

***To Love or
To Be In Love
by Dane Rudhyar***

This little word, "love," how it has been used, misused and abused! Everyone talks about love, from the Gospel writers to the young man who asks his date, "Do you love me?" Everyone at some time or other feels what he or she calls love, is exalted by the feeling — or distraught and torn. Crimes are committed because of love, and great sacrifices are made by glowing individuals in the name of love. Love and death ever mingle in the cup of the human soul. The sweet-bitter potion is concocted anew for each adolescent by the great witch, Life.

To experience love is the unavoidable fate of every human being. This experience is the great maturing force for the young; to the mature grownup, it is the acid test of whether or not he or she has actually grown-up. Even to the aging, it may sometimes come as an intimation of what is beyond life or as a renewal of life energy, a "second wind" needed to end the great race of human existence. At any age and in any circumstance, the experience of love offers to the human consciousness a mirror. The mirror says: "Yes, this is you. Did you believe perchance that you were something else? Look at your face. Plumb the depth of your eyes. What do you see? That, you are, in reality and in truth."

According to the old mythological and astrological traditions, Venus is the symbol of love; and we often see Venus portrayed looking at herself in a mirror. We also know that Venus (or Aphrodite in Greece) rose from the foam of the sea; some have described her as wearing a necklace of pearls. These are all deeply significant symbols which it would be well for us to understand, for love without understanding may turn into a hollow mockery or tragedy. To love without understanding must inevitably end in pain, pain for the lover or the beloved — usually for both.

The sea is the universal symbol of the vast, undifferentiated energy of life. Everything that lives can be said to have risen out of the sea. In modern psychology and in our dreams, the sea represents the "collective unconscious," the unknown and undifferentiated depths of our psychic human nature out of which the differentiated consciousness of what we call the ego, "ourselves," emerges. In this sea, all men are one in their common humanity; indeed, all living things are one in this ocean of life.

It is out of this oceanic unconscious oneness that Venus — the love experience — arises, naked, wearing pearls. The pearl is the product of some irritation of the life substance within a shell. Love is always born of "irritation." What is separative and self-insulated — i.e., en-shelled — must be stirred, hurt, aroused. Love is always the result of a need. Some deep unconscious yearning or lack, some fundamental hurt forces the living soul to awaken, to act; it begins to build itself up in iridescent layers of feeling. It must answer to the challenging realization that somehow it has to emerge out of the shell of ego separateness and out of the sea of unconscious existence. Blind adolescent love is the answer. Pain after pain, pearl after pearl, the goddess of love arises into the light of consciousness. As she sees herself in the mirror of the beloved's eyes under the daylight of consciousness, this undifferentiated life power of the sea becomes aware that she is a differentiated human soul, an individual in love with another. This awareness is a radiance.

Mythology is an attempt at symbolizing and dramatizing the basic experiences which all human beings can, more or less vividly, make consciously their own. Venus is the human experience of love under its many forms and at its many stages. This experience presents itself in numerous shapes inasmuch as its relation to our whole personality can infinitely vary. We may envision Venus as she arises from the sea, glowing with the barely conscious infinitude of the universal life force. Virginal in its untouched potentiality of as yet incomprehensibly complex relationships, she moves upon the solid land where all human beings meet and interact in hunger, in desire and in fear. We may see her playing games with other gods and mortals, stirred by jealousy, angry and destructive, perhaps even intoxicated.

At long last, the experience of love may come to yearn for the sea; and the human soul may stand once more where the billowing waves foam, as they break over the shore of conscious existence, seemingly repeating her adolescence. But now perhaps she stands consciously facing the infinitude of the sea, her feet (i.e., her understanding) bathed in the illumined substance of this forever ebbing and flowing ocean of life. Through this understanding, Neptune, the great power of the sea, speaks to the now chastened Venus. The experience of love assumes a new, a transfigured meaning for the human soul.

When Venus is pictured rising out of the sea on a huge seashell looking at herself in a mirror, the symbol portrays a love which is completely self-engrossed. The adolescent, we say, is in love with love. "In love!" Perhaps, later on, this love will become more rigidly attuned and attached to a particular individual; but that will simply mean that the adolescent love which was the answer to a nearly undifferentiated need for intimate relationship with some "other" — almost any "other" — is now defined by a more differentiated psychological need or complex. The need, being more differentiated, more precise and limited by antecedent experiences, requires for its satisfaction a particular type of person, perhaps a unique individual.

This, however, does not change the character of the love! There is nothing especially valuable about loving only one particular individual if the loving is a possessive, jealous, binding and perhaps stultifying type! What counts (spiritually or in terms of any significant and noble kind of morality) is not how many persons one loves, but the quality of that love. There are marriages which are worse than quasi-prostitution when considered, not in relation to social convenience and regulations, but in terms of value to the human soul and the growth of individual consciousness.

Here we come to the distinction to love or to be in love. There is a distinction and it is often made; but whether it is given its real and deeper meaning is another matter. The usual idea is that to "be in love" or to have "fallen in love" is a more basic and essential, more valuable feeling realization than simply "to love." It may be so, but it depends entirely upon the character and quality of the love.

When you say that you are in love, it means precisely that you have been drawn into the whirlpool of life energies of a magnetic field produced by the relationship between you

and another person. You are caught in that field. You accept, happily perhaps — but also often reluctantly and with periodic attempts at disentangling yourself — the state of being part of that field, of being bound (or at least bounded) by the rhythm and scope of the play of the energies of that field, a field seemingly disparate from your own being.

Venus is essentially the power of magnetism. It is the Venus power which produces the lines of forces of any magnetic field. Anything which responds to and is drawn into the field must organize itself according to the pattern outlined by these lines of force. It is inevitably structured by the rhythm of the energies within the field. He or she becomes a creature of that field, a creature of love — at least until he or she is able to generate a centrifugal (Martian) force able to overcome the field's interior magnetism.

When I said "a creature of love," I meant that the relationship itself is the creative transforming factor in the situation; the two persons who have fallen in love are conditioned and moved (positively or negatively, in joy or in pain and anger) by the relationship. Their egos may think that they built that relationship; but, actually, the relationship and the play of the life energies control them. The lovers must satisfy the love power, regardless of what that power does to them as individuals. Their actions and feelings are compulsive, or at least mainly so.

Love is a power. The Venus experience has behind it the immense and inescapable tides of the sea — that is, of the whole life urge of the human species, of animal instincts and social traditions. Yes, tides! The Venus experience forever oscillates between love and hate, between subservience to the field of the relationship (Venus) and the yearning to escape from it (Mars). The Earth, as a planet, is balanced between these two forces, centripetal and centrifugal. Either the conscious or semi-conscious interior feeling reactions of the mates to their love relation, or outer events which actually exteriorize their totally unconscious responses, will periodically force the centrifugal Mars urge to freedom to disturb the Venus field of the relationship. Unconsciously, the lovers will seek for some external person or circumstance which will help them to break through the boundaries of the field.

When, on the other hand, a person truly "loves" without being compulsively "in love," this love manifests essentially as a conscious force seeking to establish a relationship in terms of recognized, understood and accepted individual needs. To love, in that sense, is a positive statement of relationship with another person. He or she who thus loves imagines and works toward the unfoldment of a love relationship. To this sustained act of love creating — and it must be sustained and victorious over countless obstacles if it means anything at all — the lover consciously seeks to bring happiness and soul growth to the beloved. This love is purposive; the other type (the "falling in love" type) is fundamentally compulsive.

There is, of course, nothing wrong about compulsive love! Such a love is normally the best way to overcome and possibly transform a stubborn ego. Indeed the compulsive power

of that love is often the direct answer to an exaggerated and equally compulsive egocentricity — in which case, the ecstasy of love blends, often tragically or bitterly, with the groans of battered egos.

Moreover, most human beings are still children. They want to be caught in the whirlpools of the life energy, of the love power. They are afraid to take a stand alone, as individuals; or, if they take it for a brief moment of release from the normal bondage of their race and society, they cannot hold it against the aroused pressures of their surroundings and their instinctual life urges. Thus, they let themselves be rolled to and fro by the tides of the love power. They are in its waves; the tide possesses them; they willingly agree to be creatures of the sea, even if their minds have to build up superficial explanations to protect their sense of spiritual pride.

The individual who is able to love in freedom and conscious purpose accepts the tides, the depths of love, the power and the storms. He or she does not seek to escape (if truly free and an individual) into asceticism or into a variety of schizophrenic illusions; nor does he or she collapse into a panicky yearning for security. There can be no security for the person who, as an engineer (symbolically speaking), consciously wields power; the engine may always blow up at anytime! Such a person has assumed a status or position in terms of his or her individually recognized and accepted destiny; having assumed a responsibility, he will discharge it — to the best of his or her ability.

In this conscious and purposeful compassionate love, the Venus power is also active; but it is a Venus that has returned to the sea after harrowing experiences on land among mortals and gods. Venus experiences consciously now the sea's infinitude; the whole power of Neptune, overseer of the tides, flows into the being that once unconsciously emerged from the sea, an adolescent looking at herself in a mirror. The Venusian power of the service of Neptune. Compulsive passion becomes the compassion of a love that is boundless as the sea. Truly conscious love is always, basically, compassion.

Such a Neptune-transfigured Venus love no longer calls forth an inevitable Mars reaction of escape from the binding patterns of a love field. Neptune is in itself a tidal flow; it contains both tides, ebbs and flows, are rhythmic expressions, is the power of Uranus.

Venus, if acting alone, must arouse the polar and complementary energy of Mars. Compulsive love is wedded to some degree of tragedy; the one follows the other sooner or later — and there is no greater tragedy than a soul's refusal to grow, out of fear, weariness or despair. But where Neptune flows unhindered into the power of Venus, transfiguring its love nature, then Uranus acts not against Neptune, but through Neptune's power. Neptune and Uranus are two aspects of the same will to transformation which, if allowed to operate within the human psyche, transforms Saturn's rigid and opaque structures into a clear lane through which the Sun may then pour its beneficent light.

To love — or to be in love — the choice may come to us all. Both ways may lead to the same end, in time — through pain, when happiness would mean bondage. No one can

deliberately choose what he or she is not ready for, is not able or willing to accept. If this be the case, the life urge and circumstances are allowed to choose for us. We have to learn to live, for a time at least, with this choice.