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PSICOLOGO PSICOTERAPEUTA

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BURNING FEMININITY

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PREJUDICE WHICH WEIGHS ON WOMEN

One of the complaints which emerges more frequently among the women managers I usually contact, concerns "the difficulties we have as women to assert our authority and to be successful in a male world where we are not considered for our real ability. We work in a contest where there is initial mistrust; perhaps later on they change their mind".

How can we master these provocations?

Beyond the pragmatic point of view of learning verbal answer tactics, when someone attacks us with a clear intention to disqualify us to put us offside and to discredit our identity, it is to be cleared up as how it is possible to make women more aware and to integrate them in a traditional male and masculinist culture like that managerial one. But the same speech is valid for many other kinds of careers where the male presence was almost exclusive till recently.

To understand the prejudice which burdens heavily the career woman, it is necessary to go back to some fundamental psychological ideas.

What do we mean by "femininity" and "soul feminine"?

Speaking about "soul", one means soul and psyche strictly connected. This concept of soul, from the psychological point of view, is used particularly by Carl Gustav Jung, who makes a separation, a distinction, taking two Latin terms, "anima" and "animus". He puts them in the man and in the woman, considering that in someone of them there is a part of the opposite part which is found in the other one.

Then in the woman there is an *animus* to recover – that means to recuperate a male component which exists also from the chemical and hormonal point of view. There is an *anima*, a female component to recuperate in the man, because our culture has been giving us a dimension of being man and woman always completely different: the man is on horseback , he is acting the hero, while the woman stays at home and is knitting.

This has been the beginning, even though there is the ancient well-established matriarchy. Then we have passed to a dimension entirely diverse, a dimension totally male; it is sufficient to think of settlements in the Mediterranean area of the Jewish religion, with *Yahvé*.

The Jewish religion became current in that part, along the coast, and met peoples which had cultures with gods and goddesses, men and women; but they have already overcome this stage, and then phagocyted all the divinities and incorporate them in their monotheistic and male religion.

During the after-war period men began to cry, to show their emotions. It is not a question of romanticism. Women, on the other hand, have begun to recuperate a male competitive and pragmatic dimension.

This recovery and recapture starts precisely from the industrial revolution, from the women revolution in America, in England until the feminism of years not long ago, when they arrive at an extreme compensative strategy addressed to the re-qualification of the feminine Ego. All to the highest degree, to arouse a reaction and finally to make themselves heard.

Women have become aware of their capacities and resources and then have begun to consider their importance and to stop thinking they can be a valuable person and be appreciated thanks only to the presence and the desire by the masculine, to the existence of masculine.

And so today we are in a particular moment, men and women have in themselves, and show, a male and female dimension, and cannot understand what is happening: women are male and men are female.

Men have become sensitive forgetting the masculine and women have very often forgotten their female dimension.

And this is the reason why introverted listening has disappeared once again, and we are all captured by this world, crazy and frenetic to do and arrive.

There is no time to reflect or contemplate, while pondering is a very important time: it is the flexing of the mind on its self, its time to think.

It means it replays what you have lived during the day. In the evening you are tired and by day you are pressed by a thousand duties and there is no time to contemplate. It is necessary on the contrary to listen to all that you feel, think and what is present.

Why do a lot of women still feel uneasy, moving in a world traditionally masculine concerning several kinds of careers? The "drama" of the woman is that she has a male energy which estranges her from her own identity. This means that someone has peculiar, potential characteristics, which belong to the other sex: woman has male energies, hiding within a male identity, and man a female identity.

The feminine and the masculine within us

Between two poles, man and woman, there is an intermediate pole, that is the male and female homosexual. This polarity is not actually real, because also the most "deep-rooted"

homosexual, both man and woman, has 60% of the opposite component. That means the male is 60% female and his 40% remains, and is included in the category.

Hermaphrodite, instead, is androgyne, that is man and woman together, he who has both his penis and her vagina and is part of the myth.

Jung used two Latin terms, *Animus* and *Anima*, in order to be able to speak of these characteristics, that is of inclinations that are common in the childhood, both in young girls and boys, are just the same for both. Then, as there is the differentiation with the course of puberty, the woman begins by adapting to culture, to use a set of characteristics typically female: she "must" be ready, obliging, willing to help.

Man begins to become rational, aggressive, et cetera, but woman brings within herself a male dimension which she will be compelled to be aware of and man has within himself a female dimension or a feeling of which he will have to be conscious.

Too many men are afraid of saying "I love you", caressing, letting oneself go, giving oneself up to grief, crying, being moved and touched, things very easy to a woman.

Then man must integrate the practical-sentimental part of woman, which belongs also to him and woman must integrate the logic and rational part, which belongs also to her.

Therefore the woman is pure feeling and must recover also the other part. And so we see this is the real problem because this is a world where woman must resolve the problem of alienation and this female alienation is the result of collective life, culture, and does not allow her to see herself exactly as she is.

Giovanni Gocci describes excellently the drama of woman who tries to adapt herself to aspirations of man in her, renouncing being herself:

The problem of woman is to try representing the ideal of feminine for men who are beside her.

I think you all remember an incredible character who died in 1962, Marylyn Monroe, and was considered the female ideal personified

Marylyn Monroe, poor woman, had a peculiar characteristic: she was trained by her mother to symbolize the ideal role as woman since she was a child. She had to be the ideal woman (the projection of her mother who could not be this) and her mother wanted to make a sort of Goddess of her famous daughter. And because of this her tragic destiny was to become a great star.

A great star who did not know who she really was. She identified herself in a total pure female figure, in a Goddess. She identified herself in Goddess Venus and this took her to her terrible death caused by herself or others.

It is the danger of female alienation: identifying in a character and role who must achieve the expectations of man. Identifying in a Goddess is terrible and dangerous, because that means to be

mortified and to lose one's identity. It means to fly off at a tangent and not to recognize oneself any more. But another question turns up: how does a woman learn to take on this role of Goddess? This means: how does a woman learn to take on the role of Anima of man?

Once again this means how does a woman learn to bring out and to try to be the ideal figure which represents the Anima of man that surrounds her, and then she goes to look for? Man goes to look for the woman Anima or the wonderful, nice, good, extraordinary, ready, obliging, submissive woman, complying with his wishes, she who does all, when he has had a terrifying mother, and vice versa and then he will uncover in time that woman Anima, under the cover of goodness, is a ferocious tiger who disguised herself, because she has never had the bravery to show her own "true" identity.

Therefore men, after a little while that they have been married, suddenly realize that they have a tiger close to them which they do not recognize, and so great dramas happen in the relationships, because this woman so good and so upright becomes like the wicked mother.

But let us come to our question: when and how does it happen? It occurs precociously when she was a child in the relationship with her father.

This woman structures within herself a particular female dimension and this means that she learns to feel more and more important; this is also very healthy, because the father who prostrates himself and falls in practice to the feet of his young girl, is a fundamental father who recognizes the meaning of the feminine to the daughter.

The problem begins when the daughter makes bad use of her power of woman, after having uncovered it, which is itself a good discovery.

Therefore she transforms and uses her smile as a game to dominate men, to have all at her feet and prevents herself continually from entering into relations with her own feeling. In fact it occurs that woman who identifies herself with what is feminine, this is the Anima, the role of Anima of the father, she identifies herself in a divine role ¹.

Here a fundamental characteristic of our culture emerges.

While in the past the problem was resolved by the Gods and the Goddesses because men and women could go to the temple of God Mars, that is of the God of strength and war, or could go to adore the female divinity of Beauty and Love, today, we move towards figures taken from the cinema or from the top-models, because female divinities no longer exist.

So, these women are obliged to play a role on the stage of their life, like Marilyn Monroe, who lived the drama of the disidentification, of not to be able to be herself, true, authentic, but the personification of unconscious expectations of men: a Venus of our times.

Woman who play a role as "ideal woman", looks at herself in the mirror and does not recognize herself: she cannot assert her personality, if she wants to begin living, existing. The

¹ Gocci G., *Psychology of femininity*, Acta hypnologica n. 1-2, January – May 2005, 13-14.

female stereotype which women try in some way to approach, ends up betraying them, making them unhappy, ill at ease with themselves.

But one day something occurs, that new trait of the personality in evolution makes itself felt and seen: it is the man within the woman, the Animus.

The animus

Gocci offers us a description of this discovery:

So almost all close themselves frightened by this interior voice, by this personality.

Instead of being available, questioning what this new thing is, which is coming out, we close ourselves because we are afraid. Therefore when woman feels this, denies herself to her new feminine which is arriving and, instead of listening to her innerself, she accuses her husband of not letting her to exist. She is prey to her animus, to this little male monster which is within her.

Jung defined the Animus the male personification of unconscious and it appears in the dreams of women by a series of figures, of animals. This figure passed through four phases: firstly it shows with the personification of physical power; so woman begins to see it, to admire it, it is the Schwarzenegger who is the personification of physical power and strong muscle; the second presents itself by the spirit of enterprise and the capability of creating something autonomous and practical; the third way shows the religious dimension, it is logos, it is experience of the divine representation.

Thus obviously this animus creates several problems, but it has its own valence, that is it has a degree both of positivity and of negativity. Now we see the negative feature in relation to woman, this Animus is a sort of monster, in fact a terrible demon for the personality and it personifies itself by the brutality and brutishness, the stubbornness, the coldness, and it practically paralyzes the growth of woman. Therefore transforming this little monster, which is negative masculine within woman, means sufferance, because it is a question of leaving an old identity for a new one and this is not an easy thing.²

Negative Animus, as a sort of demon, which personifies itself in the brutishness and brutality, stubbornness, coldness and acidity, usually attacks the male, husband or partner, indifferently within the circle of known males.

This is the Shadow which comes out, comes to light: it is the obscure part of our personality, that is that part which agitates us and we do not recognize. The Shadow then becomes something collective and becomes incarnate in a figure. In the Middle Age they burnt the "witches": they were the scapegoats, those poor women who brought the collective

² Ibidem, 14-15.

projection of the group and incarnated the shadow of the group, considering they did the most depraved, vile and horrible things. They were the incarnation of the "woman receptacle of evil and channel of Satan to go into the world".

The negative Animus has been "personified" and burnt by scapegoats, women defined "witches".

The woman-witch appears in the myths and in the fairy-tales under various covers like the antagonist of good, lovable, adorable, charming, obliging, yielding and always complaisant as the fairy. Between two opposite poles of witch and fairy, woman goes through an evolution, in which she is "called" to find herself, to develop her potentialities.

Jung said: one becomes what he is. Becoming oneself; letting the soul express itself: this is individuation.

The soul wants to be recognized in all ways in its substance, in the multiformity of experience.

The transformation of woman

Gocci explains how the transformation of woman occurs. The woman tries to comprehend and develop her potentialities and capabilities through the process of individuation.

This process must call her Animus to account, that is her male side which woman must not give up, because it is an important component of her identity, as the Anima for man; but she must transform its negative aspects like obstinacy, coldness, brutality into positive: intelligence and spirit.

The marriage marks a fundamental stage in this process of transformation. We will follow the stages of this journey through the words of Gocci:

Therefore one day Jung said a very funny thing: "Women are lovable and charming and run after men until they marry them, then they transform themselves into devils and obsess and torture them from morning to night".

Naturally he was a joker and said it in a loving way, but after all it is very true, because it is bound to the negative play of Animus.

On the other hand man acts his role because this happens, it is clear, it is not a question to judge by two different standards, I could speak about woman, but I could also speak about man in the same way.

Therefore what happens, why does woman change after marriage and behave in an excessive and exaggerated way?

Because before marriage woman could dream, she could imagine life in different ways, and also she could dream to leave the man of her dreams, and to find another to build her life. After marriage there is a part of his personality which still wants to be free and alive and instead feels blocked and trapped.

The same thing occurs when most of the women who remain pregnant, vomit.

Do you know why this happens? It is a psychological fact. They do not refuse motherhood, they want a child, because this is what, in accordance with philogenesis and ontogenesis, allows woman to be woman. As regards to marriage it is the same thing which makes woman at all costs before desires the male and then obsesses him with jealousy, and with a lot of things, because she is afraid he has stolen her freedom. Marrying her, he does not permit her any more to escape into imagination and to daydream.

When the woman remains pregnant and vomits, this occurs because in that moment she is afraid for her future freedom. I have seen women who from morning to night, during the six-eight hour period, have stopped vomiting and my friend gynaecologist phoned me and said to me: "What did you do to her?" I had not done anything to her, simply she had understood her vomiting was rejecting the limitations of motherhood, which prevented her, according to her, from being a free woman in the future.

Then when she understands that women have always given birth and the child, from a practical point of view, limits for some things, but does not hinder true freedom, true capability of expressing, explicating her potentiality, then vomiting disappears.

This is incredible, but it occurs just so. Because it is the freedom which we are afraid of losing; thus it occurs for marriage we desire so much and then reject because we are afraid of losing our freedom. But the true freedom which we lose is that which we want to lose, because we cannot live and communicate with the other partner, because we are slaves of a whole set of psychological processes bound to our personality formed in a certain way.

Therefore woman has a fundamental duty: she must study, have a career, she must not let herself go, give into herself, lose courage because then she vomits continually, then becomes acid and wicked, that is in other words woman must not isolate herself.

Jung was very stimulating regarding the female world and was more than content when women began to study again (we are fifty years behind, then things were already different) and had a career and tried to live this part of Animus as a woman in career.

Today there are many women who have important careers, but today the problem has been transformed, the woman in career has identified herself with the Animus of woman in career, but has inflated herself to the other side, therefore the negative Animus emerges and does not allow woman to live her female component.³

³ Ibidem 19.

Therefore marriage and motherhood, can represent a prison, even if it is considered golden, if woman does not feel able to live and relate with her partner.

There is the risk that the negative Animus surfaces and does not allow the woman to live her female component. As soon as woman realizes this negative component, this little monster which is within her, she must transform it into "intelligence and spirit".

Woman must not give up her male component, and "must have" a career, but as woman not as man. Man, on the other hand, "must act" as a man with the feelings, not as a woman. This is very different from having female characteristics. The overshadowing of features, with woman who acts as a man and man who acts as a woman, does not seem to realize the maximum equilibrium in the integration of the personality.

Competition in roles

Gocci expresses clearly this point, when he stops to consider the problem of the competition in roles, within the couple:

There are women in career who dream then to go out shopping, to do nothing or dream to crochet, to knit, that is their unconscious tells them that if they identify themselves with the Animus, they lose sight of a female dimension which is typical of wasting time, wandering about, so as if certain men identify themselves with their sentimental opposite component, suffer from it. Many years ago I have had a friend. As soon as he had a daughter, he identified himself with his female component, with the Anima, with his feeling and was in competition with his wife: he escaped from the office to go home (unfortunately his wife could not breast feed) to prepare the feeding-bottle and to decide the quantity of milk and to discuss with his wife, because he was without a doubt better.

He had identified himself with this Anima, with his female component and wanted to act as the mother of his daughter and to give her the milk with incredible sufferance. Practically this man did not live his male component any more, which however he needed.

He was an important computer expert, and needed to use the computer to do certain things, to follow his many hobbies; then when he understood that he was losing his male component, he changed his attitude.

What happened, this man was possessed by this female dimension which did not allow him to live, to come back to his own masculine. He could live his own feeling, but could not take the place of mother because the mother is the mother, so as the woman in career cannot become a man: she will act as "a career woman" and the man will act as "a career man", as the father cannot act as the mother, it is the mother who gives her child the feeding-bottle and not the father-mother, because they are two different roles. Do not let yourselves be enchanted, not by the superimposition of roles, but by society which preaches the equality of sexes in a certain way.

There is confusion, but not because there is not equality, but because a mother acts as a mother and a father acts as a father, it is not possible to make a father act as the mother and a mother act as the father, there could be a woman who acts as a mother and assumes a paternal role because there is a non-existent father. There will be a father who assumes a maternity as regards to his child because there is a dead mother or a non-existent wife. It is different dressing as a man or a woman.

It is a question of two complete different ways of living. Give Cesar what is his, otherwise one creates confusion, or becomes neurotic; today the world is full of neurosis.⁴

Re-uncovering Animus and Anima to live fully

Therefore, that antique structure which is within us and of which we are carriers, makes that the woman without her male side, without her Animus, is a "no" woman.

She would be a woman lacking in intelligence and in capability: she would be an uterus to give birth to children and hands to clean and cook. It is the Animus which gives savour to life, which makes her exist and be.

On the same level, the Anima gives sense to man. When we talk about the soul, we talk about love, life, warm-heartedness, humanity, creativity, feeling, emotion and something else. Therefore, we can understand it as an imaginative possibility which is within us; then image, imagination and that way which is in each of us, which knows every reality in the world, from things to persons, as symbolic of something.

Plotinus said that the soul expresses itself in its creations, which are not works of its intelligence or awareness, but expressions of its life. It is the same life, which is the soul. Psychology calls these creations of the soul "images of the soul". Leaving the images of the soul puts people into difficulty.

Our world, our current way of living, is the fruit of a typically and totally male dimension, fruit of logos and conscience. And this world continually shows us its ill-depressed face turned towards catastrophe: ecological disasters, wars, massacres, political corruption, Aids, drugs, etcetera. It would be paradoxical that women contributed to its ruin depriving it of love.

Nature rebels against excessive use of logic, thought and consciousness, against a too-complicated way of thinking of future in technological, economic, expansionistic terms: things, money, benefits, conquests, hegemonic power.

Our way to live, a frenetic way, divided without the soul, makes us realize that all means, all that we have, all the technologies which should have the target to improve our life,

⁴ Ibidem 19-20.

to save us time, to make us better, serve only to fill our time totally, and so we have no time to listen to ourselves.

Therefore we live in this reality as robots, as authentic mad people, without considering what is necessary to become more and more ourselves, reaching the aim of our life, for which we are born, we exist, we must express: a purpose, a plan, which goes beyond our way of thinking and feeling.

A reality ensues from all that: superficiality, frenetic rhythm, frenzy, giddiness, instability, neurosis. This is not civilization. It is a mass-civilization, which reduces the private dimension. In this way, it takes us out of our private sphere, of finding ourselves, and it drags us to the tumult, making us become an infinitesimal, unaware, lacking in meaning particle. We don't live, we are someone who moves and lives, but without any reference to the soul within us.

We women, dragged to the arena of the attitudes and male values, of logic and thought, risk living apart from our soul, on the wave of the technological, expansionistic economic dimension. We risk being totally absorbed by things, benefits and conquests as men. Life, creativity, warm-heartedness, imagination, humanity, all expressions of the life, the "images of the soul", are more and more foreign. Are we not maybe sinking in the mud in the same "male world" against which finally we have rebelled, for its tyranny, presumption and violence?

The culture of the mass-medias conditions us totally and makes hypertrophic the dimension of the I, of the conscience. It has permitted the communication at the most high levels, but the information that reaches us is knowledge as notion, appearance, imitation of someone or something, stimulus to the conquest of status symbol or power.

We usually listen little to that part which is the dimension of the feeling, the female, creative dimension that, according to Jung, is reactivated by the use and listening to the interior channel.

Going back on the listening to the interior channel, a particular world is reactivated, the world of images. There is a soul, a female component to recover also in the man. In that moment every change makes us a different person in comparison with before, then we have many facets, many persons, many personalities.

Jung declared that the true duty of the analysis is permitting person to uncover her true visage is hidden from thousand other faces. As the centre of onions is covered with many layers, so our true visage is covered with thousands of masks: this is the individual, the human being, the person, the actor who plays a role.

Therefore, it is necessary to live together with these persons from morning to night and it is necessary to recognize the Animus and the Anima within us.

The rapid changes

It seems to us that today many men are in trouble to free themselves from a "model" of woman which they have inherited from centuries of history. On the other hand it is not easy to find a balance among the models of the past and the pressure of social requests more and more pressing which weighs on women.

How is it possible to create and to sustain social and interpersonal bonds at all levels of life and at the same time to pursue the self-improvement and self-realization?

Joseph Luft points out that "rapid changes in the society, in the structure of the family life, in the communication and in the means of transport, in arts, environment, politics, sexual relationships, in the community and in the values, challenge the capability of adaptation of people. In this way, a lot of changes attained fast, has already caused problems which we have not begun to comprehend and identify. But their disturbing effects are felt and suffered".⁵

The uneasiness to have tried out too many changes in a time too brief often makes people feel alien within their own culture.

Luft specifies that "when the next-door neighbours, the roads, the buildings, clothing, habits and custom, the style of interaction and the social rules change too fast, persons feel disorientated, things lose their meaning, family life style disappears and there is no place where we can return. Toffler uses the term "future-shock" to describe the sense of loss and disorientation which is experienced when one's own culture is replaced too fast by another to which we cannot adapt".⁶

We can point out that it is difficult to adapt ourselves to another culture when this one does not satisfy fundamental needs of the human being, among which emerges also the need of rooting and belonging, besides the self-esteem and realization.

When the family life style disappears and there is no place where we can return, the recognition of a fundamental need is taken away. The creation of a family unit, which has pertained to woman for ages, thus cannot be neglected.

But we cannot even ignore the need of realization of women limiting all chances of having a career and sabotaging their attempts to compare with competences which the cultural tradition has defined "male" in a reductive view.

⁵ Luft J., *Dynamics of group*, Città Studi Edizioni, Torino, 1997, 184.

⁶ Ibidem 184-185.

Even if historians can identify many periods in which fast and deep changes have happened, the sudden acceleration of contemporary changes is another thing. It is discontinuous with the past and has no precedents.

Luft enumerates some factors which reflect accelerated changes which have had a radical impact on people and society:

1. Population: the required time to double the world population has passed from one million to two hundred years, to eighty, today. To the current increase-rate, the population will double in the next thirty five years (Ehrlich, 1969).
2. Production: the gross domestic product of raw material and services in the most advanced twenty-one Nations in the world is doubling every fifteen years.
3. Scientists: from 85% to 90% of all scientists who ever existed, were alive in 1970.
4. Energy: nearly half of all energy utilized in the last two thousand years, has been consumed in the last hundred years. The increase-rate in use has also increased rapidly.
5. Speed: the highest speed of transport has never overcome twenty miles per hour until the middle of the nineteenth century. Now space crafts take men beyond twenty thousand miles per hour and for many air-crafts speed overcomes the speed of sound.
6. Innovation: the innovating cycle between a new idea and its application is reduced from a thousand years to only a few. Combinations of inventions, including those which regard computers, have accelerated drastically new inventions.
7. Movement: about thirty six million people move from a place to another in the USA every year.
8. Books: in the period of four and a half centuries, publication of new books has increased from a thousand a year to a thousand a day.
9. Scientific literature: number of newspapers and articles doubles every fifteen years, with a current production of about twenty million pages every year.
10. Information: the number of words and ideas learned daily by the average adult from magazines, newspapers, radio and televisions, has risen greatly and new technologies proliferate quickly to speed up the rapidity of information. These changes make up only a partial list.⁷

Luft stresses that these changes need to be comprehended and to undergo a social humanizing control:

⁷ Ref.: 185-186.

The Transcience is defined as the concomitance of cultural and psychological changes. Consequently, when a change occurs too quickly, people, places, organizations and ideas influence us in a way not satisfactory and not well located. The quality of relationships, the presence of a commitment and an involvement, the characteristic of the friendship, the process of education and the skill of communicating - all seems to suffer a decline.

The sensation of temporariness which is not an easy factor, pervades over people. These conditions are essentially psychological, however, only a little research and few theories exist, that study them.

Two firm points can be given. The first is this: even if these changes cannot and perhaps have not to be stopped either, they need to be liable to comprehension and social humanizing control. The second point is very close to the first and here the aim can be established more clearly than the means. The quality of human interactions needs to be raised so that a meaning and a value can be restored.⁸

The number of people who can have problems of adjustment to stress and variation or evolution have enormously increased.

Besides crises due to different existential events (motherhood and post-childbirth, diseases, old age, death of consort) we can add social-psychological stresses due to loss of work, marriage or divorce, etc.

Gathering people who can share experiences or who can understand what a state of crisis means, it is easier to overcome difficulties.

Women can draw a lot of vital lymph from solidarity on the basis of sharing problems and from the research of the best solutions.

An analogy drawn from the nature can suggest an healthy optimism to us.

Why do leaves become yellow, red and brown in autumn?

The lymph, flowing more slowly, and the decrease of sunlight contributes in the stopping of feeding the leaves, therefore the green produced by chlorophyll is no longer synthesized and reduces itself. Other coloured pigments, due to the presence of waste that the tree has accumulated in spring and in summer and have always been within the leaf but hidden by the chlorophyll, now reveal themselves. So colour's changes are explained by the leaves typical of autumn.

The plants which lose all their leaves every autumn, are called caduceous-leaves. The plants which remain green in winter too, like pines and firs, are called evergreen.

⁸ Ibidem 186.

Nature goes through periodic crises of autumn, as a way of adjustment to climate change and sunlight. The life cycle of women has to cope with similar crises of adjustment at life's conditions which can modify them internally.

Nevertheless, women can draw from the own inner resources to survive and regenerate, like leaves.

What happens when leaves become yellow and fall?

Winter getting nearer, the plant defends itself against the cold and the little sunlight which arrives, slowing down its vital functions and resting until next spring. Just remaining bare, that is losing all leaves, it manages not to die of cold.

Actually leaves, lightly covered and full of liquid, could freeze, when the air gets too cold. Before intense cold arrives, to the stalk of the leaves, gummy and waterproof flakes form to block the passage of chlorophyll towards the leaf.

Leaves which are no longer fed, become yellow, dry up and shrivel. A gust of wind or a raindrop will be sufficient to make already dead leaves fall. However, a fallen dead leaf is not useless; not only the rain and the snow, but also microbes and bacteria make fallen leaves soak up and decompose becoming a very good fertilizer for the ground.

When the leaves fall, lymph well protected from bark will continue to flow inside the trunk without freezing. The tree does not absorb any more water from the hard and frosty ground and the lymph continues to move in the trunk, but very slowly; therefore the tree uses substances stored up during the summer and so survives all the winter. In spring, new leaves will sprout from the buds which in autumn have already grown near the stem of fallen leaves: before the winter trees have already produced little leaves and buds which will bloom into future flowers.