

"Feminisms and the NGW"

Grzaal ?

1988

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

V.P
45 72

Feminisms and the NGW



1. From the early 60s' to the first half of the 80s' there has been an intense movement calling itself Women's liberation movement which can be considered as a neo-feminism.

- a) the awareness of zones of discrimination going further than civic rights - self-awareness as a new ingredient, not out there but inside me;
- b) the connection with workers' movement and independence movement leading to women's power (and terminology of "liberation");
- c) the jump to a collective assertion of women as a potential new force in society (few have expressed it in clear terms).

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

2. In the 70s' the women's movement expresses itself through a great variety of trends encompassing the struggle against sexism as well as the nurturing of being women.

- a) equality in all aspects of life leads to institutions and mechanisms at national and international level; results are not nul but not complete;
- b) the neglect of specific women's problems is overcome by bringing them to the forefront: IVG;
- c) the being women together is blurred by the lesbian trend which practically occupies all the space.

National and international policies and strategies for equality are being designed and implemented.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



3. The trend of specificity of women leading to the expression of a new culture is a minority parallel issue dealt with at the intellectual level:

- a) the "parole de femmes" as a basic expression of this new culture: literature, relation to words, anthropological analysis;
- b) the uncovering of biographies of women as our "mothers" and "ancestors", a lineage, a historical sense of a culture of silence;
- c) the connection of women with life issues of today: peace/ecology;
- d) the representation of women and the symbolic world (witchcraft, ...).

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro





4. The results of the neo-feminism though achieving some degree of equality and breaking traditional taboos caught women in the slang, mode of being and strategies of the masculine culture:

- a) women in the political, scientific, technical fields don't show any specific culture; the quota system leads to the dominant culture;
- b) partnership at the level of family has led to strange distortions;
- c) feminisation of several fields of action (cf. health) doesn't go together with the educational affirmation of new values and culture.

Women themselves, unaware of the traps, are assimilating the masculine values.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

5. The "space of the feminine", its own territory (social territory) is still to be discovered. Parity and full equality cannot be the "absorption" of women by the dominant culture. It is in the context of a culture going beyond discrimination and invisibility that a new type of values can emerge:

- a) the integration of women in the spaces occupied by men has challenged women to adapt themselves to the men's culture and has led to the silence of women's values;
- b) the other side of the current trend of equality is the fact that the invisibility of women's culture has been reinforced by women themselves in their attempt to be where men are.

*
* *



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



The representations about women in society at large and in the Church - NGW go against traditional representation.

No auxiliary, no servant, no apparent sacrifice - on the contrary, FVG did insist on the need to appear always joyful.

*
* *

Equality, yes, but it is important to challenge the norm. Otherwise women will be sucked up in the same nonsensical type of civilization men have built.

*
* *

As a body, NGW needs the differentiation of many ways of intervention in society so that we may see the possibilities and the limits of our own situation:

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

* *

- a) infériorité, d'où discrimination
- b) réaction du Christianisme: altérité et complémentarité
- c) altérité mystifiante, aboutissant à une nouvelle forme de discrimination
- d) altérité niée par certaines féministes.

Or, c'est l'idée de complémentarité qui est discriminatoire.

L'altérité est une différence non symétrique.

Questions controverses

1. Féminisme: Droit à la différence différence au corps
et à l'esprit:
façons différentes
d'être au monde
comme le courant le
plus nouveau.

2. Conséquences pour la société :
Restructuration de la société dans quels aspects ?
avec comme conséquence de la restructuration

3. discours fragmenté sur la femme vs. globalisation

4. Rapport au temps
à l'autre
au langage
 - a) relation au Kairos - stratégie du temps,
initiative
présence future
transcendance de l'éphémère

 - b) solidarité : présence à l'autre

 - c) prendre la parole



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

Feminism - a suitable concept?



1. When the women's movement manifested itself in the early sixties, it was spoken about and denominated itself women liberation movement.

It arose from several phenomena different in their nature and expression, according to the societies in which they took place. (...)

The wave of liberation movements gone with the independence of practically all countries, the women's liberation movement gradually became equated with feminism. Simpler and to some, less aggressive.

In the countries of latin expression, in Europe, a distinction emerged; feminism became the coined word for all those who were fighting against discrimination of women, and whose absolute goal was equality.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

But this word didn't express all the hopes which had been released in the early 60s'. Small groups clang to the name women's movement and they went even to the point of calling themselves women in movement. They were deeply committed to value the difference.

While feminism was appropriated by the public powers - hence the Ministries, Commissions, Secretariates on the Women's Rights" - women-in-movement had as its utmost expression the lesbian trend.

Equality generated new forms of appropriation of women's being. Difference generated marginal but strong forms of disguising women.

Following the growing influence of the English language in all spheres of world affairs, feminism became the word which is supposed to express the manifold aspects of women's problematic in today's world.

I consider the word feminism (which I use myself in the English language) unsuitable.

Of course, it can be defined as the fight against sexism and hence the process necessary to bring about equality among men and women. But two objections can be formulated:

- a) At a time when ideologies get blurred and survival of mankind, physically and spiritually, becomes the main all-encompassing issue, at such a time is it adequate to translate what goes on in society about women, among women, of women, in terms of a new ideology? This has led to some of the most hypocrite statements by unconcerned women and by self-satisfied men, claiming to be "feminist" and often deviating all the purposes and originality of the women's movement.
- b) Is equality an absolute goal? Equality refers to a norm and once you define the equality "women = men" you are putting men as the norm. Hence, all the newness of women's movement, the unique/original contribute one could expect from such a strong force in all fields of society, is blurred under the men's norm, the pitfalls of equality.



What does this mean in terms of the GNG? Basically this:

- a) There is no ideology to be espoused, to become our cause; on the contrary, a new strength has to be found in the idea and impetus of women-in-movement.
- b) Born out of the conviction that women had something original to give to society, NGW would not be satisfied with attaining the common norm and thus merely reinforcing the statu quo.

- Primordial myths women are/exist
rather than outward expressions the womanside of God
- Feminism as ideology: a man's world
women-in-movement: attentiveness to life vs. death of
all ideologies.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

- Des initiatives/des efforts/des gestes/des projets à la recherche d'un mode autre de dire et d'agir.
- Une action concertée/au-delà.



2. The interaction between personal and public

(conf. CRC, hence TSC)

Idée de la jarre : face intérieure et extérieure (M. Yourcenar)

démontrée par l'absurde: "The prodigal daughter".

- . Psycho-analysis + Politics
- . Power struggle
- . Antigon



NG, a new mode of linking personal and public;

in the past much more as a heritage from the old monastic life; breaking through new ground: scientific rationalism, critical philosophy, political relativism (there is no progress, no improvement), psychoanalysis; exposed to everything and yet, a deep sense of the private, "avoue toujours, plus tu en parleras, plus tu en garderas" (Guilleric).

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

The "transfer" as an experience of love with strong sexual demands. It is the merit of the psycho-analytical science to have proved that in all situations of openness, acknowledgement, etc., there is a "wild transfer" at work.

We, NG women would be outside our time if we would ignore that.

Priesthood is sociologically a public life in the context of the Church.

I have wondered often why some of the clergy in my country were so passionately against me. Today I am convinced that it was

because of my public activity linked with my open statements about my Faith and my life in Church structures. Somehow they must have felt I was "stealing" something from them.



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

Several questions are key in the women's movement:

- 1) Is the women's movement as important as other social movements? if not, why not?
Is there a reason for a women's movement in our time?
- 2) Is the women's movement the same as feminism?
If this word has replaced the women's movement, which are the dangers?
the possibilities of change?
- 3) Women's situation, the one having undergone the greatest changes:
 - life expectancy (the most striking demographic feature)
 - sense of freedom
 - career as main goal
 - contraception.
- 4) Questions to be dealt with:
 - functions / roles / vocations / tasksclarification needed.
- 5) Cultural context of assertion:
 - marketing of ideas: state it publicly
 - interdisciplinarity
 - .
- 6) Equality and differentiation:
to challenge the norm in all fronts
(impossibility to do it only on women's issue)



1. Women's movements

After the euphoria of the 70s', women's movements seem to undergo a kind of paralysis. No young people, the current membership being made up of women in the late 40s and 50s. No new expressions, the main issues having been taken up in the different national/international bodies where political decisions are made.

At this moment, the national machinery concerning the status of women exists in several countries and deals with ... (Council of Europe).

The women's movement has achieved more quickly than other social movements the goals it had given itself.

The trade-union movement is far from achieving its goals (see social unrest in many countries, and the lack of perspectives on quality of life).

From the quantitative claims (wages, holidays, social security), it has moved to more qualitative goals.

The movement towards independence of the South Hemisphere is still facing the question of economic independence and of cultural identity. The discussion switched from the "liberation movements" to the official political institutions. Monetary and economic disorder, etc.

To some extent, there is a parallel question with the women's movement - where is its battleground now? which are the issues?

As the issues of the 60s' and 70s have been taken up by traditional institutions, for many women the questions are solved. The women's movement appear then as less urgent.

However, new frontiers are appearing. Women in ecology, in peace movements say a lot about the way in which women's concerns express themselves in this decade.

Is peace solved? From the disarmament question the world has to move into conflict solving and negotiation.

Ecology is a dimension of everything - the need for beauty, for "atmosphere" (oh! the rôle this had in the history of the Grail!) ... Survival, survival of people, forests, life-supporting systems.



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

What is the meaning of all this for the NG?

- a) Women's movements have a sense, they are needed, but not as exclusive (out of the village pattern, rather several networks crossing each other);
- b) to be in the forefront of world's issues - no refuge in the "in-group" whatever it may be (Church included);
- c) Christ as "LIFE": "life in abundance" witness to life with all this entails (goes against necrophily of women!)

2. New cultural context
for any kind of assertion.



Several aspects are the features of recent years.

Ideas are not conveyed just by sheer logic. They are put in the marketing, they need to be stated. We are in a mass-culture where there is no place anymore for an idea to grow like a "tache d'huile". Communication is instantaneous - so must be the communication of ideas.

Any movement has to find the means of our time to be talked about in public places.

Every initiative has to be put in a wider context, both in terms of concepts (interdisciplinarity) and of people (network of networks).

In terms of a women's movement, this is a very heavy demand. The movement must find its own theoretical framework to assert itself in today's world.

The movement has to find modern massive ways to express itself in society.

Not to take a stand is a clergy business, it is not a lay attitude.

In terms of NGW, this is a heavy demand:

- a) freedom for study, depth of foundation, true elitism, not allowing the Grail to be watered down by ignorance (Kundera);
- b) to find new ways to make the Grail a meaningful contribution to society;
by being part of women's movements there is the commitment to that.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

3. Women's movement different of feminism

There is first of all a linguistic problem: anglo-saxon/latin language.

4. Changes in women's situation

The UN have been stating all over the years since 1975 the facts and the changes concerning women's situation. Figures and facts are well known:



- produce
- earn

But we have to go beyond that.

The most striking factor is life expectancy:

	Europe	USA	South Hemisphere
- XIXth century			
- 1900			
- 2000			

together with contraception.

While most women had to prepare themselves to be mothers (no horizon beyond the fertility period of their lives), today it is as important to be prepared to live one's own life in many different ways.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

- . Young life up to 25: sexual relations ...
- . 25-40 eventually 2/3 children
- . above 45/50 no fertility.



Comparatively the maternity period is a short one.

Preparation for many different activities.

To acknowledge the fact that you cannot go through your whole life doing the same thing.

Contraception: separation sex of procreation

leading to the extreme of sex by itself

"Freedom" - exalted and exalting sense of limitless ; (cf. enquiry)

It is a new utopia obviously as there are many doors which are closed; women may feel that they have to do something which is a dream for them but society may not allow it.

However, there is a sense of expansion of women's universe, of overcoming boundaries and specializations, of following one's own desire. Important the verbs to want / wish / chose come so often. It may be an illusion but it is there.

Career as the main aspiration: need to achieve something, new as a generalized phenomenon.

Be watchful of a closed situation, replacing house and children by limited "career".

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

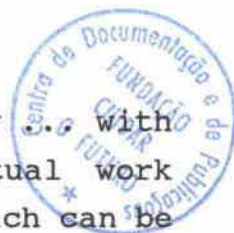
For NG this is a vital field.

- a) Celibacy goes beyond the period of one's own fertility. Meaning a way of life which encompasses different sexual periods and goes beyond their own claims. Tremendous variety of elements. For some 50 years old, still a problem "to have given up children". Not anymore true as there is a choice for every woman.

What is it that you accept/chose? A life of ever-changing relationships /to start new friendships (with your peers) at 50/60 ...



Retirement is just a new phase and not just watching with retirement age going down (55 and in intellectual work (cadres) going down to 50), there are many years which can be useful. (cf F. Dolto about old women ...).



Interdependence of old and young through work.

- b) Freedom is spelled out in such a way that it can be equated with our "old" availability - not in the misunderstood sense of doing at any time what others think you should do but being alert to respond to what is there around you, ideas, trends ...
- c) Career as sense of achievement, purposefulness, assertiveness, competence, paths to wisdom and self-esteem - importance of life-long education, community as a means for growth and for widening scope, as the possible frame for realism.

5. Societal questions needing clarification

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

In the past as well as today different words <> to different realities were used to express only one thing: what women were supposed to do.

There is a need for clarification of different words:

- vocation
- function
- rôle
- task.

Important for NG so as to help to disentangle various issues.

It will lead to the manifold life of a NG woman, as with age, variation in situation, demands from others, all this changes.

(For instance, the rôle is a political matter: it means the investment others put on you; it is not because they "like you" or "don't like you", it is also the way in which you conduct your own "campaign"!!).



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

Training (women's formation) is a time in-between, half way between private and public space.

It expresses a desire to change, to acquire a new status, to make a leap.

It is a step towards greater possibilities in a world of men.

Whenever this training reinforces the family relationships, the submission (etc.) surrenders (?), it prevents women from acquiring the capacity to enter into another public space. It retains them in the sphere of the private.

*
* *



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



1. The main drive of the last 25 years has been the struggle against discrimination and the efforts to tear down the veil of invisibility.

The International Year of Women brought with it the acceptance of the Convention of elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

The social, economic and political fields were scrutinized. National legislations covering the main areas of discrimination were issued. National bodies of coordination of policies were born which took upon themselves the reviewing of the concrete situation of women as well as the legislation concerning them.

The Church followed this trend. We saw women fighting for equal rights within the Church and for the abolition of the current difficulties of access of women within the Church.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

... qui conditionnent
la mobilisation et le rassemblement des Français
en vue de l'incroyable épreuve de 1992.

JD, N.Obs.

les majorités d'idées successives peuvent déboucher dans
quelques mois sur des alliances organisées.

Rob. Schmersh (?), N. Obs.

Parce que tout le monde sait que dans cinq ou six ans il n'y
aura place que pour cinq ou six grands groupes de presse en
Europe. C'est maintenant que les places se jouent.

G. Pettijean, N.Obs.



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



1. Un immense malentendu traverse tout ce qui concerne le mouvement social des femmes. Après toutes les transformations survenues pendant la Décennie de la Femme, on peut déjà établir le début d'un bilan.

Ce bilan concerne à la fois les enjeux et les institutions ainsi que la philosophie qui sous-tend les uns et les autres.

Pour ce qui est des enjeux, il s'agit d'une multiplicité de fronts qui avaient été étalés - dans toutes les instances où les femmes se manifestaient.

2. "Les femmes et leurs droits"

- droits civiques et politiques, droits sociaux (travail et famille), droits économiques (emploi, logement, développement)
- il est beaucoup moins question de droits culturels (ou uniquement dans la perspective de professions tenues comme masculines ou de l'univers des représentations mentales qui auraient "dû" être équivalentes à celles des hommes).

3. De cada vez que a realidade social se transforma, há uma minoria que realiza uma transgressad.

Le féminisme est, à un moment de l'histoire, une déviance par rapport à l'équilibre qui s'était maintenu.

Le premier féminisme (droits civiques fondamentaux) est résorbé par le système. D'où un deuxième féminisme, issu de la période de l'après-guerre où la discrimination sociale est l'enjeu dominant.

Il s'éveille maintenant une nouvelle déviance, à l'intérieur même du féminisme. Elle se dit dans les lieux mêmes où la percée du néo-féminisme a été la plus forte.

4. Quand on parle des femmes et de leurs droits, on est d'emblée dans le domaine de la loi.

Ce qui veut dire codification, uniformité, objectivation de ce qui doit être imposé à la subjectivité de l'être.

Les limites de la loi : elle est faite pour l'homme et non le contraire.

A chaque nouvelle incarnation du Christ, de nouvelles frontières sont dépassées.

L'invitation à une démarche avec le Christ est une invitation

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo

The Grail,, 1988?

