

# women as world makers

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- intervention
- in "Nato Symposium" Lisboa
- texte manuscrit
- cf. tiré à part

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Women as world - ~~makers~~ makers 0

The title I have given may  
be misleading & ambiguous  
ambitious

NATO Symposium  
Lisboa, 8 de Agosto 80

My deep conviction that we are  
at the end of one type of civilization  
and coming to the dawn of a  
new world.

~~35.45~~  
~~35.45~~

To discuss w + the world of work  
so that w would be integrated into  
a civilization which is fading  
away/is of no interest to me.

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But  
~~rather~~ I am deeply concerned  
with our contribution to the world  
to be built, with the steps to  
be made.

(NATO)





# I. Work ≠ employment

We can speak about women + work in "classical" terms: the increase of  $\bar{w}$  present in the labour-force and its consequence on the economic life. There will be plenty of opportunity to do so during this seminar. Many questions will be raised + answered in connection with the double task of  $\bar{w}$ , the division of labour in society, the necessary conditions for  $\bar{w}$  to gain their independence through participation in the economic cycle.



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My basic assumption in this first part is the following:

- regardless of the many problems still arising from that perspective, we can say that the great leap made in quantitative terms by  $\bar{w}$  in the world of work, gives room to a qualitative question



which can be formulated in this way: <sup>2</sup>  
the relation of  $\bar{w}$  to work ~~has no to be~~ <sup>is not necessarily</sup>  
equated with  $\bar{w}$ 's employment, but rather  
with any activity which performs a personal  
or social function.

In a striking sentence Krishna-Patel,  
editor of  $\bar{w}$  at work, wrote recently:

"Most  $\bar{w}$  are permanently working,  
but not permanently employed in the  
labour-force."

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Let us then see the basic difference  
between the wider meaning of work  
and its common understanding as  
employment.

It is now a fact of general  
agreement that employ/ is related to  
paid labour, is measurable and  
recognisable.





It is at once a consequence of a 3  
strictly "technical" (econometric) approach  
and of a wide-spread ideology.

The technical concept is the one of  
labour-force, as the use of human  
direct potential in the process of trans-  
formation. It is the basis, together  
with the ~~ownership of land~~ <sup>ownership of land and the</sup> concept of capital, of the  
overwhelming analysis made by  
economy, as <sup>the</sup> interpretation of ~~the~~ the  
processes of creating wealth + exchanging it.

The ideology, underlying it all -  
it may be profit or economic growth -  
is the by-product of industrialization  
and the beliefs it generates. One of  
the most striking beliefs is the  
idea that technology - all kinds  
of technology - have a magic  
power, contribute to progress,  
well-being, justice.





Whatever the political regime, 4  
such ideology presupposes the existence  
of a strong Nation-State. The frame-  
work is then the one created by the  
last 200 years. It has as its expo-  
nents the bureaucratic, <sup>or</sup> absolutized  
forms of state we know of — either  
through the machinery or through  
one single individual on whom all  
decisions about the survival of the  
planet do rest. (pres. Roosevelt)

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The strong Nation/State of today's  
world is the one that is capable  
of using the military labour-force,  
controls the land <sup>and</sup> has a concentration  
of capital which enable it to  
be in the forefront of technologized  
achievements. These states are governed  
by men. So, W is an empty expression.

∴ W, employ, concept of  
economy, Nation/State, power of  
technology — hang together in this  
view.





This system is so alien to 4'  
w as human beings that, as  
Kathleen Newland, strongly states:

"By some perverse logic,  
those who cannot make it into  
the labor force  
cannot be considered unemployed."

It is my conviction that  
instead of correcting the "perversity"  
she denounces, we better ~~get~~  
~~to~~ move ~~towards~~ a healthier  
way of understanding w's work.

Let us be clear:

economic growth - and all  
the ideological values connected  
with it - is not equated  
with better employ/opportunities  
for w.





(X) <sup>A great part</sup> Work of our thinking

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in social sciences is done ~~at~~  
in separation from some basic  
concepts in physical sciences.

Work understood only in the  
mechanical interpretation of  
reality.  $W = F \times a^2$

→ a force

→ acceleration

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But nothing is said about  
the subject of the operation  
nor about its result. It is  
disconnected from the global  
process of energy, affecting  
the cosmos.



Since Carnot, we cannot 5  
think of work without a thermo-  
dynamic approach.

Energy



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II — Work  $\equiv$  activity (7) 5  
Work may not be seen necessarily  
under those terms of reference.

One aspect which all the preparatory  
work of the UN conference in Copenhagen  
made clear has been the fact that  
we work and yet they are  
statistically } invisible.  
socially }

They are active — and yet most  
systems of statistics do not give an  
accurate account of their action.

They are deeply involved with  
processes which are vital to other  
individuals, in a massive way.

— and yet sociologically as well as  
politically their involvement is totally  
overlooked.

Going through the documents  
for the Copenhagen Conference it  
was striking to see how their "mood"  
seemed to be the acknowledgment  
that we are working. But HOW?  
WHERE?





They do work but what they <sup>6</sup>  
do doesn't come under the category  
of employment. They fulfil some  
kind of activity.

||| Those activities are the fabrics of  
existence of all human beings.

They are food-providers - growing  
food, gathering food, distributing  
food.

They are value-givers - they  
teach signs, codes, behavior, history.

They are health-dispensers -  
from the <sup>most elementary</sup> forms  
of hygiene <sup>+ nutrition</sup> to the different levels  
of health-care.

Women are at the root of  
the most fundamental conditions  
of life. We do know that if,  
in ind. / ed countries, all those works  
would be translated in monetary value  
they would account from 1/5 to 1/3 of the <sup>GNP</sup> ~~the~~  
national budget.





Obviously, I am referring 7  
now to the fact that  $\bar{w}$  are,  
in their activities,  
more involved than anybody else  
in the answer to the basic needs  
of human beings.

Another set of values is at stake.  
Economics are no more the target  
but human beings are.

However, ~~the role~~ the role performed by  $\bar{w}$  is  
not seen in  
the  $\neq$  economic systems. As  
national planners are not sensi-  
tive to unquantifiable realities  
nor to basic human needs as such,  
what  $\bar{w}$  do is put aside.

When they are channelled to  
"productive" tasks in the national  
plans, they are supposed to go on  
doing what they had been  
doing before.



The satisfaction of basic human 8 needs may become one day a concern of the Nation-State. As things stand now, it is not. ~~3~~ ~~Rather~~, <sup>But, indeed</sup> it is the goal, the raison-d'être of society as a whole. Throughout a whole nation, people do understand that language.

(universal aspiration — Eva)  
① World Lutheran Federation

Even in terms of conceptual framework, the activity displayed by 5 make very sharply before us the difference between State + Society.

Society is a dynamic reality, the State may or may not be that dynamic reality.





## 19 - Need for working with the 2 concepts ⑨

When we situate ourselves in the logic of employ/, many aspects have to be taken into account which will depend, to a large extent, on the will of the State concerned, on its policy and on its means to implement it.

### Improvements:

- Equal access / promotion
- Equal pay
- Better training

## Possibilities given by employ/

- "equality" (sometimes needs to be provided)
- economic independence (autonomy)
- contact with the "real" world  
(for persons who are still uni-dimensional this is one door)

## Fallacies of employ/

- from  $\bar{w}$  { -  $\bar{w}$  as double ~~slaves~~ <sup>workers</sup>
- { -  $\bar{w}$  becoming around the world a new type of slaves
- from  $\bar{w}$  { -  $\bar{w}$  mimicking men





As Kathleen Newland so sharply



states:

"The fuel of many economic processes is cheap female labor".

What would happen if that inequality would change? What if

~~if~~  $\bar{w}$  were widely unionized

— If they would demand equal pay conditions in all kinds of enterprises would change drastically.

— The redistribution of income, the buying capacity of 40% of the population would lead to an inflation that few managers could cope with.

— Costs of goods manufactured by  $\bar{w}$  + services rendered by them would alter drastically the practices of the welfare state.

— The initial current state of affairs would be ~~drastically~~ dramatically changed.





Work seen as activity asks  
also for special conditions:

- intersectorial approach to life  
↓ "general culture", they say,  
but why not? if it springs  
forth from the fundamental magma
- (new relation work/leisure  
or rather work as a source of  
culture, adding something  
to the world
- awareness of interdependence  
among human beings
- freedom in relation to institutions:  
mobility in mind  
in action
- getting rid of hierarchical schemes  
of promotion, importance, status,

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# Pitfalls

- doing nothing
- losing one's own centeredness
- creating guaranteed sources of security

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## IV - Political outlook

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Which "world of work" are we talking about?

- the one that accepts without discussion the N/S division of labour? (1st/3rd world)

- or the one <sup>that</sup> takes into account the work performed by  $\bar{w}$  and which E. Bourdieu called the 5th World?

the categories of primary, secondary tertiary activities as they are given in any criticism

or the ones that take into account the quaternary sector?



In this context, work problems <sup>(14)</sup>  
with political implication on  
their own:

• countries with strong immigration  
at intermediary level ~~and~~ who  
should be giving key-positions  
in strategic industries occupied  
by foreigners

or

having more adults  $\bar{w}$  in  
the labor force?





• Introduction of appropriate technologies (15)

— They are found everywhere for the dev./ process and, as they do simplify basic processes, they be feared towards work performed by  $\bar{w}$  while  $\bar{m}$  will go on with just the most advanced technologies

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or

will then appropriate technologies become a  $\bar{w}$ 's ghetto?

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• w as food-providers: (17)

Can w rethink the production of food (the weapon Susan George denounces)?

Can w be the promoters of a totally new redistribution of food (calories of dogs + cats France)?

Can w stop people from eating too much?

Can w be ready to learn how to grow other food?

Major task, not only humanitvian, but political

↓ PEACE.





• Can  $\bar{w}$  help to pass on values in a critical way?

How to widen the universe of  $\bar{w}$

signs

codes

behavior

history

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•  $\bar{w}$  constitute the overwhelming <sup>(B)</sup> majority of the teaching jobs.

It is a field where <sup>technology</sup> ~~technology~~ prevents democratization.

Can  $\bar{w}$ , are  $\bar{w}$  able to introduce the radical changes needed:

- stockage of inf./ic computers

- <sup>school</sup> ~~administration~~ is a new way

- educators as capable of leading the whole person through the forest of information everyone gets?





- $\bar{w}$  are health-dispensers (19)

Impossible to give medical assistance as it is asked now.

Maybe there is even a soft medicine which needs to be developed.

as well as primary care of which  $\bar{w}$  can be the basic agents

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→ Disappointed over political topics which were taken from GA of UN into the conference at Copenhagen :

— no doubt as ~~to~~ most participants (90%) in GA are men

— and <sup>may</sup> make the agenda for all meetings

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## V - Fundamental political question

A new Inter/Dev./ Strategy is in the making. From the preparatory documents known up to end of June, we can say that no drastic change has occurred.

The same concept of development is at work. The same promises are taken into account.

Moreover, everything is relegated for the level of negotiations among states. Positions get stronger, issues get weaker. Ideologies or interests become paramount, human dimension becomes blurred.

"If the human dimension of issues negotiated at int'l level is irrelevant, what is relevant?"





What seems to be lacking is <sup>3</sup> (21)  
the continuity <sup>from</sup> ~~of~~ domestic to  
international policy + vice-versa.

"Vertical linkages are disconnected."

If N/S negotiation is lacking in  
human dimension, it is at the  
domestic level that the w's move  
and w's work can be of drastic  
help.

$\bar{w}$  workers of the Third  
World make up  $2/3$  of the  
global world of  $\bar{w}$  labor-force  
(by 2000 they will be  $3/4$ ).

Do we go on considering their  
situation marginal?

Are  $\bar{w}$  of the W hem. far  
enough to link their experiences  
& research with those of  $\bar{w}$   
in the S h. without thinking  
that ~~that~~ all  $\bar{w}$  have to go through  
the same stages?



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$\bar{w}$  of N hem., even  
(or mainly!) when <sup>aware of</sup> working  
know what it is to be of an  
oppressed group;

they can reach out to a  
global strategy with the  
 $\bar{w}$  of the S. hem.

They can build PEACE.

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II - Psychoan. angle

My second assumption deals with w's own fulfillment and happiness:  $\bar{w}$  have worked for too long according to laws + models established by others; it is up to each  $\bar{w}$  now to find her own path of self-fulfillment. A3

Work has become in the industrialized a substitute for affective happiness. Respect + power it entails have been insidiously part of its pattern. (Not denying need for self-esteem, for recognition by others, for the exercise of power to achieve certain goals.)





(84)

Becoming oneself has a lot to do with personal liberation. Many w in the so-called world of work are so utterly carbon-copies of male workers that it is no strange fact that their impact is practically non-existent.

No w can change her work just because she is a w. A long process of probing into oneself goes together with the outward-oriented change.

The process may vary from one to the other. Exploring one's own roots is a deep adventure. It is not listening to anybody's advice - we have had that! It is listening to what we say ourselves and why we are saying it.



One of the most important B5  
contributions of the w's novels has  
been the ~~ent~~ often painful and yet  
always revealing process of self-aware-  
ness, not as a static human being,  
not as some archeological piece to  
be discovered, not as a romantic  
self-pity ~~is~~ reawakening of the  
past,

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but as an energizing factor for one's  
own future, always becoming something  
somebody else,

as a path towards wisdom,  
self-confidence + yet humility  
strength + yet vulnerability  
lucidity + yet emotional involvement.





~~Sign~~ For each  $\bar{w}$ , there will be the (26)  
discovery to be made about  
her relation to work and the mean-  
ing it has for her in the general  
economy of her affective life.

How does she relate to work?

Is she bringing there the "humble  
servant" approach? the only too easy  
way of coquette making up for what  
she is not contributing? the striking  
way of responsibility out of fear  
to compete with men and to  
alienate a possible lover? is she  
doing what she does because of  
men — admiral  
— vengeance  
— acceptance of prejudices



Do I work only because I want  
TLC? recognition? What is the deep  
& yet unknown motivation? because  
I want to care, to nurture, to  
be mothering? finally, because  
I want to be needed?

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The major question to be dealt with personally is indeed the path to wisdom, to a liberated self


How  
• in harmony with the created world  
(how else is it possible to work — long is gone the mastering of the world + creature!)

• in a new acknowledgment of others  
(w em Amara te e bé c/a mudança ao todo e um de 1 mes)

through thoughts

feelings (free from the limitations of the rationalistic thinking)  
joint ventures + actions



- in a new capacity of wonder   
before beauty, newness  
— to enter into the circle of  
"charm"  
(so far away from sheer  
efficiency)
- in a search for meaning  
without which work is merely  
a "task"

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VIII - Condition for  $\bar{w}$  as world-makers

(2)

The courage to reach out  
into the political meaning  
of everything

The freedom to dig in  
the psychological depths  
of all behavior

It is at their meeting point that  
 $w$ 's contribution to the world of  
work can be relevant.

There is no particular interest  
in increasing the labour force!  
If  $\bar{w}$  can bring to it a totally new  
element then they can be  
"world-makers".

