Chapter - I

MYTHS AND REALITY
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Woman : Myths and Reality

Woman as subject has been claimed to have defied all discussion. Discerning thinkers, philosophers and creative men have treated woman as subject, concept, biological creature and also enigma. Astrologically, woman has been given the seventh house in the zodiacal horoscope, midway between the sixth and the eighth houses, representing enemies, disease, death and devitalization. The Indian poets of yore bowed down to this house respectfully and felt that it was this house that could save man from sickness, enemy and death by interfering with the paincausing elements. Yet Bernard Shaw has gone to the extent of saying that “Vitality in a woman is a blind fury of creation” (Shaw, *Man and Superman* 60).

In popular and less serious social levels woman is woe to man. The male dominated world often makes fun of women and gives them the second place. Simone de Beauvoir’s great book *The Second Sex* is an ironical title on woman’s second place in the scheme of things. On more political and banal levels “that woman” is current in all civilizations and climes. General Yahya Khan, a former President of Pakistan has gone on record of having called Indira Gandhi (former Indian Prime Minister) “that woman”. In other words, woman unlike man has been the agent-provocateur of all psychological and poetic discourses, idolized, glamorized and slighted. Men like Antony have
kissed away half the world for woman, whereas, misogynists and unredeem-
able cynics have ascribed woman the central place of all evil and calumny. A
scholar writing about woman in the last year of the twentieth century, must,
of necessity, steer clear of the paradoxical and conflicting claims of adulation
and denigration in order to reach the concrete shores of objective understand-
ing. In this chapter, we propose to project the socio-cultural dimensions that
have grown around woman: Woman as myth and woman as a role player in
social reality. Further we hope to show that the myths that have been trans-
mittled from ancient times to the modern age, about woman, are respectful to
woman; but woman as woman, biopsychically separate from man, always
pines for a distinct identity of her own. All myths about women, in the cul-
tural history of the world, have been created by man. All descriptions, pat-
terns and types of women are male visions culturally enforced in history. Yet,
it is the male world, which seeks to find correspondences between the male
and the female, establishing thereby an “objective” picture that is revealing if
not confusing. C.G. Jung, one of the most perceptive minds in the post-Freud
century observes:

The conscious side of woman corresponds to the emotional side of man,
not to his “mind”. “Mind” makes up the “soul” or better, the “animus” of
woman, and just as the anima of a man consists of inferior relatedness,
full of effort, so the animus of woman consists of inferior judgements, or better, opinions.

(Psychological Reflections 112)

Jung tacitly admits that woman is different but tries to explain her in terms of male experience and cognition. He fails to project woman as woman without having recourse to male experience. This happens because woman has never been the definer of her own identity. Her distinct appearance identifiable separate, has not been fitted into a psyche distinguishable from that of the male. In this chapter we hope to establish that woman in myth and poetry does posit an identity separate from what man has given her.

Woman, fundamentally, has a biological separateness, as a flesh-bone construction. This biological séparateness, however, has been conceived as stemming from man in the creation myths. In the Judaco Christian myths of creation Eve has been shown as a surgical wonder carved out of Adam's chest:

21. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof.

22. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman and brought her into the man.

23. And Adam said, that is now my bone of bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.

(The Bible, Genesis, 21-23)
Similarly, in an Indian myth, Urvasi the celestial dancer has been created out of the thigh of the sage Narayan:

sthāné khalu nārāyanamṛṣīṁ vilobhayantyastaduru
saṁbhavāmimāṁ dṛṣṭvā vṝdītāḥ sarva apsarasa iti ।

(Kālidās, Vikramorvāsiya, I, 22)

[How very proper that the nymphs of heaven while endeavouring to entice the sage Narayana were put to shame as they saw her (Urvasi) spring from his thigh.]

In this sense, a woman has no separate formal being and logically no respect for her separateness is called for. The Indians as well as the men of the civilized world even today, in half earnest and half jest, speak of her as Ardhangini or the “better” half. Woman is never full, she is always a part of man. In the patriarchal societies woman is secondary. Killing of female children by throwing them into the river or abandoning them in unfrequented places like Sita in the Ramayan is of epical authenticity in India. The female child was dispensable as she was an unwanted claimant to property. Under systems of patriarchy the girl had no legitimate right of being accepted into the family. A girl’s social survival depended on the kindness of the father. Simone de Beauvoir writes:

Under the strictly patriarchal regime, the father can, from their birth on, condemn to death both male and female children; but in the case of the
former, society usually limits his power: every normal new born male is allowed to live, whereas the custom of exposing girl infants is widespread. Among the Arabs there was much infanticide: girls were thrown into ditches as soon as born. It is an act of free generosity on the part of the father to accept the female child; woman gains entrance into such societies only through a kind of grace bestowed upon her, not legitimately like the male.

(The Second Sex 114)

The female child is never welcome as it is not a "penis-child". Luce Irigaray writes:

Her (Woman's) fate is one of "lack", "atrophy" (of her genitals), and "penis envy" since the penis is the only recognized sex organ of any worth.

("This Sex Which is Not One" 323)

In the so-called civilized countries, testing and determining the sex of the foetus in the mother's womb and aborting the female ones is a hateful practice even today. But at the same time, deification of woman and admiration of feminine qualities have been celebrated all over the world in literature and art. The contradictory patterns of male behaviour in the society determining the status of woman, however, are not the complete story of a woman. Woman as woman - apart from and beyond her existence in terms of her relations
with man - still remains elusive. Her biopsychical and social existence as an individual entity, independent of man, is as yet unassessed fully. She is the creative principle of the universe. Most myths of the East and West give woman the pride of original manifestation. It is her energy that creates the process of reality. It is also our contention to show that woman with little effort could make the life system of the universe heavenly. What she truly lacks is the questing spirit to fulfil herself.
Woman is the primal form to generate from the original chaos in the first flush of creation. In the Pelasgeian myths of creation, Eurynome or the "Goddess of All things" rose from chaos:

a. In the beginning, Eurynome, the Goddess of all Things, rose naked from chaos, but found nothing substantial for her feet to rest upon, and therefore divided the sea from the sky, dancing lonely upon its waves. She danced towards the south, and the wind set in motion behind her seemed something new and apart with which to begin a work of creation. Wheeling about she caught hold of this north wind, rubbed it behind her hands, and behold: the great serpent Ophion. Eurynome danced to warm herself, wildly and more wildly, until Ophion, grown lustful coiled about those divine limbs and was moved to couple with her. Now the North wind who is also Boreas fertilizes.

b. Next, she assumed the form of a dove, brooding on the waves and in due process of time, laid the Universal Egg. At her bidding, Ophion coiled several times about this egg, until it hatched and split in two. Out tumbled all things that exist, her children: sun, moon, planets, stars, the earth with its mountains and rivers, its trees, herbs and living creatures.
c. Eurynome and Ophion made their home upon Mount Olympus, where he vexed her by claiming to be the author of the Universe. Forthwith she bruised his head with her heel, kicked out his teeth and banished him to the dark caves below the earth.

d. Next, the goddess created the seven planetary powers, setting a Titaness and Titan over each.

(Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* I, 27)

The Jainas of India conceived the world in the shape of a woman arms akimbo.

(The Encyclopedia of Ethics & Religions, Vol. - IV, 161)

Indian creation myths also conceive of Aditi as the first to be born:

adītīryādyuṇaradītraṇtarikṣam aditīrmātā

sapitaḥ saputraḥ visvā deva aditiḥ punjanaḥ

adītīrjaṁ adītirjanitvaṁ.

(Shukla Yajurveda Samhita, Canto 25, Mantra 23, 464)

[Aditi is verily the heaven and she is the atmosphere, Aditi is the mother, the father as well as the son. Aditi is the gods, Aditi is the five persons (elements) Aditi is the created and the creation itself.]

In her great study *The Vision of Cosmic Order in the Vedas* Jeanine Miller writes:
Aditi connotes the infinite depths of space, the matrix, womb, or 'lap', the generative feminine power, the primeval mother wherein all things come into being through the impact of that power called *daksha*; as a result of the act of *tapas*, that inner kindling that gave the original impetus to creation. She is the mother who brings forth the gods and within whom is all that has been born and all that will be born, the repository of the past, present and future, of the manifest and the unmanifest. (77)

Aditi is the mother substance. Her worship in the *Yajurveda* is a prayer for the primal mother:

Aditi, mighty mother of just rulers and queen of those who follow Eternal Order, great ruler with a far extending sway, untouched by time, protectress, gracious guide, to you we cry.

(Yajurveda, XXI-5)

Thus, the West as well as the East regards the first created form as the feminine form. Woman is the universe. She is the initiator of the process of creation. Only the *Bible* projects the woman as a part of man, but she too is created by god.

The genesis of the world as envisaged in the *Bible* and the derived myths, however, emphasise the feminine symbolism more than that of the male as far as the creative process is concerned. If Adam is created by God,
Eve too is divinely created and she springs from nature which comprising forests, caves and the moon is feminine in its essence. Milton in his *Paradise Lost* echoing the myths of genesis writes: "He for God only, and she for God in him" (IV, ii, 299, 282) which clearly suggests that Eve’s realisation of godhood is through Adam, that is through a male manifestation of the creative principle. In her lower nature, Eve is identified with all that is green, thick, dense and beautiful in the original creation of God. The sublunary or the lower nature of Eve does not rise above Adam; in other words, Eve pervades the Adam-Universe around. Through Adam, Eve’s higher nature finds fulfilment in God-realization and through the Earth her lower nature finds fulfilment in creation.

The first ever imagined woman therefore is both revealed and revelatory. Like Eurynome and her formal counterparts in other myths, she is self-revealing and causing revelations by sexual union with the first off-spring the serpent Ophion. The serpent is the active principle, while the sex drive in Eurynome is the creative principle of this earth. In the revealed form she manifests creation and in her revelatory form, she displays creative divinity through the male. This mythical symbolism is perhaps derived from the elements that go into creation. Out of the five elements the earth alone is feminine and the rest four represented by the sun, sky, air and the rains are the male principles. The Noble Laureate James Lovelock in his *Gaea*
established that the earth is functioning as a woman. The engendering of life is the responsibility of the earth and the elements like air and fire are the initiators. The earth with her cavities, forests, flowers and rivers provides the womb for impregnation.

The existential situation of the earth in the midst of other elements is so conceived that the earth like a display platform holds the sky and other elements in a harmonized unity. The forests, flowers, rivers and caves make the earth the original nature-goddess or mother-goddess. Symbolically she becomes Venus with the attributes of Eros and Adonis. Eros and Adonis have been suggested by Summer and Winter as Northrop Frye theorises in *The Stubborn Structure* (the birth-death cycle). Summer inaugurates the life-cycle when the sun awakens the earth into new forms of life. The sunless winter keeps the earth under the shroud of snow ritualising death in the eternal progression of summer chasing winter and winter waiting for summer. Eros or Summer is thus love which creates and nourishes life. Adonis like winter is death and it completes the cycle of life on earth. The earth thus is the primordial feminine form holding the principle of love and the progressive cycles of life and death. The earth on the one hand, reaches out to the sun, the sky, the air and the rains like a woman transcending the formal patterns to conjoin with the original creator. On the other hand the earth in her sublunary form tries to protect the life thus created, from inevitable death. This dual
nature of the nature-goddess or the earth goddess is the nature of a woman.

In the agrarian myths of India the earth is conceived as a fecund woman sprouting the grain-bearing sapling after the rains. According to the sun calendar the earth has her menstrual period on Raja Sankranti (June 14, every year), and gets ready for the impregnating waters (semen) of the monsoon.

The Sāmkhya system of philosophy of the ancient Indians recognizes two ultimate entities - nature and spirit - which are mutually exclusive. These two in terms of the Sāmkhya system are Prakṛti and Puruṣa, the passive female and the active male:

Prakṛti is independently real, as real as Puruṣa and in that sense, it can be called a "self" existing by itself. Prakṛti exists and acts by itself but is not 'for' itself; the value of its existence is for another (sanīghātaparāthatval). The Sāmkhya would not go to the extent of asserting that Prakṛti would exist even if there were no Puruṣa. The raison d'etre of Prakṛti's existence and activity is the satisfaction of the needs of Puruṣa.

(T.V.R. Murty, "Rise of the Philosophical Schools" 36)

Explaining the two concepts he further states:

If change and impermanence are the sole pattern of reality, then Puruṣa (self) must be replaced by the states of the buddhi (mind), and change
itself must be constructed as the momentary flashing of things into existence and their subsidence. For, the acceptance of an abiding entity (Prakṛti) which changes, introduces heterogeneity into the structure of the real. (36)

Prakṛti therefore exists only for Puruṣa, though it does not owe its existence and activity to the latter. As per Śāmkhya, thus, the whole objective universe with its infinite variety and diversity has evolved out of this entity, termed as Prakṛti. Prakṛti is the first cause, while Puruṣa is the final cause. Defining the two concepts, M. Hiriyana writes in his essay, *The Śāmkhya*:

Puruṣa is not complex but simple; it is not dynamic but static, knowing neither change of place nor change of form. It is passive while prakṛti is never active, which means that it is to be identified more with feeling or the affective side of the mind than with the intellect or the will. (45)

The Prakṛti of Śāmkhya Yoga like Gaea, the Greek goddess of Earth, or the Earth goddess in all mythologies, and the nature goddess, all are identified with the feminine principle and become the empirical data for the inevitable inference that woman is the centre of the universe and also the dynamic principle that motivates and activates the objective universe that springs from her; she is the very subject and content of life. The whole objective universe with its infinite variety and diversity is woman revealed.
All matter, water, vegetation, animal and human life spring from, and on earth. Earth generates life, for she bears, nourishes and brings out all life in and from her womb and again absorbs and takes in all life into her womb. She sets into motion the cyclical process of life - the birth-growth-death cycle describing the circle of fullness. She creates, sustains and brings to natural termination all life that emerges from her womb. It is from her womb all visible life in the universe emanates and into the dark abyss of the same dusky womb it disappears, after drawing the full circle of experienced reality on the very surface of the earth. The earth thus becomes the creating, sustaining and displaying platform, the only planet on which life is possible, as it holds the elements in a pattern which is congenial to all life on it. The vaporous atmosphere, that envelops it, the sky that expands and stretches over it like the vast dome holding sun, moon, stars and other planets and even satellites, is all designed, and held in place for earth and the life that emanates from her.

Woman, in her earth-earthiness is basically a creative principle, the womb that bears the child, nourishes and brings it to life. She, like the earth, feeds and sustains the young life, for she biologically possesses the sources of food for mankind. She carries food for the whole mankind within her body (the breasts). Thus she becomes the nourisher and sustainer of human race like
the Mother Earth who contains infinite variety of food for all kinds of life she
gives birth to.

The earth does not merely create and sustain but brings to full fruition
all that is within each being that it holds up to our view. She is not only the
displaying principle that holds all other planets and elements around her in
their proper places but she displays all that is within herself and within the
beings and objects created by her. A full display of her manifestations
ceaselessly goes on and the earth is the harmonizing principle, the principle
that holds everything in its place. Scientifically, this holding phenomenon is
easily explained by the theory of gravitation. Literally the earth is the base,
the stage, the theatre of manifestation, where the eternal, ceaseless play of life
- the 'Lila' as called by the Indians - is created and maintained everchanging,
evergrowing and evermoving. An eternal display of life in its countless variety
and range, a kaleidoscopic view - starting from the lowest of the lowest
creatures to the greatest, she provides the basis on which the very
superstructure of life is created and expanded. Each creature and object is not
fed like a helpless human babe who is to be taught even to suck, but is taught
to strive and find its food and existence. She demands work and endeavor
and in return gives food, rest and shelter, boons and glories. Even an ant has
to search for and store its food. She sets them to work, goads them to their
respective goals.
Earth, above all this display is endogenic, changing within herself. All the changes within herself are manifested externally, for nothing is hidden in her womb. All the visible seasonal changes, cyclical changes of birth - growth - death, geographical changes, changes in nature are endogenic. With these changes she strikes accord, discord and again brings about a balanced order of the universe or a concord. The volcanic eruptions, throwing up burning, boiling, sizzling lava, the senseless relentless heat cracking up the fields, the gentle rains softening the hardened grey land into green pastures of beautiful fertility, the mute massive rocks, levelled down to planes and the huge large trees decaying, the green tender saplings sprouting and springing up into leafy beauty and flowery fruition, the singing brooks thinning up to narrow streamlets and again swelling into fullness : all are consequential upon the same endogenic nature of the earth. This variegated range of nature is the revealed form of earth, which the feminine figure contains and displays in its physical form. Woman in her revealed form is terrestrial and in her revelatory form is celestial, the earthly aspiring to the heavenly, the mundane transforming into divine; the non-numinous reaching out to the numinous.

The terrestrial elements do not comprise the fertility of her womb alone. The whole universe is to be found in the revealed form and shape of woman. Great poets and sages have envisioned the whole of this universe in feminine form; the biological structure of woman is perceived in the universe and the
expansive objective universe around us is but a visual presentation in its miniature form in feminine shape. The vast azure sky is her brow, the sun and moon her eyes, the up curving mountains and the green valleys and murmuring rivers, the planes and meadows are revealed in her form at a glance to perceiving eyes that can see beyond the mere flesh and bone mortal. The very grace and rhythm of life in her limbs; the gentle ripples of watery brooks in her supple movement; petal softness in her flesh; wingy silkenness in her smooth snowy skin; sunny laughter in her dove like eyes are the endowments of nature and earth in their formal mix. The feminine form has inspired poets and thinkers to discover graces in the universe. Shakespeare and Kālidās, the all time great poets of the West and East always portray woman through natural imagery: Perdita in *Winter’s Tale* is:

‘no sheperdess, but Flora peering in April’s front’. (IV, iii, 2-3, 340)

And Kālidās describes woman in *Meghadūtam*:

\[
\text{tnvī sỹāmā Śīkharaśaṇa pakvabimbādharosthī} \\
\text{madhye kṣamā ċakitahariṇīprekṣaṇā nimnanābhiḥ} \\
\text{sroṇibhāradalasagamana stokanamrā stanābhyām ya} \\
tatra syaduvati viṣaye srṣṭirādyeva dhātuḥ \\
\]

(*Uttarameghah, Sl. 22, 137*)
[The lady, who will be found there, slender-framed, youthful, with pointed teeth and her lower lip resembling a ripe bimba fruit, thin in the middle (waist), possessing of eyes like those of a frightened doe, having a deep navel, of a gait slow on account of the weight of her hips, slightly stooping on account of her breasts and the first creation, as it were, of the Creator in the department of women-kind.] (138)

Such is woman, rare and worthy. The symmetry of feminine figure is so majestic and graceful that the very beauty and richness of the universe springs from it. Kālidās wonders what elements went into making her form, what ingenuity begot such grace that enlivens the dull world. The protagonist in his Vikramorvasiya - wonderstruck at the beauty of Urvasi muses:

asyaḥ sargāvidhau prajāpatirbhūṣandrō nu kāntiprabhaḥ
śṛṅgāreikarasah svayam nu madano māso nu pūṣpākaraḥ ।
vedābhyaśajadaḥ katham nu viṣayavyāvṛttakoutūhalo
nirmātum prabhavenmanoharamidāṁ rūpam purāṇo muniḥ । ।

(I, Sl. 8, 22)

[Was the moon of lovely brightness her creator? Or Madana himself who joys in love and love alone? Or the vernal month? For how could an aged anchorite who has grown dull through the study of the Vedas, and who has withdrawn himself from all worldly pleasures, fashion such a lovely form?]
Searching for his beloved, the lover finds her everywhere in nature; her graceful gait in swans, her face in the lotus, her dark bewitching eyes in the bees, her sweet fragrant breath in the breeze-wafted flowers, her shapely breasts in the extensive slopes of the mountains, her soft musical voice in the cuckoo. The image of a sulking woman is seen in the flowing river:

taraṅga bhrūbhaṅga kṣubhitavīhasrenirasanā
vikarṣanti phenaṁ vasanamiva saṁrambhāsithilāṁ ्
yatavidhāṁ yati swālitamabhisaṅdhāya bahusō
nadībhāveneyāṁ dhruvamasahana saṁ pariṇataṁ ्

(IV, Sl. 26, 116)

[The waves are her brows; the chirping birds are her tongues; the disorderly furious foam is her clothes; when I see the river’s zigzag flow, I feel it is my sulking beloved who going apart from me, has transformed herself into this river.]

Even a repentent beloved is like a flowerless creeper:

tanvi meghajalārdrapallavataya dhautādharevaaśrubhiḥ
sūnyevābharanaiḥ svakālavirahōḍ viśrāntapuspodhāma ्
cintāmounamivāsthitaṁ madhulihāṁ sābdeirvinā laksyate
çandī māmavadhūya pādapatitam jatānutaṁeva sa ्

(IV, Sl. 26, 122)
[This creeper is slender; its leaves washed by the rain are like the lips washed by the tears. As it is out of season for flowers, it looks like an unadorned woman. The silence of the bees is like her lost in thoughts. This creeper looks like my repentent beloved Urvasi who is waiting for my footfall.]

Woman is everywhere in animate and inanimate objects of the universe, woman in all her varied moods is perceived and reflected in the objects of nature; woman in her beauty and form is as rich as the very earth.

Rajgopalachari in his rendering of the original Ramayan of Valmiki says of Sita:

The beauty of the goddess Earth mortal eyes cannot see its fullness, but we get glimpses of it as we gaze with graceful hearts on the emerald green or golden ripeness of the spring tide or the autumn fields with awe and adoration on the glories of mountain and valley, rivers and ocean.

This loveliness was Sita in its entirety. (7)

It is not the mere seductive curvaceous shape of woman that invites a reference to mountains, rivers, valleys and caves but also the grandeur, majesty, solemnity and serenity of the soul of earth and nature self spreading over this universe that is suggested in the feminine form.

The symmetry of the feminine figure is so majestic and graceful that her shape like the emblem of the macro reality sways and swings producing music
of concord. Woman is love. When she opens her tender rounded arms, it is as though she makes a bid to embrace the vast expanding universe with the whole of its creation, and the spheres arrest their movement, breathless and expectant, pausing in their celestial music for effect. Her eyes, like the stars of twilight take in the oval of creation; reflect the blue of the deep; flash the jewels hidden in the heart of the stormy oceans and the lightning of the azure sky; her wavy tresses of hair spread over the Universe like the dark canopy of the night sky, cool and refreshing, relieving the parched hearts of mankind, lulling their exhausted spirits to restful sleep; her balmy breath like the blooming gardens (earth) concentrates all the aroma of the fragrant flowers; her nimble feet set the course of life’s moments. The rounded perfection and tenderness of her limbs awaken and set into motion the cosmic dance. The body of Malavika in Kālidāsa’s Malavikāgnimitra is so artistically perfect that the royal lover says:

\[
\begin{align*}
dirgha\text{k}\text{\textbar} \text{k}\text{\textbar} \text{\textbar} sa\text{\textbar} ra\text{\textbar} di\text{\textbar} du\text{\textbar} t\text{\textbar} v\text{\textbar} da\text{\textbar} ma\text{\textbar} b\text{\textbar} \text{\textbar}\text{\textbar} ha\text{\textbar} \text{\textbar} n\text{\textbar} t\text{\textbar} v\text{\textbar} a\text{\textbar} m\text{\textbar} sa\text{\textbar} \text{\textbar} yo\text{\textbar} h \\
sank\text{\textbar} spi\text{\textbar} ta\text{\textbar} m \text{\textbar} nibi\text{\textbar} don\text{\textbar} nata\text{\textbar} ta\text{\textbar} stana\text{\textbar} mur\text{\textbar} a\text{\textbar} h, \text{\textbar} pa\text{\textbar} r\text{\textbar} s\text{\textbar} ve \text{\textbar} pram\text{\textbar} r\text{\textbar} us\text{\textbar} the\text{\textbar} i\text{\textbar} v\text{\textbar} a \\
madhya\text{\textbar} h \text{\textbar} pa\text{\textbar} n\text{\textbar} im\text{\textbar} ito \text{\textbar} ni\text{\textbar} tam\text{\textbar} b \text{\textbar} jagha\text{\textbar} na\text{\textbar} m \text{\textbar} p\text{\textbar} d\text{\textbar} a\text{\textbar} va\text{\textbar} r\text{\textbar} la\text{\textbar} ng\text{\textbar} uli \\
chando \text{\textbar} na\text{\textbar} ta\text{\textbar} yit\text{\textbar} ur\text{\textbar} y\text{\textbar} athe\text{\textbar} i\text{\textbar} v\text{\textbar} a \text{\textbar} ma\text{\textbar} na\text{\textbar} si \text{\textbar} si\text{\textbar} la\text{\textbar} stha\text{\textbar} m \text{\textbar} tath\text{\textbar} as\text{\textbar} y\text{\textbar} a\text{\textbar} h \text{\textbar} va\text{\textbar} pu\text{\textbar} h \\
\end{align*}
\]

(282)

[Her long eyes; her face lovely like the moon of autumn; the arms sloping at the shoulders; her compact bosom with the plump and swelling breasts; her sides as if polished; her waist measurable by the
palm of the hand; her lips expansive; her feet with their curved toes; her whole body thus seems framed to suit the fancy of her teacher of dancing.

Physically, woman is the poised form of nature. She is the dance and the dancer.

It is not the structural resemblance alone that makes woman synonymous with the universe. Like the nature goddess or Prakṛti, woman is the activating principle for man, for man is the constant aspect of the Ultimately Real or God or Brahman, which is the static principle like Puruṣa in Śāmkhya. Man is the potential energy. Woman is Śakti, the energy principle. Scientifically speaking woman is the kinetic energy that moves, motivates, acts, activates, creates, sustains, nourishes - in short, the energy principle of the universe.

Woman in Indian mythology and philosophy, as we have already seen in the Śāmkhya system, is identified with the palpable and impalpable, and also with Prakṛti which exists as Śakti (power) or creative energy. The Devi Mahatmya a part of the Markendaya Purāṇa goes beyond the Śāmkhya and envisages the universe as feminine energy directing human destiny. Thomas B. Coburn writes:

Of the various features of the Devi-Mahatmya one is pre-eminent. The ultimate reality in the universe is here understood to be feminine, Devi.
the Goddess. Moreover, the Devi-Mahatmya appears to be the first occasion on which relentless and comprehensive articulation of such a vision is given in Sanskrit. There are, of course, various goddesses who are known in Sanskrit from the time of the Rig Veda onwards. But never before has ultimate reality itself been understood as Goddess. (Italics mine). (153)

According to this concept all that is and all that happens in the universe is caused by mahāmāya (cosmic illusion or great deceptiveness), the prime goddess. She is also conceived as the knowledge that releases man from mortal existence:

She is (also) the supreme eternal knowledge (vidya) that becomes the cause of release (mukti) from bondage to mundane life....

(F.E. Pargiter, The Mārkandeya Purāṇa VIII-XIII)

The text introduces the idea that the universal energy is feminine with the concept of mahāmāya who can hold Viṣṇu the Supreme God in the Hindu belief, in soporific stupor in yoganidra: "The yogic slumber (Yoganidra) of the lord of the worlds, Viṣṇu, is (this same) mahāmāya, and through her is this world being deluded". (1.41) Brahma the "Creator" invokes the Devi as more powerful than the creator, protector and destroyer of the world:

Whatever and wherever anything exists, whether it be real or unreal (you) who have everything as your very soul. Of all that, you are the power; how then can you be (inadequately) praised?
By you the creator of the world, the protector of the world, Who (also) consumes the world is brought under the influence of sleep: who here is capable of praising you? (63-65)

The Universal energy controlling all gods and manifestations also takes earthly forms. The earthly form of this mahāmāya is Durga, the symbol of Śakti, to destroy the buffalo demon Mahiṣa. She was the commissioned energy of mahāmāya who could liberate man from bondage by vidya and can also put to bondage all life by avidya (ignorance). Her power of creating illusionary forms and control over all that is and all that would manifest, is evidenced by the fact that she holds under her absolute command Viṣṇu and his supreme mind. She alone, after Brahma's appeasing invocation releases Viṣṇu and activates his mind. Mahāmāya's earthly form is willed by another such prayer to rescue gods and men from the demon. Durga is the śakti-incarnation of the primal energy. She relieves the earth and restores its moral equilibrium of which she is the protector.

This Energy, this Śakti is the creative power of Śiva. As Prakṛti-Puruṣa are inseparable so are Śiva-Śakti or in the ultimate analysis, Male-Female. This Puruṣa or Siva or Man is the cosmic consciousness, like "she for God in him" as Milton would put it; and Prakṛti or Śakti or woman is the very cosmic content out of which the world is born and into which the world is dissolved. Woman is the kinetic energy of the cosmos or the Śakti that is the prime
mover of creation:

...the initiator of the experimental reality; the holding principle of the Energy that causes the universe to move, the life to continue and the source that sustains all kinds of life. It is in this sense, that a woman is the very incarnation of cosmic energy and symbol of the essence of reality. In Tantrism, Śakti is endowed with all aspects of life, creative to dissolutive, sensual to sublime, benign to horrific. Śakti’s universal power is the prime mover and mother-womb of the recurring cycles of the universe and as such reflects the procreative powers of eternal substance.

(Ajit Mukherjee and Madhu Khanna, The Tantric Way 16)

Woman is thus the very reality. In her lower nature woman is the womb, that brings out life like the Earth. She creates and nourishes the human babe to growth; sustains young life like the earth, by feeding and tending the infant. Of all kinds of infants, it is only the human babe that is the most helpless, for when left to itself after birth, the chances of its survival are often remote unless it is saved by some sort of providential interference. Even the very act of sucking is to be taught to it and in this, woman’s biological role is of a graver import than that of the man and is identical with that of the earth.

Woman is as fertile as the earth and contains in her very form the source of food that is essential for the survival of mankind. She feeds the babe from her very being and nourishes it till it weans. Like the earth that yields rich crops
and varied food to all kinds of life existant on her, woman yields food and
that too with love, and nurtures the child with tender care. Woman, however,
is not a mere mindless womb. True, it is that her lower nature seeks fulfilment
through creation. But, her higher nature, the 'divine' in her is expressed
through the soul in her form; the soul that is tender and protecting, that takes
care of the human babe till the same crosses the age of susceptibility to
danger and evil. It is to the protective arms of the mother that the child runs
as soon as he is threatened with danger. Mothering the child, nursing the
child, protecting the child and presenting life is all but her lower nature. She,
in her revealed form, like the earth is merely the creator and nurturer. In her
revelatory form, she assumes the graver responsibility of nurturing the mind
of the babe. Emerging as the formative force, she helps the mind, the seat of
all action-provoking thoughts, to grow, to flower. The routine childish play of
putting sundry objects before the child and encouraging him to reach for
them, to point to things and identifying them with name and form to create
associations of ideas and images, to instil thoughts, to imbibe virtues, to
instigate actions, to inculcate in the child the desires for and dreams of glory -
all these are the mother's way of drawing the child to the world. The mother's
play with the child may appear to be quite a fond play, waste of time and
falsely engaging the restless energetic young child to her own fancies- but it is
charged with such import that the mother moulds the pliable brain of the
child and shapes it as she envisions the child to be. It is the woman as mother, accomplishes the task of shaping the child for it is with the mother that the child spends time till adolescence. The father, as is common knowledge, is often the intruding "other" in the mother-child relationship. Woman displays the whole world to the child. She is the experimental reality through which the child's first encounter with the world is made. She is the medium through which the child's initial contact with the world is established. She is the connecting link in the chain of being, that links him up with the existential world in and around us. She introduces and exposes him to a varied range of reality. She is the nurturer both on physical and psychological planes, and she creates an intellectual and temperamental edifice on which the subsequent flowering of the individual takes place. Guiding the first faltering steps of the child she ensures its efforts to reach out to the world. She is like the nature goddess, who determines the very essence and colour of the flowers, and taste and shape of the fruits that each creeper, plant and tree is to yield. Woman shapes, forms and patterns the life of the young child. Woman, like Prakṛti, the Energy radiating source of the universe, is the life giving force, the sustaining source and the nurturer of the physical, intellectual and moral being of man as Wordsworth would say:

The anchor of my purest thoughts; the nurse,

The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul of all my moral being.

(William Wordsworth, 'Tintern Abbey', ll. 110, 165)
Protecting, preserving, nourishing the child, woman safeguards, like the earth, the future of mankind. Her biological role is not a blind process of perpetuation of human race, like an automaton turning out stereotypes or isotypes. But it is as the maker of mankind, woman reveals her higher nature and finer sensibilities; tries to reach out to divinity transcending all that is sublunary.

The biological analogies further extend from creative acts to the endogeneity of the earth. Woman displays variety and changeability in her physiognomy as well as in her psyche. Influenced by the lunar movements, woman's cyclical changes feature her lower nature again, parallel to the endogeneity of the earth. The moon moving round the earth in twenty seven days and four hours, affecting woman's physical system, brings in the monthly changes of ovulation, menstruation conducive to her impregnation. It is worthwhile to quote here a corroborative passage from Woman's Mysteries, Ancient and Modern:

The symbol which above all others has stood throughout the ages for woman, not in her likeness to man, one aspect of 'homosapiens' but in her difference from man, distinctively feminine in contrast to his masculinity, is the Moon. In poetry, both modern and classical, and from time immemorial in myth and legend the moon has represented the woman's deity, the feminine principle, much as the sun with its heroes, symbolised
the masculine principle. To primitive man and to the poet and dreamer of today the Sun is masculine and the Moon is feminine.

The moon, first as an influence of fertility and later as a deity, has been considered throughout the ages to be in a peculiar relation to woman. It is source and origin of their power to bear children, the goddess who keeps watch over them and all that matters that primarily concern them. These beliefs are very widespread. They are to be found almost all the world over and persisting from remote times upto the present. They occur among the Indians of both North and South America, among the negroes of Africa, among the primitive tribes of Australia and Polynesia, among the aboriginal people of Asia, and the exceedingly primitive people of Greenland. The peasants of Europe have similar legends which also permeate folk tales everywhere, while the people of India, of China and Mongolia, of Arabia and Syria, of ancient Greece and Rome and the Celtic peoples of Northern and Western Europe incorporate these beliefs about the moon into the very center of their religious structure.

(Esther Harding 20)

In the Greco-Roman World, the primitives believed that moon impregnated women and married women were made to lie directly under the moon, for conception. Though this sounds incredible, it still points out that woman's fertility of womb like that of the Earth's is relative to the lunar movements
and the sublunary aspects running parallel, inevitably lead to the formation and workings of her psyche.

The feminine psyche, thus, is analogous to the feminine features of Earth; the psyche, that is so elusive to discerning thinkers, so preplexing to the psychiatrists, so challenging and at the same time so very unpredictable and inexplicable even to the feminists and feminologists. Woman, till date, has always been attempted to be explored and explained in social terms but not in cosmic terms. The word woman has become so relative a term that she ceases to be an independent existential entity in cosmic terms. She is the 'other' for man and even for herself, as expounded by Simone de Beavoir in *The Second Sex*. She remains secondary as seen by Kate Millet in her *Sexual Politics*: the woe and weal of man as discerned by man at large, a 'weaker vessel' as bibilically termed have all been analytical theses founded on the social—existential base. But, woman's 'inner being' or the 'woman' deep inside the woman is the manifestation of the feminine principle of Earth whose soul is nature or Prakṛti or Šakti the energy principle that envelops and intermingles the universe. The real energy that plays in and around the Adam Universe is, however, not perceived as yet. The dualism in woman, being difficult to be explained and defined in concretised terms, is often disposed off as fickleness by male theorists while the feminists justify it as woman's protest to her ill-treatment inflicted on her by the male oriented society.
The formative and functional being of woman is analogous to that of the earth, the psychic being is inevitably analogous to Nature - the Soul through which the earth manifests herself and the Energy principle or Sakti which acts and interacts everywhere in the Universe. Explaining the Sakti concept in his *Introduction to Tantra Sastra*, Sir John Woodroffe says she is (*Lalita*) the world-player:

"She who plays", whose play is world-play; whose eyes playing like fish in the beauteous waters of her Divine face, open and shut with the appearance and disappearance of countless worlds now illuminated by her light, now wrapped in her terrible darkness. (113)

Woman's psyche evincing the subtle shades of light and dark is thus the envisazing force which creates a small world of her own where she plays the game of life; makes a world now and mars it for another; brings in one thing now and takes away that for another; creates, nurtures, destroys to reshape, to rebuild, to renovate like nature that goes on ever beautifying itself and its surroundings. Levelling down a steep rising mountain into a planer surface, felling an over grown and antique oak and causing a green young sapling to spring up by its side, withering away the old flowers and bringing young buds in their place, cooling down the sizzling purple lava into solid rocks of varied shapes and sizes - nature beautifies the earth every moment; decks her
with seasonal novelties; displays her wonderous beauties. Woman as per her natural disposition tends to exhibit; we may even say, to show off. It is not her vanity that prompts her to display as is often thought of by psychiatrists and misogynists. She displays her 'self' through her body, her man and her children. She decks and adorns herself in myriad ways: like Pope's Belinda in *The Rape of the Lock*. Beautification of her self is a ritual, she goes through with solemnity and ceremony. The dressing table being her altar, she worships her own image reflected in the mirror. She, likewise adorns her mind, her 'being' and on the social level she adorns her home, decorates and places every sundry object in its assigned place; she sets an order. It is not narcissism as is often termed by womanologists. As the moon grows to its full shape and size, as the buds bloom into flowers, as birds chime in songs, as the earth beautifies herself, as the sky gets filled with the shiney stars at night fall, so does woman adorn herself - it is a longing deep within her, as natural as nature itself. Beauty then, is the prime value that woman holds in herself, in her being. She is the unsullied treasure house of beauty. As the stars and moon follow the sun, all other finer values follow this prime value, beauty. Goodness and truth have, always been associated with beauty. Keats asserts "Beauty is truth and Truth Beauty" ("Ode on Grecian Urn"). Marina in *Pericles* is so beautiful that she could not be 'false' nor could she 'cheat'. Rosalind in *As you Like It* is:
The quintessence of every sprite
Heaven would in little show.

Therefore heaven nature charg'd
That one body should be fill'd
With all graces wide - enlarged.

Nature presently distill'd
Helen's cheek, but not her heart,
Cleopatra's majesty.

Atlanta's better part.
Sad Lucretia's modesty
Thus Rosalind of many parts
By heavenly synod was devis'd
Of many faces, eyes and hearts,
To have the touches dearest priz'd.

(Shakespeare, II, iv, 148-160, 229)

Adler too says:

Aristotle defining beauty wrote: "To be beautiful, a living creature and
every whole made up of parts, but also be of a certain definite
magnitude. Beauty is a matter of size and order -

Aquinas said that the beautiful object is one that has unity, proportion
and clarity. It is a complex whole having parts. When the parts are so
organised and proportioned to one another that the complex structure of
its wholeness is perspicuous or manifest (i.e. not obscured by any
discordant or inharmonious element); the object thus constituted is
beautiful. It is admirable for its intrinsic excellence or perfection.

(Six Great Ideas 112-113)

The beauty of the form often reflects the goodness of the soul. Beauty is the
barometer of perfection. Keats in Hyperion points at this truth as a
metaphysical perception of the process of life:

The first in beauty should be the first in might.

(II, ii, 229, 83)

The very graceful formatic structure evinces qualities of her soul as Erikson
would put it: "The richly convex parts of the female anatomy suggest fulness,
warmth and generosity" (Identity : Youth and Crisis 28).

The symmetrical perfection and biological functions mostly determine
the psychic formation: Woman is tolerant, patient and resilient; she is a
recipient and a giver. She has a greater tenacity to suffer, like earth; she is
often a willing martyr; her function of bearing, creating, protecting, preserving
and moulding the created forms demand an intense emotional involvement
with life.

The mind-body complex that a human being is, its feminine form is the
absolute form of life. The male merely acts out the reality of the absolute.
Woman is fulfilled by man and man realizes his self by woman. Yet, woman goes further than this in myth and literature. Woman brings back the dead. Wrests out life from Death, bringing thereby a new vitality to the rhythm of the metaphysical process. The Savitri myth in India's long memory is the greatest triumph and achievement for woman. Savitri by her devotion, love, Sakti brings back her husband Satyavan from the jaws of death. The Lord of the Kingdom of death, Yama, rewrites his registers by yielding to the powers of Savitri.

In the myths of India's great cultural heritage the myth of Savitri, a woman of great chastity and love has been shown to have interfered with the schedules of Yama, the god of Death, by her virtuous powers. She brings back to life her husband Satyavan who was fated to die young. Sri Aurobindo in his celebrated epic Savitri makes his heroine a power, a Sakti that wrests life out of death. She had fore-knowledge of her husband's death and when the time came she demonstrated great fortitude and divinity:

She told the secret of her woe to none:

Calm was her face and courage kept her mute.

Yet only her outward self suffered and strove;

Even her humanity was half divine.

Her spirit opened to the Spirit in all.
Her nature felt all Nature as its own,
Apart, living within, all lives she bore;
Aloof, she carried in herself the world: (8)

Aurobindo’s Savitri is not only divine, partaking of both process and reality as woman, she is also the maker of her own destiny by the power of love. As lover and wife she combines harmony and the shaping power of self-regulating creativity. She cannot accept, therefore, any contrary judgement that disharmonizes her reality. If her being is challenged, she knows what to do:

Her being must conform its formless cause,
Against the universe weigh its single self.
On the bare peak where self is alone with nought
And life has no sense and love no place to stand,
She must plead her case upon extinction’s verge,
In the world’s death-cave uphold life’s helpless claim
And vindicate her right to be and love.

Altered must be Nature’s harsh economy. (12)

Savitri as woman, is the life-principle that loves Satyavan not as mere wife but as the agent to change earthly life into something divine. She feels that she is spirit in human form and can raise the "world to God". She asserts
that conviction of hers when Satyavan dies. She argues with God when God tempts her with the virtues of single life:

In vain thou tempts with solitary bliss
Two spirits saved out of a suffering world;
My soul and his indissolubly linked
In the one task for which our lives were born
To raise the world to God in deathless light
To bring God down to the world on earth we came,
To change the earthly life to life divine. (692)

Finally Savitri wins; God grants life to Satyavan and also blesses her with a boon:

The thoughts are mine, I have spoken with thy voice
My will is thine, what thou hast chosen I choose;
All thou hast asked I give to earth and men.
I will possess in thee my universe
The universe find all I am in thou. (698-700)

In Indian mythology Savitri is divine not because of any special powers bestowed on her. Her divinity springs from her human love for a life of social commitment. She must have the full share of her life. Her love must restore life to Satyavan for they are God's human forms to make earthly life divine. She argues out her choice of love. Love is her strength:
Once my heart chose and chooses not again.

The word I have spoken can never be erased.

It is written in the record book of God.

The truth once altered, from the earth's air effaced,

By mind forgotten, sounds immortally

For ever in the memory of Time.

Once the dice-fall thrown by the hand of fate

In an eternal moment of the gods.

My heart has sealed in troth to Satyavan:

Its signature adverse fate cannot efface,

Seal not fate nor Death nor Time Dissolve.... (432)

Sri Aurobindo in Savitri shows that woman is the universal spirit in formal pattern, she is not a fleshbone mortal playing to the recorded music of an unseen master:

My will is part of the eternal will,

My fate is what my spirit's strength can make

My fate is what my spirit's strength can bear;

My strength is not the titan's, it is God's,

I have discovered my glad reality

Beyond my body in another's being: (435)

In the Isis-Osiris myth of the Greco-Roman world, Isis has been associated
with generative power. Savitri protects and prolongs life, while Isis regenerates, brings back to life Osiris, her brother and husband killed by Typhon:

It was said in the myth that Isis by her love drew forth again the potency of the dead Osiris. Isis the magician avenged her brother ... She made to raise up the helpless members of him whose heart was at rest. She drew from him his essence and she made therefrom an heir. She suckled the child in solitariness and none knew where his place was. Her love gave him back his potency which Typhon the lustful had destroyed.

(Esther Harding 185)

With a sense of order, her own perceptions of reality, and values and love, woman wins back whatever is lost; reconstructs whatever is broken, rejuvenates whatever is ruined. Self-effacement, self-immolation, imagination, receptivity, tolerance, protective and preserving instincts are all feminine virtues. Possessing these virtues, she always feels she deserves everything. And when she does not get what she desires and deserves she sulks, she turns away her face in contempt and disgust. She is unyielding and hard at times like earth; she displays granite hard obstinacy; she is cruel and betraying at times like Keats' La Belle Dame; throws up tantrums of an unyielding temper, inexplicable indifference - streaks of negativity, for they comprise another face in her - the face other than that which is expected of her by society and man.
Puzzling and illogical though they may appear for an analyst, these are not the traces of evil in her nature; nor are these discordant notes in the *moonlit sonata* or a *falsetto* in solo music. These are manifestations of a woman's defense mechanism whereby she tests the fidelity and constancy of man and society. A woman sulks, hurls abuses, bangs the door on the face of a supplicant, for she always thinks she deserves more than what is offered, and by doing that makes life spicier. And it is these negative streaks in her otherwise benign nature, bring in heterogeneity into the experimental reality of life. She makes life a challenge. As said earlier she is the "World-play", creator as well as destroyer. Life's veriegated heterogeneity is caused by woman who is changeable, playful, dynamic and varied. She is not a static phenomenon, taking things lying down, absorbing all dust and heat like a doormat. She plays upon and is played upon. She acts and activates; she causes and sets into motion a chain of events, like Helen's elopement and Sita's kidnapping causing wars. She desires and makes men desire her more; she moulds and yields to be moulded; she goads her man and children to bring glories for her; she absorbs and accommodates her man, his ego, his sorrows, pleasures, woe and weal.

Prakṛti or Śakti manifests its activities on the Earth, the theatre of manifestation, while woman does the same in the society in her home, through her family, through her man. The society of man depends upon the range and
variety of woman as the panorama of nature depends on her various moods. Society is an artifice modelled on nature but free from nature's domination. In other words, it is the world which man creates by his intellect and creative faculties. The woman is the centre of this world as nature is the centre of the earth.

It may be interesting to quote one of the celebrated Physicists, Fritjof Capra in this context. Commenting on the Chinese view of yin (the feminine principle) and yang (the male principle) he writes in the *Turning Point*:

In the Chinese view, then, there seem to be two kinds of activity - activity in harmony with nature and activity against the natural flow of things. The idea of passivity, the complete absence of any action, is not entertained. Therefore, the frequent Western association of yin and yang with passive and active behaviour, respectively, does not seem to be consistent with Chinese thought. In view of the original imagery associated with the two archetypal poles, it would seem that yin can be integrated as corresponding to responsive, consolidating, cooperative activity, yang as referring to aggressive, expanding, competitive activity. Yin action is conscious of the environment, yang action is conscious of the self. In modern terminology one could call the former 'eco-action' and the latter 'ego-action'. (20)
A paragraph later, updating his interpretation of the modern visions of yin and yang, he writes:

From this it is apparent that rational knowledge is likely to generate self-centered, or yang activity, whereas intuitive wisdom is the basis of ecological, or yin, activity. (21)

Capra considers the yin to be intuitive wisdom and ecological. This supports, on modern scientific terms, the view that the universe in its nature is feminine. Woman in society is for intuitive integration. She is the central energy of home, society and earth.

Being at the centre of the world of man, the miniature form of it being the family, woman plays, acts, plans, schemes, designs, constructs, shapes, arranges and rearranges. The game of life, the ‘lila’ is played here in her diverse role; the order of life is set here; the tune of living is set here. She is the designing angel, the architect who designs the patterns of social life, all her finer sense, aesthetic sensibility, sensitivity are displayed here. For, family is the smallest unit of the society, a microcosm, self-contained and holistic. The woman, like the angel of the house looks after the kitchen to feed and sustain life in the family, nurses the children and the pride and glory of her man. As nature plans extra human creations, giving an evolving and changeful pattern of beauty and harmony, woman in the family functions in the same creative
mould. The family is what a woman makes of it creatively, as an achieved world-unit comparable to the achieved nature-unit in the macrocosm around. The form, complexion and beauty, the harmony that a woman is, shape the family, raising superstructures on props and foundations of her imagination and artistry. As Earth and sky beget evolutionary creation, woman and man beget children, thereby achieving a separate and complete spectrum of the creative demiurge. The home thus is the personal world of a woman in which nature-like she orders, beautifies, expands and juvenates the life she conceives and brings forth.
III

The reality of woman today as well as in the past, most educated and enlightened women argue, is exploitation, sexual aggression and suppression. The feminists prove and theorize that woman has no sexual identity: she is the *Female Eunuch* (Germaine Greer). She is not the goddess of the myths; she is of *Woman Born* (Adrienne Rich), and inferior; treated by the male world as dirt or door mat. The focus in this construction is on man and phallocentrism; the woman is the wailing victim of a male universe.

We will not discuss the feminist point of view as the basic contention in our thesis is different although references to feminist arguments will be made to support our contention. We believe that the female universe has not been rationally conceived. The feminine cosmology has not been created. And woman has not realized her full potential. If the reasons for this failure of woman is man and his dominating male imagination in all obtaining human systems, it only proves that woman has not been able to use her own energies, translating the symbols into objective reality. She has not been able to create *live* reality. The idea that woman is "intuitive wisdom" which is the basis of eco-balance has not been developed into a system as yet. In the absence of such a system woman suffers the state of a victim by always comparing herself to man. The complementarity of woman-man relationship
has not been developed into proper orchestration. The result is the helpless state of woman.

But woman, as we have already seen, is not a victim. She has never used her powers to heroize herself. The goddess has not come out of the pedestal. But whenever woman willed herself to control reality, she has done so admirably. As she has two basic roles to play in family and society, that of lover and wife, she has excelled in both in grand proportions. Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt and Draupadi the consort of the Pandavas in the *Mahabharat* have manifested the best feminine forms as lover and wife. In the chapters following, we will measure their potential and assess the performance of their soul force in terms of the true feminine essence.