the men that were called to the front. This influenced decidedly the real situation of the women. Nevertheless, from the First War until approximately the sixties, there is an apparent silence of production and writing. The advances and the struggle were conducted in a different way, more pragmatically. These were the decades in which gradually most countries recognized the right of women to have the vote, also very important legal, educative and laboral reforms were attained, and this goes on changing the situation in a significant way. On the other hand, women worked actively in the resistance movements of their respective countries and they were involved in the enormous political events which characterise the first half of this century.

In 1959 Simone de Beauvoir wrote *The Second Sex*, a fundamental step in feminist thought which marks the future. Also *The Feminine Mystique* from Betty Friedan was epoch-making and it meant an ideological advance. A new stage begins.

Until these moments feminist concern focused as a priority the attainment of the same rights as men and this is usually defined *as feminism of equality*, essential for any real advance. Still, little by little steps and achievements were made in the legal scope, and logically all that has had repercussions on *feminist ideology* which, of course, realizes that its hopes have not yet been completely fulfilled, nor its aims obtained. On the contrary, it goes on discovering horizons, new facets and possibilities towards liberation.

Starting in the sixties, many women's movements arise and already not only in the countries called the First-World. This is extremely important. The women of the Third World, obviously more oppressed, begin to awaken energetically. Also emerges the feminism of the difference, enormously important today..., and we can't forget, although slow to arrive, Christian feminism which has sprouted with impressive evangelic, ecumenical and liberating strength.

3. AN UNSTOPPABLE WORLD-WIDE MOVEMENT

The IVth Conference and Forum about the Woman, in Beijing organised by the United Nations (1995), was a sort of historic milestone, not so much because of what it has really been able to advance –although the improvement is real and it exists– but mainly *for its symbolic value and the echo awakened in the women and in world wide public opinion.*

3.1 BEIJING: A WAY WITHOUT RETURN

In fact, these events don't define life, but they contribute so that it be aroused and be made to move forward and they do that on an international level.

The Forum of the ONGs, held earlier and concurrently, was full of hope, of work and of energy.

It sprang from a grateful singing, from the aim of a posthumous recognition of “the ones who preceded us in the struggle”, those who began and “smoothed the way”. It was a sort of celebration on a large-scale, multicoloured –more than thirty five thousand women had arrived from all the corners of the world– and a promise for the future: “celebrating the voices of the women from all the world, paying homage to those who prepared the way and the hope which dwells in the youth of the world”, to enrich and push the Forum and the Conference, that took place in Hairou-Beijing.

They were there, together with the governments of the Planet, “in the interest of the *whole* of humanity”, to see reality “through women's eyes”. They were there recognising by their presence that “the equality between men and women is a question of human rights and it constitutes a condition for the attainment of social justice, besides being a necessary and basic prerequisite for equality, development and peace. In order to obtain a sustained human development, it is essential that there be *a transformed relationship, based on equality between men and women*¹². That is to say, a global approach that affects relationships deeply and is affected by them.

The mass media of the world responded inappropriately to this sort of events. It was hard work, and at the same time, it was a meeting place of Hemispheres (North, South) and of lives in which women were able to express themselves, get to know, share problems, humiliations and hopes, and unite in order to exert pressure on their governments. That is why, the Forum influenced more than was expected, the Conference of the governments.

The groundwork Document which the governments debated “The Platform of Action”, gathers up in 12 chapters all the aspects of human existence and therefore, women's existence: education, economy, structural causes of poverty, all kinds of violences, the media, peace, health, sexuality, racist matters and xenophobia... ecology and sustainable development, politics etc... All is interrelated, all is global and thus it appears also in this Document. In these chapters women's position is shown with realism and aims, strategies and steps forwards, some of which are very significant were drawn up. Also the destitutions and the necessities of this world, “the black holes” and the injustice, are made very clear.

Certainly it is a good Document and it could be excellent, if the governments of the whole world could set about applying it to legislative changes, to the contribution of financial resources that it demands, with the same energy as is devoted to a practical and steady monitoring of it. It would be necessary that the word “to guarantee”, so often repeated by the governments, turn into something more than a promise of good intentions.

3.2. LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

To understand and to be consistent with the idea that “Peace, Development and Equality” are intimately linked and have a woman’s face, presupposes a qualitative, dynamic and efficacious change towards liberation.

Education, once more –and I think it is important to point this out–, has been contemplated as the instrument of transformation and “empowerment” essential for women; as Benazir Bhutto said, when prime minister of Pakistan: “Women can’t control their own life, if not through economic independence, and for this achievement it’s essential to provide education for all”.

Although consensus was not easy, it was attained. In the Conference strong differences were felt between the States, as well as various positions and approaches in the Churches, the Religions, etc. and even, in some cases, amongst the ONGs. The plurality of positions and of existing practices was evident. The difficulties and the confrontations can’t be put aside. Loyalty and coherence towards the commitments made will not be easy. The responsibility list that the Action Platform attributes to the International and National Institutions, to the Governments and to other organisations is nearly endless.

Something that has been very clear in Beijing is the certainty that “feminism” is not a first world matter and/or the liberation ideology of the rich countries and of the well-off classes. On the contrary, women’s position in the more unfavourable countries of the Planet and liberation strength that begins to arise, with energy and vigour, from their women, the most oppressed of the earth, were spoken of at length, vividly, realistically and clearly. The women of the whole world unite themselves and they claim justice.

It’s very important that the United Nations, that the governments and institutions don’t disappoint Humanity; yes, Humanity, because this matter concerns men and women, concerns us all.

4. TO RECOVER THE TWO WINGS OF HUMANITY

Like everything else, the IVth Conference had its limitations, and very big ones; nevertheless' as a whole it was very positive. We hope that the "Action Platform" will not become a dead letter. It outlines directions leading us forward in the struggle and in the hope. Much perseverance will be necessary, but tracks exist and concrete steps have been taken.

The General Secretary of the Conference, Gertrude Monguella, was perhaps excessively optimistic, when in her last words she predicted: "starting from this conference, woman's image will change radically". Perhaps it may not be so quick nor so simple, but there is no doubt that something in it is true because, in Beijing, the hope has been deeply fortified, and "nets" have been woven amongst the women of the whole world. The change is not so imminent, a very great deal of effort will be needed but, at any rate, the IVth Conference has shown more clearly that the movement is already universal and unstoppable; it is "a way without return". It has made possible a very important and decisive stage.

Bella S. Abzug, one of the historic feminists present in China, believed in the moral strength and in the dynamism of women; when the Forum was over, she threw out a challenge which she expressed beautifully and with conviction:

"We have the bricks to build some new structures, the bonds to establish some different relationships, the words to create a new language... and, as the women in Hairou have proved... we can!"¹³

New structures, different relationship, new language... All that speaks to us of remaking and creating, of a deep transformation which affects the whole of Humanity, global relationships, and, at the same time, demands other values and other attitudes; it points out a task which has much to do with the desire to revive and to revitalise this Earth.

4.1. JOINTLY WITH MEN

The two wings must be developed, the shorter one will have to be more favoured. So, it is a task to be done jointly, men and women from our world, must cooperate, because it is a responsibility which is to be understood as being held in common and that's why it must be shared.

Gertrude Monguella, at the end of the Conference, remembered the way followed by women and she extended the following invitation to men: "Women have always fought beside men against slavery, colonisation, apartheid and for peace. We invite men to join themselves now with women in their fight for equality",¹⁴.

This fact is very important and totally true. It carries a historical recognition and it also gives an idea of the perspective and global concerns present in women's fight for liberation.

Masculine dominance and all unjust and oppressive behaviour against women "offend as much men's dignity as that of women"¹⁵, and that is why such behaviour harms both.

Besides, and as the Document “Vita Consecrata” very well clarifies: “It is unavoidable that we recognize clearly that the new feminine consciousness also helps men to revise their mental schemes, their way of understanding themselves, of placing themselves in history and of interpreting it, and of organising social, political, religious and ecclesiastical life.¹⁶

Thus, it is absolutely necessary that men and women recover themselves together and, therefore, that they feel jointly responsible in this task which liberates not only women, but also men. Because certainly, the whole of humanity is wounded. The anima and the animus are unbalanced, they are disarranged in men and in women.

Let us remember the saying from Bahá’i which we cited at the beginning: ”The world of humanity possesses two wings: one is the woman and the other one, the man. As long as the two wings are not equally developed the bird cannot fly.

If one of the wings remains weak, flight is impossible". Just so, but furthermore, with one of them excessively weakened, the other one also suffers the consequences of the excess and thus it is also ill.

4.2.THE CRISIS OF MASCULINITY

Little by little, there are men who are catching on to this fact which is as true as it is dramatic. They are yet a minority, the ones who see, feel and declare openly the need for a change. Because not all men feel comfortable with their image as being domineering and competitive, adopting almost caricatured models of virility, received from the past, and drowning their expressions, emotions and totally legitimate feelings, but they fear to be considered “feminine”; this impoverishes the being not only in the affective and emotional sphere, but practically, in everything. Nevertheless, some men – very few ones are perfectly conscious about these facts. They foresee a change and they assume it as a challenge and a community commitment together with women.

The first person who said this to me some years ago, was a young and intelligent friend of mine. To him, the feminist reflection was an explosive that made him fully aware of unconscious masculine oppression. There is a clear imbalance in the animus and the anima which is becoming more acute in men and that not only distorts and impoverishes, but also crushes and hurts relationships. Definitely, he explained to me, men are the most needy. The imperative “be man”, with its load of pressures, heard from childhood, is becoming excessively annoying to many.

But this consciousness is still in the minority and, as with every wound not healed the problem, suppurates and gets more victims. So then, in our western civilisation we detect a real crisis of masculinity, qualified by some people as enormous and without precedent. An example of its visibility is the appearance of what is called the “soft man” stereotype of a man excessively weak, passive and “effeminate” in contrast to the “hardy man”, “the tough male”; both are a sort of caricature or schema which, unfortunately, has been concretised in the experience of modern western man.

The prevailing model is disintegrating and not always does it find another reshuffled way. This produces unconfessed insecurity and distress. People begin to speak about “masculine uneasiness” and about “giving a name to masculine wounds”.

Psychological and biological studies have been undertaken, “Men’s Studies”, specialized reviews and, even some masculine liberation movements have been initiated. Some men think: “We must reject traditional masculinity” and, of course, we must walk towards other more integrated models.¹⁷

Something is getting dismantled; there begins a painful and necessary demythologisation of masculinity, generally not fully openly formulated, that announces an end of a cultural age and which must lead to a profound inward and outward reconciliation, that begins with a recognition of reality. Because, truly, something is beginning to show; to reinterpret the masculinity also means to revive it but in another way, that is by allowing what was shackled and hidden to flow free.

4.3. A CALL TO RESPONSIBILITY

We are aiming at an enriched Humanity. The whole of humanity and also the Earth, the ecological system so pressured and damaged, needs new models and new relationships.

Elisabeth Badinter describes the situation very well: “When the men were aware of their disadvantage in nature (she refers to fertility) they created a palliative of great expanse: the patriarchal system”. But in this system fissures begin to be glimpsed, and she adds: “Nowadays, compelled to say good-bye to the patriarch, they must invent again the father and the virility that implies. Women, who observe with tenderness these mutations, hold their breath”¹⁸.

It is the expectation of a possible new birth.

5. TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM AND A RECONCILED HUMANITY

This new birth and the deep healing which human relationships require, goes through a deep psychic and spiritual process which affects men as well as women and also all creation.

5.1. TO RECOVER THE ANIMA

It requires a change, a radical conversion of relationships. It calls for *reciprocity* masculine-feminine, starting from otherness, from mutual recognition. It requires the *acceptance of the difference*, the inner recovery of the animus and the anima, in man as well as in woman. It leads to an apprenticeship in order *to grasp the energy which springs out of opposites*, out of multiplicity and to learn how to situate the contraries, and to engage in a dialogue with what is different. It is an arduous, laborious and, at the same time, gratifying therapeutic process, which leads to a new relationship more spontaneous and egalitarian. It demands new models and values also from the heartfelt spiritual experience which lets itself be taken in by the God –mother and father– of life.

Starting with the needs of this world, and emerging from ethics and theology there begins to be more and more a call for forgiveness, pity, loyalty, tenderness, vulnerability, compassion, care for life... attitudes and expressions of a balanced “anima”, which point to the hope of a possible relational healing. Terms like “ the right to forgiveness”, “compassionate solidarity”, “the ethics of pity”, the need for relationships in which love and tenderness are made explicit... these state something more than a vague wish expressed in some minority sectors.

All that is a sign of a new sensitivity which emerges yet timidly and it is a call to substitute competitive aggressiveness with mutually binding compassion where a spirit of collaboration replaces proud competition.

The need for a spiritual and cultural change becomes apparent; a change which deeply affects relationships and human contacts; a qualitatively different way of engaging in dialogue.

It is a progress from the hierarchical “vertical position” to knowledge gained from experience more “horizontal” and in solidarity with relationship; a passage from “complementarity” to otherness and a recognition of the difference.

As women it is imperative that we make our contribution for the benefit of the whole of creation and of all humanity; so, it is necessary that our voice be listened to and our company accepted and understood. It is also necessary to approach with humbleness and courage this process of purification and re-creation.

A realistic and universal ethics demands a basic change, a total conversion of relationships already very damaged and impoverished, as a first step towards peace and justice.

As women we beg neither favours nor alms, we ask for the re-establishment of the fraternal and fair relations beloved by God and to which all the creation has a right, and we offer to come to an agreement for reconciliation and co-operation. This is much more than an interested vindication, it is a watchful and urgent response for the good of all Humanity and of all creation, because our Planet and our Humanity need a physical and spiritual recovery.

Man does not in the slightest, benefit from continuing to be domineering; on the contrary, this degrades him; neither does woman benefit from being dominated and used. But subordination and even defeatist attitudes have been internalised by women over milleniums, while strength and pride to dominate have been fostered in men. There can't be liberation of Humanity if men go on oppressing women, nor if the latter consent to go on being oppressed.

Both animus and anima, but specially the latter, are suffering in men and in women, in all humanity. We begin to awake... but undoubtedly women have moved ahead and in them the process of becoming aware is stronger. Suffering is and always has been a vigorous spur.

It is necessary to recognize and to acknowledge with gratitude the work and the farsightedness of women in their efforts to liberate themselves and to liberate: "This situation has began to change, mainly due to the critical awakening and the valiant protest of the selfsame woman"¹⁹

5.2. THE FUTURE IS AT STAKE IN THE RELATIONSHIP

Thus, we see this is a united work of liberation which can't be done individually and alone. It calls us to an arduous and community apprenticeship which all of us, men and women, must serve. It is a shared task for which much understanding, courage, patience, listening, wisdom and definitely much love is needed. Love is the energy fundamental to life and relationship; from it sprout transformation, accompaniment and possibilities of searching together. "Love changes the world", says Teilhard de Chardin. Love revives, re-furbishes, re-invigorates springing from an inner affective drift, capable of crossing the world. It opens new ways and possibilities of hope. Love springs from the spirit and leads to the Holy Ghost, essential to human transformation, to this real new creation of humanity which harmonises men and women, and transforms them, and calls them to revitalise themselves, from the very heart of God who is love. But love not only doesn't exclude sincerity, it strongly implies it, just as it includes a valiant and decided will to change.

We can no longer continue with worn out and obsolete models from the past; we have to be faithful to the future, to the search for a different sort of connected mind fundamentally new; for equality, comradeship and collaboration; for otherness and mutual recognition; for allowing energy to flow and spring out of multiplicity and for making dialogue possible. The dialogue between the animus and the anima not only integrates them, but also facilitates the development of both.

5.3. JESUS: A NEW MODEL OF INTERACTION WITH WOMAN

We need a paradigmatic model of Man-Woman relationship not hierarchical, more community, which is recognised in otherness and reciprocity, without fears or domination. The theological foundation is based on the mystery of the Incarnation. God declares God's self in solidarity, "companion, collaborator", with human beings and establish new relationships, in otherness. And in Jesus these relationships become plain and near to us.

The relationship of Jesus with people, with the excluded and, specially, with women, are surprising, absolutely innovative and they are filled with liberating and inclusive meaning; they communicate love and they are full of a compassion which dignifies. They anticipate the new relationships we seek, because they are replete with community and a liberating sense; they are devoid of rigidity and of dominion. That's why, they weren't oppressive or paternalistic, thus announcing true reconciliation. That's also why, they were global and they affected all existence; when Jesus heals, he saves the soul and, when he saves, he integrates in this salvation all existence and, in this way, he heals the body. He heals existence and he redeems it. It is the grace of God which comes to us, it becomes visible and saves. That's why his relationships breed justice and love. The Beatitudes are a code for new relationships.

Franz Alt alludes to the integration which Jesus achieves in himself of the "anima"; that's why, his relationships are different and his communication arrives at the soul's core. "Only women and men who have integrated the anima can understand the global Jesus who attained this integration. While the Churches go on being pure Churches of men, the feminine and women will be underrated in them... Nevertheless, with Him the Churches could offer to the world the decisive contribution for its salvation and liberation. In Jesus, the masculine and the feminine aren't clashing, but they are amicably integrated and reconciled"...²⁰ That's to say, he achieves an interior dialogue between the animus and the anima; and thus he is perfectly unified and balanced; and he is the source of all relationships totally conveying integration.

5.4. "GLORY TO THE DIFFERENCES" (P. Salinas)

The terminology and the images of "animus" or "anima" must not be taken as absolute; neither did Jung do so. He considered them "provisional" intuitions, "intuitive concepts" which may help explain something, and, of course, studied in depth in personal and social psychology, they can speak to us in unsuspected ways, as they aim at new persons, new men and women. The Chinese speak about the balance between the "yang and the yin" and other cultures used mythical archetypes... What interests us here is to discover that the human person has ahead interior ways, not yet attended to from the psychological and human viewpoint, but which must be deepened starting from a strong call and a spiritual dimension. It is a task which humanity has not yet undertaken.

We need to create a new sort of relationship, rediscovering femininity and masculinity, reinterpreting symbols and life, but not with the romantic vision of a past time which, of course, was nor better than ours, but from a reformulation and interiorisation today, very deeply done. We need to dare to create and to love right now "the man (the

woman) who doesn't exist yet" (Camus), but which we can and must go on shaping, contributing from our difference, and this will bring about a true revolution in Humanity.

Women are neither better nor worse than men, they are different; and from there both must contribute to the enrichment of the world and of humanity. The lack of this contribution produces a dangerous inequality.

This is an urgent effort which must be begun, because a crippled and unbalanced Humanity, not only is of no benefit to anybody, but also because it is heading for self-destruction and for neurotic disequilibrium. We must rescue the "two wings" and thus fly; we must revitalise the "anima" and thus revive the earth; we must balance our relationships to recover the physical and spiritual health of the planet, of humanity. The future depends on relationships and these must spring from a reconciled heart.

As was stated in the Ecumenical Assembly of Basilea, 89: "We must learn that our happiness and our health don't depend so much on material goods as much as on the gifts of nature and the other creatures, on Human relationships and our relationship with God". But these relationships must change profoundly.²¹

SOME DIRECTIONS TOWARDS DIALOGUE

1. How do we react to the word “feminism”?

- *If we reject it, what alternatives do we propose?*
- *Do you think there is a masculinity crisis? in what?*
- *And if not a crisis; at least, would you accept that there has been a change?*
- *How do men react in view to this?*

2. Comment on the anonymous poem at the beginning of this Folder.

- *Can you remember other aspects of the “submission state” more “close” to you than the ones described here?*

3. Let us go deeply into anima and animus:

- *Personally, how do we feel the animus and the anima?*
- *As women, how have we oppressed the animus?, how have we made absolute the anima?*
- *And vice-versa for men?*
- *In either case, how can we improve our animus?, and the anima?*

4. What applications does this imbalance of the animus and the anima have in:

- *Society, in politics, in the Churches..., in education, etc...?*

NOTES

¹ Leonardo Boff, *Nueva Era: la civilización planetaria*, Estella, 1995, p. 84.

² From a Baha'i writing. Quoted by Nekane Lauzirika, *Mirando al futuro con ojos de mujer*, Bilbao, 1996, p. 19.

³ Quoted by Romero de Maio, *Mujer y Renacimiento*, Madrid, 1988, p. 95.

⁴ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, BAC, Madrid, 1995, v. XV, Tratado del Orden, supl. q. 39, to 1-6. Also 2nd. Iiae, q. 177, art. 2.

⁵ *Ibidem*, sup. q. 93, to la, 4 ad 1.

⁶ F. Nietzsche, *Más allá del bien y del mal*, in *Complete Works*, Madrid-Buenos Aires-Mexico, 1932.

⁷ Most of the data stated as follows, although not all of them, are statistics published by the Commission of the IV World Conference of Woman at the ONU, 1995.

⁸ The complete idea expressed by M. Ward is: "There is no difference between the man and the woman which hinders women from doing great things... Then What do you think of the expression "they are only women"? As if in everything we were inferior to another creature which, I suppose, it must be the man"!

⁹ 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, 1995, Doc. "The Society and women's situation in the Church and in civil society", cfr. n. 9.

¹⁰ Anne Marie Käppeli, *Escenarios del feminismo, History of Women*, Madrid, 1993, v. IV. p. 520.

¹¹ Andrée Michel, *Le Féminisme*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1980, p. 77. Mme. Avril de Sainte-Croix, at the Washington Assembly 1888, and picking up the thought of Flora Tristán and of other feminists of the first stage.

¹² IV. Mundial Conference on women. Platform of Action, 15, IX, 1995, Emakunde, p. 2. The italics are mine.

¹³ Bella S. Abzug, *Two views on the Beijing Conference*, The earth Times, September 10, 1995, p. 7.

¹⁴ Quoted by Nekane Lauzirika, *Mirando al futuro... o.c.*, p. 111.

¹⁵ 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, o.c. n.3.

¹⁶ John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, Madrid, 1996, n.57.

¹⁷ Cooper Thompson, "we must reject traditional masculinity", AA.VV. *Ser Hombre*, Kairós, Madrid, 1993, 28-38. The first groups began in USA in 1969, in Germany 1972 etc.. And of course, they are striving in the industrialised and rich countries. Abundant literature is being produced on the subject.

¹⁸ Elisabeth Badinter, XY, *La identidad masculina*, Madrid, 1992, Madrid, 1990, p. 73.

¹⁹ 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, o. c., n.3.

²⁰ Franz Alt, *Jesús, el primer hombre nuevo*, Córdoba, 1993, p. 32 y 30. Official documentation of the European Ecumenical Assembly, Peace with Justice, Basilea, 15-21 May, 1989, Madrid, 1990, p. 73.

²¹ Official documentation of the European Ecumenical Assembly, Peace with Justice, Basilea, 15-21 May, Madrid 1990, p. 73.