

Two Levels of Love by Dane Rudhyar

Everyone speaks of love; most people "make love." A female loves her young and will fight for them; Carmen is killed by her lover in the passion of frustrated love. The Christian saint **loves** God; the Hindu Chakta and the Persian dervish sing or dance until they collapse in a frenzy of love for the Eternal Beloved; and Romeo and Juliet, Tristan and Yseult die of **love**. Millions begin really to live only as **love** takes them and renews them through delight and through pain. Love, always love!

"God is love," the Apostle tells us; but life, too, is born of love, is consummated in love. Love and death; orgasm and ecstasy; holiness and tragedy; the feverish dream-visions of mystics and adolescents, the embraces of wedded conformity or the sex play hiding boredom or emptiness under the pretense of love adventures. What confusion surrounds this little word — love!

Why must it serve all purposes? Does it refer actually to a multitude of very different feelings, acts, levels of consciousness — or is there only one feeling, one power, one driving urge expressing itself along many paths, taking a myriad of forms to reach its essential goal? What could this goal really be?

In these few pages, I shall try at least to suggest the nature of this goal; having stated it, I shall show that in the vast cyclic drama, or "play," of existence, this power — "love" — operates fundamentally in two ways or at two levels. In men and women, two modes of expression of love very often blend or are harmonized in a subtle, usually unclear, manner.

Why "love"?

Really, the answer to this question is very simple. Love is that power which urges every form of existence to realize as yet unrealized potentialities of existence and, thus, to become more than it has been so far — or, at least, different. Love is essentially born out of the urge to change — or, in a negative sense, the urge to avoid change and to escape from an inwardly disturbing, perhaps frightening, compulsion to leave behind the past and to enter a path of total transformation. Was not Venus, goddess of love, born out of the ever-moving, restless sea? But this sea also is a vast resting place for all the refuses of man as well as for the slow disintegration of mountains; its depths know the peace which forgives and forgets, absolution for the multifarious errors, sins and tragedies of human egos.

To the materialistically oriented biologist or psychologist, love appears as a kind of halo surrounding the sexual urge for reproduction. It is the glamour which entices boy and girl to overcome their innate insecurity, their fears of the opposite sex; and this glamour is distilled by glands, just as alcoholic intoxication is the by-product of chemical reactions affecting the

nerves and organs of the body. "Nature" arouses love in men and women as it provides colors and plumages in order to lead male and female to the biological dance of fecundation through which life is perpetuated.

Yet life also did exist and cells did multiply at great speed before sexual differentiation occurred on earth. Sex, even in its most primary aspects, does not merely answer the need for **reproduction**; its goal is to open up paths of **transformation**. Sexual activity is an activity fundamentally geared to change and mutation, thus to the actualization of what was at first mere potentiality, to the revelation of the as-yet-unknown, the mystery. Sex means the possibility of an infinite variation in biological genetic development; and love, even in the most bio-psychic sense of the word, is also a power of mutation. It changes the perceptions, the responses, the character of those whose consciousness and ego are swept into the field of its tensions, its desires, its climaxes and its frustrations, its joys and its tragedies.

French poet Edmond Rostand, in his famous hymn to the sun, glorifies the giver of light and of shadows, saying, "O, Thou, without whom all things would be only what they are!" This is true of sex and love as well. It is true of all deeply experienced human relationships, for all change comes through relationship. Love is simply the most powerful, the most transforming mode of relationship — the one most likely to make of a human being **more** than what he or she was until drawn into the fire, and perhaps the light, of the most central of all human feelings and movements.

Yet love, too, can follow the way of the shadow. Those whom it touches may shrink in confusion or fear, clinging to the fallacious security of the ego, the familiar, the consciously known and classified. They become, in some degree, "different," but also essentially defeated; and the ego walls close upon the consciousness which turns to the past for frozen models and obsolete worship.

The weary "warrior" may seek in love a way out and the repose of a presence that is warm and tender to his aching muscles and his confused mind tired of striving along the path of a "greater love" which demands ever more total transformations, ever more heroic rebirths. Yet even this "lesser love" may mean the moment of rest needed to regather one's energies before the last struggle; and in the story of Gautama, the Buddha, we see the starving young ascetic exhausted by meaningless practices ask of a passing milkmaid "milk" to drink. Then, restored and at peace, he faces the supreme test and reaches illumination and total understanding.

The Circle of Change: Venus and Mars

Love is always the urge toward transformation; there are, however, two basic types of transformation. The process of change may be cyclic; a series of transformations may repeat itself according to a norm established by the structuring power of "life" or of a social, cultural, religious collectivity. The child is transformed into the adolescent, and the physiologically mature man and woman love and produce normally a progeny. In time, they

begin to "age," as the glandular rhythm of the body changes, slows down and becomes quiescent — in the end, splitting into negative eddies of disintegration.

This biological cycle is more or less closely duplicated at the psycho-social, cultural level by a collectively accepted and taken for granted pattern of changes in the behavior and the consciousness of individual persons. In the old Hindu society, the life-long unfoldment of the potential inherent in a human being at birth was plotted out as a strict pattern (a series of four stages) to which was attributed a cosmic significance. In our modern Western world, the pattern is far less rigid; yet we see it manifesting in the idea that teenagers constitute a very special "age group" and so do "senior citizens" after (if not before) the retirement age; individuals around the "dangerous forties" are also considered as a more or less special group.

The change from one age group to another may not be precisely set to happen at a particular age; yet the fashion for young people to marry a partner of the same age tends to accentuate a separation between age groups — a separation which, I believe, is most unfortunate. However, it belongs to the realm when normality and conformism rule, and social-cultural values strive more or less deliberately and significantly to mould themselves upon biological events and glandular changes. This is the realm represented in Astrology by Venus and Mars.

Venus has been traditionally known as the planet referring to love; but it is also the symbol of the organs which produce the male as well as the female seed—testicles and ovaries. Venus "rules" over the feeling of love; Mars, over the **activity** of love and all that carries the seed to its destination. Venus is the rhythm of **production** of seeds; Mars, the rhythm of **impregnation**.

At the biological level, Venus represents the chemistry of love, the mysterious current which establishes a perhaps atomic, perhaps only molecular and cellular, magnetic bond between two bodies; at the psychological level, Venus is the often instantaneous response of a personal need to that which, in another human being, seems to offer the possibility of its fulfillment. "With you, I can be **more** than I now am": this is usually unexpressed, at the root of all personal love.

Yet in Venus' realm, this "more" has not the unlimited, open character that we shall presently see it acquiring in Neptune's realm. It is a "more" limited by ego and glandular response, a "more" that accepts itself as part of a process structured by what is recognized as the fatality of cyclic time, of the sequence beginning-middle-end. It accepts the human body and its functions as legitimate rulers, the traditions and culture of a particular society as a more or less unquestioned authority. Mars, who acts out love, may occasionally rebel and explode; but Venus has learned that taboos are real powers within the unconscious and that "Christian resignation" may lead to a valid conclusion of the life cycle, even though it implies a sacrifice of the individual to the collective.

In any case, at the level at which Venus and Mars function symbolically, love is always defined, as well as sparked, by the need of body and/or ego. It may be a passionate,

uncontrollable love; but needs- whether biological or psychological — can also be intensely compelling. Men die of hunger and thirst, and they may die of the lack or the sufferings of love — or they may be driven into the tragic escapes of psycho-neurosis and perhaps of sadism or crime. The unfulfilled emptiness, the surgical crises of loss of love are indeed physical as well as psychological; they often result in psychosomatic illness. A life cycle in which the potential "more" has been transformed into a gnawing, haunting sense of "less" ends often in personal defeat.

The person who, on the other hand, has seen the Venus-Mars type of love transform unsteady adolescence into settled biological-social normality is glorified in most societies as the "mature" human being. Venus in his personality has accepted the tradition-based rule of Saturn; and Mars has learned to behave in terms of Jupiterian "good fellowship" and of the moral virtues acceptable to his society and culture. All is well.

Children are born who, after a few stormy years, will probably rediscover the comfort of traveling in the parental ruts. They will grow from one age group to another; they will love and seek the honors which go with social-personal maturity. "More" will mean for them "bigger and better"; then change will disintegrate the sand castle of the normal personal life and the cycle will be completed — one among so many human cycles, one of the billions of seeds which fall from the tree of humanity and can only decay, simply adding a few special chemicals to the humus of the earth's biosphere.

The Spiral of Transmutation: Neptune and Uranus

Yet no cyclic end returns exactly to the level of its point of departure. There is a love which does not accept being bound by the patterns of social-cultural normality and maturity; it is ever ready to accept the as-yet-unknown, with eyes and heart always open, always warm with the sense of wonder and the precious gift of humility and adoration.

Such a love is at the very core of the symbolic meaning of Neptune. Neptune dissolves all lesser loves so that man may begin to feel in his own heart and through the entire field of his being the pulsing of the "greater love," the presence of the miraculous. This love does not deny anything. It is open to all there is; it transfigures all there is. When this love touches a person who belongs still to the Venus-Mars realm of social conformism and so-called personal maturity, this person — should he accept the touch and listen to the song of Neptune — finds himself in a new world, even though he has not changed his place.

He sees and feels everything differently. Everything is more than it was; but "more" has now a different meaning. This "more" does not refer merely to a new step within the cyclic pattern of the normal and natural human life, a step leading to other steps ending in the end of the cycle; it is a step **through** the boundaries of the cycle, yet a step which does not mean a change of position.

What it means is a transformation of the man's or woman's **capacity for relationship** to anything and everything. The early Christians used the Greek word *agape* to describe this

new way of response to all life; but the usual translation of the word, "charity," is most confusing today, for we have lost the feeling of *charis*, which meant divine gift of "grace." A somewhat better term is "compassion"; but it, too, is usually more misleading than revealing.

That Neptune-pervaded love is not a feeling of (as ordinarily meant) compassion for whatever experiences suffering or deprivation. This love is an act of transfiguration, a flow of light, a song of tenderness; it is mother love as well as lover love, for it seeks to hold everything — and, of course, more particularly, the object upon which the love is then focused — in the vast openness of a consciousness for which every contact is, or tends to be, a dissolution of boundaries and an absolution for past fears, refusals or sins.

As Venus is polarized by Mars, so is Neptune polarized by Uranus. Neptune is the "lashless eye" of divinity, always open to absorb light and receive the messages of need and longing from whoever is ready for transfiguration; Uranus is the response of the eye, the glowing glance that, to the individual yearning for release from the cyclic involvements of normality and productivity, is an intoxicating drink of "living waters," a song of peace beyond **yet through** all tragedies.

Neither Neptune, nor Uranus denies anything except bondage to a set pattern which "must" be accepted and followed to the disintegration of the end. This "greater love" does not deny the lesser loves, as long as these, too, serve a significant purpose and answer the lesser needs of the personality; it simply gives to them a new meaning, it sees them in a new light — not less lovely a light, but less blinding, a light free of the fatality of shadows which plagues the little loves of man and woman in bondage to rules, results and regrets, if not remorse.

There is no shadow because the ego has lost its substantiality or weightiness. Neptune has dissolved the Saturnian frame of reference of social conformity, the rigid sense of place, age, function and customary behavior; and Uranus is creative improvisation, true spontaneity welling up from the vibrating core of the individual's self. This self is still "individual" — i.e., not divisible — but it is even more a particular focus for the light and energy filling all space: a focus for Man, or is it God? American philosopher Oliver Reiser once wrote: "When God is known, He becomes Man." The path to that knowing is the path of "greater love," symbolized by the polar activity of Neptune and Uranus. It is not that "God is love," but rather that the "greater love," as it transfigures (while accepting them) the lesser loves and all that adds a "more" to human consciousness, **is** that supreme activity to which men have fumblingly given the name God.

The "Critical State" of Love

It is easy to become lyrical as one speaks of the "greater love" if one's being has resonated to its never-ending ubiquitous melodies; but one should also focus one's attention upon the concrete problems, the practical consequences, the psychological crises which are inevitably associated with the revelation of the Neptune — inspired love.

The first thing to realize is that anything which normally belongs to the unfoldment of a particular and traditionally defined social-cultural process may only separate itself from the determined sequence of its phases at the cost of either a prolonged or a sudden and violent effort. Every cyclic pattern of transformation (biological and psychological) opposes a strong force of inertia to any change which does not accept this pattern as a binding framework — thus, to any change, **and any love**, which does not come in the "normal" season of the cycle.

However, it is just that type of change and love which Jesus, according to the Gospels, expected of every living thing — including the famous fig tree which he asked for fruit **when it was not the season for bearing fruit**. He "cursed" the fig tree, which then withered and no longer bore any fruit in or out of season. Jesus' call to his followers has resounded through the ages, "Be ye separate." "Hate your father and your mother, and follow me" — but so few have understood that by such symbolic pronouncements, he meant to urge his followers to be in the cyclic seasonal process of nature and society, but not of it. The call was a Neptune-inspired call; and Jesus did not fail to reveal — and himself to experience — the inevitable first consequence of this becoming "separate": "Take your cross" — in other words, "Expect to be in a constant state of crisis".

Of all the people Jesus met, it was a Samaritan man of low caste and with many lovers to whom he declared that he was the expected Messiah — a fact to which most theologians pay no attention, perhaps for obvious reasons! He spurned the normal love of mother and brothers and proclaimed the transfiguration of this love into one vast feeling which encompassed everyone who followed in his footsteps out of the tradition-ruled road of what the men of his day would have meant by normality and maturity.

However, to him the "little children" flocked, for the little child is symbolically he who has **not yet** been thoroughly geared to the wheel of the routine social-cultural as well as biological process of human productivity — the making of wares and also the making of a progeny (another kind of wares from the point of view of economics and nationalism).

Some church ministers clamor to their congregation: "Are you committed to Christ?" They take pride in their feeling of being committed. At the other end of the ideological spectrum, the atheist philosopher, Sartre, demands of every individual that he be totally "engaged." But the only commitment apparent in Jesus' words is the commitment not to be committed, except to "the Cross" — that is, to the necessity of going **through** a more or less permanent state of crisis.

It is this state of crisis and this "going through" which Uranus essentially symbolizes. Astrologers speak of this planet as the Rebel, the Revolutionist, the Iconoclast. It is, above all, the "crisis-maker" — and the word "crisis" comes from a Latin word which means "to decide." To decide, moreover, signifies to let what had once been useful fall away. The normal rhythm of the seasons compels the deciduous tree to let its leaves fall to the ground, where they become fertilizer to feed the growth of another repetitive seasonal cycle; this is a crisis within the cyclic process, as adolescence and menopause are crises

within the normal cycle of a human life. But Neptune and Uranus evoke and present to the few who are ready an unceasing potentiality of crisis at the core of the experience of the "greater love."

This crisis may mean social condemnation, ostracism, isolation, a spiritual or intellectual form of exile — at least, incomprehension and a slightly sneering kind of tolerance by the comfortably adapted and officially mature citizen golfing away benignly his or her potential crises. It may be more severe even in its inner psychological aspects because what is at stake in these Uranus-led and Neptune-inspired crises is the meaning, function and value of the ego itself.

A modern psychologist may describe maturity as the condition of a man who has "come to terms" with his complexes and has found his place within his society. But all that such a person has achieved is a well-adjusted ego, at peace with Saturn while on good-fellowship terms with every Jupiterian institution — from his ancestral church to Wall Street, including perhaps a few "five o'clock motel" diversions besides Sunday golfing. Within this Saturn-Jupiter framework, the Venus-Mars capacity for love is neatly regulated. Love may be an escape from office boredom or conjugal dullness and, in any case, entirely dependent upon the temporary or perhaps the constant and never truly fulfilled need of the ego.

The individual in whom Neptune and Uranus are forever active does not come to terms with his complexes; **he uses them**. His place in society is **to have no place**. "The Son of God has nowhere to lay his head," is an ever-present fact; and he who perhaps had no father or had lost him in childhood knew how to use his father complex by introverting the father image and universalizing it as "Our Father." If one speaks all the time of a sublimated image, one has **not** "come to terms" with it; one uses it as a springboard to creativity.

The emptiness, the pain, the wound are there always — though they be transfigured, or indeed just because they are transfigured, they are an ever-present Cross. From this Cross, the "greater love" is proclaimed, beyond the ego power of character-structuring, beyond culture and tradition — yet through all these vitally experienced boundaries of the social and biological norm.

Every man and woman, or nearly so, has known, however briefly, moments in which the "divine discontent" of Uranus and something of the "greater love" of Neptune touched the Saturnian fortress wherein the lesser love powered by Venus and Mars pursues its slowly changing, expectable, conventional work of transformation. For a moment, the consciousness was shocked into out-of-gear-ness; and a passive kind of ecstasy swept upon the mind, like a great wind filled with the scent of exotic flowers. When this happens, men may give all kinds of names to the experience according to their educational and cultural background. For some, it is "great passion"; for others, "cosmic consciousness"; for others still, "religious conversion."

Today, as the whirling gears of an increasingly more conformistic and managed society draw more and more would-be free individuals into their meshing, it has become fashionable, in the intelligentsia at least, to take drugs which induce visions and paranormal

feelings of unbounded existence and intense empathy with people surrounding the experience. Perhaps, indeed, through such experiences a person may get a glimpse of what should be an eventual development of human consciousness. But how few are those who are prepared and ready for such an expansion of consciousness and, once the great moment is passed, **know what to do** with the memory of it and with what it has left within the disturbed or upheaved ego?

The true path of Neptune and Uranus is not away from Venus and Mars; it is through the lesser into the greater. The greater may enter the lesser in the still moments of an all-too-human love beautifully lived; all that is really needed is total openness and utter lack of fear. Only that — but it is so difficult for most ego-bound, culture-molded, society-driven individuals!

Perhaps the very old and the very young are the most likely persons to experience such an openness and trust in life; yet the very old has to struggle against weariness and memories, the very young against insecurity and lack of self-confidence in his or her ability to give value to meetings in which might be revealed the presence that makes all things new — and forever renewable and renewed. Spontaneity is the soul of love at any level. At the level of the Venus-Mars love, it is a sporadic kind of spontaneity, a flight that at once falls back upon the everyday earth soil; but where Neptune and Uranus pervade the consciousness and the feelings with their unrestrained infinitude, spontaneity, while assuming a quiescent aspect, can be the ever-present companion of a love whose fire finds everywhere materials to burn and transmute into light.