

Women as World Makers

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The topic that I have chosen for my presentation is part of the quotation cited on the program for this symposium: "...the large-scale movement of women into the work force opens up the exciting possibility of creating a much improved society." The utopian title of my talk, "Women as World Makers," therefore, can be condensed to this quotation. I only wish that I could have the facts, and the inspiration, to give flesh and bones to this exciting concept.

The title I have chosen might be misleading. If we speak of women as world makers, to some ears it may sound as if we exclude men. This is not the case, although they have had their opportunity now for quite a long time. It does not exclude men. It does suppose, however, that for the past few years, and from now on, it is women who are shaping up the world.

The title also may appear ambitious, particularly in light of what we see as concrete facts. But it seems to me that unless we consider those facts, both in historical terms and in terms of what we want the world to be, it may appear that the efforts of women of our time and those who preceded us were all wasted.

It is my belief that we are indeed at the beginning of a new world. (It is not a brave new world, not brave at least as yet.) When I speak of a dawn of a new world, I certainly have to stress that it is because I am fully aware that we are at the end of one type of civilization. I do not want to get carried away by any strictly ideological elements, but I would like to point out very clearly that we have been watchers of the end of the empires era.



When we look at history and see what happened with the end of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the Roman Empire, just those two facts, which are so near to us in the western hemisphere (not to mention what has been going on in Asia for thousands of years), we may have a slight perception of what historians will say in 200 years about our time. When I studied in grammar school, I learned not only that Portugal ruled on five continents, but that the sun never set on the British Empire. These are indeed facts about our life-time, but they are no more a reality. Considering just those facts, in strictly geographical and political terms, would connote the end of a civilization. Now, there is something completely new, and we can see this very well when we consider that more than two-thirds of the countries existing today have been "born" since the Second World War.

Thus, we cannot say that we have a very clear continuity with the past. And yet, at the same time I say this, I am fully aware of the fact that it does appear that we were misled by a kind of universal myth in the notion of a technological world. In the positive meaning of the phrase, it was thought that as technical civilization spread around the world it would put different cultures in contact with one another which, in turn, would create a unity of nations. As we can see, this has not been the case.

Rather, what the past empires have given to the new countries are technological tools and it has been through these technological tools that what is often called in United Nations jargon, "nouveau imperialism," has been formed. However, the impression of technology I would like to stress is that in spite of the spreading of technological facts and technological culture, we are still facing the end of this type of civilization.

When I state that we are at the end of one type of civilization--and may



be at the dawn of another--I have to say very frankly that to discuss women and the world of work in such terms, that women will be nicely and fittingly integrated into a civilization that is fading away, is of no interest to me. I am deeply concerned with our contribution to this world that is in the making, to the future ahead of us, and with the steps that must be taken to establish our part in it. I. Work and employment?

We speak of the increase of women present in the labor force and we speak about its consequence on economic life. In the economic report of the U.S. President for the year 1973, one of the five chapters was devoted to the participation of women in economic life. It was a very striking fact that an entire chapter would be devoted to this topic. Therefore, it does seem there is one fact that cannot be ignored anymore in any system of the world: The presence of women in the labor force has profound implications for economic life at both the national and international level. This question will certainly be discussed at this seminar. Many questions will be raised and answered in connection with some already classic topics in this context: The double duty of women, the division of labor in society, and the conditions necessary for women to gain their independence and gain participation in the economic cycle. Therefore, when I consider this, and consider the infrastructures that enable women to cope with a dual role and with that division of labor, I know there is much to be studied in greater depth.

I think that when we speak of work, we speak very often as if work and employment are equated as the same reality. I noticed this even in the docu-



ments of the U.N. conference dedicated to women just held in Copenhagen. Some very outstanding women, however, have attempted to clarify this in a U.N. publication, "Women at Work" and Krishna Patel, for one, very clearly states right from the beginning that "work" and "employment," in actuality, are two very different terms and relate to different conditions. But, very often we speak about women and work in outmoded terms.

However, my basic assumption in this introduction is that regardless of the many problems still arising from this perspective of work being equated with employment and the need to study those aspects, we can say that there already has been a great leap made in quantitative terms by women in the world of work. So much so that this quantitative leap will give rise to new qualitative questions. Women are so involved in the world of work that new approaches and other outlooks can already be seen.

My premise, therefore, can be formulated in this way: The relation of women to work is not, in my mind, necessarily equated with women who are employed, but rather with any activity in which they perform a personal or social function. Such activity springs forth from the personality of the individual and answers the many needs of the society in which she lives. In a very striking statement, Krishna Patel, the woman I mentioned just moments ago, points to this very clearly when she says, "Most women are permanently working, but are not permanently employed in the labor force." And this, I think, does show the fundamental contradiction in the ideas attached to the word "work."

We have only to look at the basic difference between the broader meaning of work and the more common notion of work as employment. Of course, it is a



fact that employment is related to paid labor and, therefore, is recognizable and measurable. It belongs to the world of defined quantities and, although that definition is sometimes rather downtrodden, it is appropriate. It is at once a result of what I would call a strictly technical approach to labor and of what might be called a widespread ideology. In fact, the technical concept of "labor force"--a term commonly used--is the direct use of human potential in any process of transforming and processing goods and/or rendering services. This concept of labor force, together with ownership of wealth and property, forms the bulk of what is brought together into the science of economics. This technical approach, as an interpretation of the process of creating wealth and exchanging it by monetary devices, has much to do with what we understand of economics.

I think this is related to what I termed a widespread ideology. It may come under the level of profit, if we are in market economics, or under the level of economic growth which, if you will allow me to remind you, was initially a concept from the centrally planned economies, but has now become a term used by everyone, everywhere. So, either profit or economic growth are indeed the by-products of what I call the ideology of industrialization or industrialism. And one of the beliefs that this ideology generates is that technology--all kinds of technology--has a magic power necessarily related to progress and to justice.

I believe we now have many questions connected with technology and the impact of technology on this world of ours. Whatever the political regime may be, this industrialist ideology is always associated with, and presupposes



the existence of, a very strong concept of nation states. Thus, industrialism is not something which has to do with the way in which goods are created and exchanged, but rather has to do with the way in which people relate to each other and create the social structures within which they live. We can say that the framework for this ideology has been created by what has happened in the world during the last 200 years. We have on one side the bureaucratic centralized state where decisions are always made according to a well-defined hierarchical system and where the state is absolutely overpowering to the individual or any smaller institutions individuals may form and, on the other side, we have several almost absolute forms which are exercises in the total power of the individual. We can look at the world nowadays and see a power which is capable of shaking us to the very basis of life as we know it in the control of one single man, totally isolated, who may or may not be subservient to a Parliament or Congress.

I recently read a fascinating book written by the Former Commissioner of of the Atomic Energy Commission, Bernard Goldsmith. He tells how in the late 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s, a group of scientists from Canada, France, Britain, and the United States developed their research. It is very illuminating to read of his own experience at that time of working with two others in a very small research unit. He knew absolutely nothing of what the other scientists were doing, even though they were just next door. Indeed, the only person who knew everything was President Roosevelt. The book is not at all a political science text, but is rather a story for persons interested in the field of nuclear energy, or perhaps for historians. The author does



not attempt to prove any particular point; however, what comes out very sharply indeed is the tremendous concentration of power held in the hands of one single man and the enormous responsibility he had in relation to the whole world-- just because one technology, and the dangers inherent in its development and use, evolved in a particular direction.

We must turn again to the nation state because it is this state today which has the capacity to use the labor force, to control the ownership of land, to at least guide the concentration of capital, and finally, to determine if it is possible or not to be in the forefront of technological achievements. When I realize this, I have to say, "But almost all the nation states are governed by men." The employment that is part of the economics of technology, all that is related to the employment of women, is governed and decided upon by men. When we speak of women's employment in this context, we must say that it is an empty expression that women control their own lives. Employment, economy, control of the nation state, and the power of technology must all be considered together.

One related aspect that Kathleen Newland stressed in her book, Global Employment and Economic Justice: The Policy Challenge, is quite interesting. She says that by some perverse logic those who cannot make it into the labor force cannot be considered unemployed. Because women are impeded from entering the labor force, they cannot receive the same benefits as those who are considered unemployed. This is a very simple way of showing that the machinery somehow has broken down; somewhere in its very logic it is not what we think it should be. In even more current terms, we can say that economic growth and



all the ideological values associated with it are not, and can never be, equated with better employment opportunities for women. But it is my conviction that instead of just correcting the perversity that Kathleen Newland denounces, we also must move toward a healthier way of understanding women's work and Newland, among others, is contributing to that. For me, this is a very important point. In listening to the comments about the different scientific programs sponsored by NATO, I was struck by the fact that perhaps we are at a point where what we so much hope will happen in the world during the cross-fertilization of different types of sciences may actually occur.

I dare say that the concept of work equated with employment has something to do with our outdated concept of physics. We may not be aware of it, but we are still living in Newtonian times; we are living in an era based on mechanics. Thus, when we speak of work, it is just of employment, just a mechanical interpretation of reality, of force and acceleration. But nothing in the mechanical approach is said about the subject of work or about the change in the object of work. I think it is all very disconnected from the global process of energy affecting the whole cosmos, affecting all the changes that are taking place in the world today. In fact, since the beginning of civilization, we can say it is impossible to think of work with other than a thermodynamic approach. Such an approach centers on the change of energy: Not only the energy that is within a subject, but energy that is internalized in the very process of producing work (in physics, simply called internal energy), and also that energy which is utilized. This thermodynamic approach is really a new concept, which in a way is keeping pace with what happened 200 years ago and is essential





for another understanding of work.

II - Work = activity

All the preparatory work of the U.N. conference in Copenhagen made clear that women work, women do expend energy, and do enter into an exchange of energy. However, because of the mechanistic approach in bureaucratic thinking, women are statistically and socially invisible. Although it is true that they are active, most systems of statistics do not take an accurate count of their actions. They are deeply involved in vital processes--vital not only to a few individuals but to individuals in a collective sense--and yet sociologically as well as politically their involvement is totally overlooked as if it did not exist.

In going through the documents from the Copenhagen conference, it is striking to see how the world has changed in the five years since the Mexican conference. The situation is not optimum certainly, but coming from all points there is at least the acknowledgment that women are working. This acknowledgment comes despite the fact that in many countries rural women, working in family-operated endeavors, are seen as non-active and are not included in the statistical reports.

This acknowledgment, which has been made in practically all the documents available at the international level, is extremely important. Now the important question is: How are women working and where? It is true that women work, but their work is not included in the category of "employment." They fulfill what might be called "some kind of activity." (I look to the social scientists to find a proper word for what they do.) However, their activities are the fabric in the existence of all human beings and have been included under three main categories. In developing, as well as developed, countries



women are food providers: They grow food, gather food, process food, and distribute food. They are value givers: They teach law, science, behavior, and personal and communal history. They are health care dispensers whose knowledge ranges from the most elementary forms of hygiene and nutrition to the various specialized, professional health care levels. In other words, women are at the very core of the most fundamental conditions of living. Unfortunately, these activities are "invisible" when included in conventional calculations, but they are vitally important to the economies of nations.

We know from studies conducted in several European countries that the work performed by women--the invisible activities--if translated into monetary value would account for one-fifth to one-third of the Gross National Product of each country. This translation, if used, would result in quite an upheaval not only in abstract and figurative monetary value but also in terms of hard currency.

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In their activities, women are more involved than anyone else with the answers to the basic needs of human beings. If we compare these activities with economics, another set of values is at stake. Economics, as such, is no longer the issue: Human beings and their needs are. However, this role performed by women is not considered in the different economic systems. Our national planners are neither sensitive to unquantifiable realities nor to basic human needs per se. What women do is done through desire, and when women are channeled into what is called "productive tasks" by national planners, they still must perform their other work, though it continues to remain unrecognized by these same planners.

It is my conviction that one day the satisfying of basic human needs may



become the concern of the nation state and the powers entrusted with its care. But, as things stand now, it seems very unlikely that this will be so. The nation state is far more concerned with its monetary or financial equilibrium than it is with meeting basic human needs. I am not disregarding the importance of the financial system. What I am saying is that this system has to be of service in meeting human needs. (Speaking only in terms of the monetary system, some countries are nonexistent.) Therefore, let us be honest with ourselves and ask: Do we want to use the monetary system as an instrument--a tool in the fulfillment of human needs--or do we make it a goal in itself as many politicians tend to do?

In fact what we need is another concept of the evolution of society and even another concept of development. I purposely use the word "development" because all too frequently we use it only in reference to poor countries, which are not developing. I would like to stress, and the Brandt Report is very enlightening in this respect, that either we all make it together or no one is going to make it at all. Therefore, what we need is another concept of development that would be global and all-embracing to all nations. I would like to quote the Director of the Women's Office of the Lutheran World Federation because she has very clearly expressed my point: "When we come to formulate a new, future-oriented conceptual framework for development, we should not only ensure that this time women are not excluded, but also that development is defined as human development. By this I mean, the objectives of development have to be: (a) the development of human beings and not that of things, (b) the improvement in the quality of life by satisfying those basic material needs



such as food, shelter, clothing, education, medical care, and so on, and the attainment of such basic nonmaterial needs as independence, identify, autonomy, creativity, self-fulfillment, and so on. The development of the structures of institutions, even if they are technological or monetary, should serve only as a means to the above objectives, and never as an end in itself." I think this is very much the way women are thinking in today's world. *III - Need to work with the 2000*

It is the issue of society as a dynamic reality that is presently at stake. Work performed by women, in terms of meeting human needs, has a much more direct relationship to society as a whole than it does to the nation state. However, when we place ourselves in the logic of employment context, we can see that to a great extent much depends upon the will of the state or nation concerned--with its powers, policies, and plans for implementation. Currently we are noticing a sudden improvement in the question of access to better employment. I cannot say improvements have been made in equal promotion, because this just is not true. We are all fighting for equal pay and for better training in the fields of traditional employment. This is a very sad plight, is it not? There are numerous areas for improvement and these need to remain the goal for all of us while, at the same time, we must work towards other concepts of women's roles and work.

I would like to reemphasize the fallacies concerning employment. Women are not only workers with a double task but, around the world, are becoming a new type of slave. Women workers in the electronics industry are a striking example of the latter. A manufacturing firm, established in my country in 1974, had been forced to close one of its branches in its original European country



because studies showed that by the age of 30 women employees had permanently lost 50% of their eye sight. The turnover of employees was about 50% per year. Of course, the country where this originally took place is a country with great concern for the social well-being of its citizens, and I very much appreciate their efforts to protect workers. The factory moved to Portugal because female labor was very cheap, but the same cycle was repeated. For nine hours a day, women were required to look at one spot on a television screen or to check one small cord to see that it matched the model exactly. During the 1974 revolution, however, the minimum wage was increased and, when it was no longer profitable for that international corporation to operate in Portugal, the plant was established in Thailand and the work is now being done by Thai women, who are being subjected to the same hazards. What I want to stress here is that women around the world form a community of slaves of a new and different type. If one frees one group of women from a difficult task, the task is certain to be handed over to another group somewhere else in the world. It seems to me that this is just one of the ironies in the employment of women when viewed at the international level. Another is that very often women in employment are just mimicking what men do. I then ask myself if all the manipulating is just an exercise in increasing manpower or human power.

Kathleen Newland makes a very good point in her book when she states, "The fuel of many economic processes is not oil, but it is cheap female labor." This is not just a good mass media remark, but also leads us to think about



what would happen if a revolution similar to the oil situation happened in the cheap female labor market. If, for instance, women around the world were totally unionized, regardless of national boundaries, and they all immediately demanded equal pay, enterprises suddenly would be forced to function in completely different ways. The redistribution of income and the accompanying increase in buying capacity of more than 40% of the world's population could very possibly lead to far greater inflation than we have presently. And I wonder what one individual would be powerful enough to deal with it--not to mention those who would be the minor stars in the galaxies of power?

Thus, the activities of women have an enormous potential for changing the world's economic structure. More important, however, is the fact that this increased activity affects culture as well. When I was young and studying for my career in engineering, which at the time was not a common profession for women, my friends would ask me, "What will you be contributing to our heritage?" I used to reply, "If I become well-known in my profession, I will be able to contribute toward our culture by increased participation and I will have the leisure to increase my knowledge of the arts of our country." But, at this time, I think that what we are all looking for is the inter-disciplinary approach to life or to any activity that will increase its value for us. It is rather a platform based upon the general culture for culture does spring forth from the same basic laws and the same basic inspirations as the different professions.

I think that it is very important to view all activity as work, to see new relationships in work. This means that if work is an activity--and is not



just employment--then work is a source of culture. It enriches the quality of life, adds to what the world already has, and it also brings about a new interdependence among human beings. It brings about freedom in relation to institutions along with a mobility of mind and body for the individual.

This attitude of activity as work means that you do not necessarily have to go up the ladder--you do not care about the ladder. Although you may get to the top; then again you may fall. Rather you move horizontally because it is healthier to move that way. Here you must get rid of the notions of promotion and the importance of status that goes with it. However, you get somewhere or something else in return.

Of course there are pitfalls and I do not want to overlook them. We see that people very typically respond to such changes by doing nothing, by losing their own centeredness, or by trying to create some guaranteed sources of security in a kind of cloistered environment.

*Fundação Cuidar o Futuro - Political outlook*

I would like to bring this to a more political level. When we speak of the world of work, are we talking about the world of work which accepts without discussion the north/south division of labor? Or are we talking about the world of work which takes into account all work performed by women everywhere in those endless activities and which Elise Boulding has not hesitated to call, "the 5th World"? Is the world of work comprised of the categories of primary, secondary, and tertiary activities as they are still commonly labeled and still are generally taught, or are we also taking into account what is being called more and more often the "quaternary sector," with activities that belong to a totally new realm? In this context there are work problems that have



political implications of their own. From what I have read in the papers and from what I sensed in the short time I was in Copenhagen, it seems to me that women have not yet been able to bring to the fore their own issues as political issues. Rather they have been carried along by the issues that are important to men, which, of course, all of us have to deal with, but for which there are already adequate forums. I may be very wrong, and I am ready to be corrected, but it appears to me that what women are doing is playing--indeed mimicking--the same songs that men are playing. Perhaps they are singing an octave higher because of the range of our voices, but they are doing the same things as men and as a result are not bringing forth as political issues those issues that stem from our own experiences as women.

Let us take as an example some of the countries which have experienced immigration, not at the level of totally unskilled labor, but at the intermediary level--the level of technicians. In Saudi Arabia and other countries of the Persian Gulf, and in Venezuela, these immigrants are not the "sweepers of the streets" that you find in London, Paris, Amsterdam and Hamburg, and, perhaps, New York. The immigrants to the countries I have mentioned are at the intermediary level of skill; they are technicians. When they enter these countries as "guest workers" and are employed by private enterprise, they ask--and are asking more and more often--to have key positions. And as they become more important sources of manpower in strategic industries, the adult women of those countries are practically excluded from the labor force and from the intermediary level jobs. Now, to whom are you to give priority? This is a political issue, the brunt of which is felt by women, although it is not, in





the strictest sense, an issue of women. It is instead an issue concerning the division of labor.

Another example is the introduction of appropriate technologies. We know that they are fundamental to the developmental process, not only in the newly emerging nations, but in the developed world as well. I had an opportunity some weeks ago to visit several industrial complexes, designed for the future, on the East Coast of the United States. I saw many wonderful advances in technology being used there which will make a tremendous difference, not only in the U.S. itself, but in developing countries as well. These new changes will be most effective when we stop thinking that all countries have to go through all the various technologic steps of the post-World War II era one by one to arrive at the current level. Appropriate technologies, I think, are more and more what is needed to cope with basic human needs but, because these technologies touch and simplify basic processes that serve humanity, they tend to attract the interest of women rather than men. For this very reason they tend to create new problems. The basic processes and their attending skills have long been the domain of women. Therefore, if changes to these technologies are required, implementation of such changes should be left to women. Unfortunately, there are inherent dangers to women in this policy: Men may usurp them, leaving women in the ghettos once again and, this time, without even their original skills to accompany them.

Let us now tackle the question of women as food providers. I am very impressed by the American book, How the Other Half of the World Dies, by Susan George, published in 1977. In the book there are numerous figures which show



that food, when used as a weapon, can be extremely useful--as well as being extremely alarming. If, as statistics show, women are indeed food providers, can women rethink the production of food? Can women change a weapon? I am not exaggerating nor using a metaphor. I am recalling the address President Ford made to the U.N. General Assembly in 1974 after the oil crisis. At that time he said that, because the countries who produce oil were using oil as a weapon, we may as well use food and wheat as weapons. Therefore, I am not just speaking of a metaphoric reality; I am speaking of something that can happen and is happening in the world today. Can women be the promoters of a totally new redistribution of food?

We can note that the calories produced by the agricultural industry in France to feed dogs and cats, 8 million dogs and 7 million cats, would sustain the entire population of my country.

Can women stop people from eating too much? It would seem that people in the United States cannot eat more than they are eating now. Are women ready to learn how to grow--and use--other foods? I think the relearning process is going to be a major task, and it is not just a humanitarian one: It is a basic task required to attain world peace.

I have spoken of women as value givers. Can women help pass on values in a political way? This is another political issue that relates to science, codes, behavior, and history. It is a fantastic question that hardly anyone asks. Women hold the majority of teaching positions nowadays, and yet what is new in education? Where is the radical change? Where is the seed of the new world we want to bring about? I think that women in education have the



opportunity to introduce some of the radical changes so badly needed. We do not need teachers who merely transmit information--computers can be used in their place along with all the other forms of information available. Computers serve very well as transmitters of information. We do, however, need women who can be something else, to be educators, to be value-givers. Has that political revolution even started? I do not think that it has.

We could also discuss another level and that is women as health care dispensers, but there would be too much to cover in this area. *V - Fundação Cuidar o Futuro*

On a more global basis, a new international development strategy is in the making. I, of course, am very concerned with political questions. This development will be discussed at the next session of the U.S. General Assembly in September. However, after seeing the preparatory documents in June, I think I can say that people will be disheartened to find that no drastic change has occurred. The same old concept of development is at work. The rich countries will be asked to give approximately 1% of their Gross National Product as aid to developing countries. (It is no longer called aid for development, but something else to make it more palatable.) The countries who need to increase their wealth are to be stimulated to have their GNP also increased by a certain amount. These premises are the ones that have been, and still are, operating. Moreover, I believe that everything is relegated to the level of negotiations among states. As positions get stronger, issues get weaker. Ideologies or interests become the paramount element while the human dimension becomes totally blurred. I then ask myself, if the human dimension of issues negotiated at the international level is irrelevant, as some politicians say, then tell me what is relevant in the world? What appears to be lacking is



continuity from domestic national policy to international policy and vice versa. If north/south negotiations and a new international strategy for development are lacking in human dimension, it is at the domestic level that the women's movement and women's work can be of vital help. I am stating this within the context of NATO because I am very much in accord with the report of the Brandt Commission. Again, I will state that there can be no solution within the context of the NATO alliance, of which my country is a member, if there is no solution for the world at large.

Indeed, women workers of the 3rd World make up two-thirds of the world's labor force. Their skills overlap with ours to some extent, although they do not necessarily coincide with one another. By the year 2000, they will comprise three-fourths of the female labor force. Now do we go on perceiving the situation of these two-thirds, in a few years to be three-fourths, as marginal and something we have to rise above—as something outside our interests--or do we make their concerns ours? Have we as women of the northern hemisphere progressed far enough in our research to enable us to link our experiences with those of women in the southern hemisphere without thinking that all women have to go through all the same stages we have? I believe that women of the northern hemisphere, while they are aware of being part of the work force, but separated in many other activities, do realize that basically they cohere together--not necessarily because they are women but because they are part of a group that is somehow oppressed. If they can reach out with a global strategy to women in the southern hemisphere, together these groups could make the first steps toward lasting peace.

*VI - Psychoanalytical angle*

My other concern is on a very personal level. My assumption is that work has no meaning if there is no personal fulfillment and happiness in that work. Work in the industrialized world, unfortunately, has become for all too many a substitute, an ersatz, for affective happiness. Prestige and power have become an integral part of its pattern. I am not denying the need for self-esteem through the association with others, but knowing and becoming one's self has more to do with personal liberation and with the ability to make one's own activities. As I was pointing out a few moments ago, many women in the so-called "world of work" are so utterly carbon copies of their male counterparts it is not strange that they are considered nonexistent.

But, of course, no woman can change her work just because she is a woman. A long process of probing into oneself must be undertaken along with the outward oriented and political changes I have mentioned so far. The process may vary from one woman to another, but it is the exploration of one's own roots and one's own aspirations that is the deep adventure which may lead us to another concept and another possibility of women and work.

One of the most important contributions of the Women's Movement in our time has been the painful, yet revealing, process of self-awareness--not of one's self as a static human being; not as some ideological finding yet to be discovered; certainly not as a self-pitying romantic simply reawakening the past. Instead, the process is an energizing factor of one's own future in that one is always becoming, always something else, a pass toward reason.

Today women in the world of work have to cope first of all with what they want from their lives--their happiness, their affective lives. Perhaps



they should ask themselves if they just want power, as men do, or if they just want mothering as some women do, thereby transposing to work the patterns they have known in other spheres. The major question of personal development is, I believe, the pass to wisdom, to a liberated self in harmony with a creative world. How else is it possible to work?

I think the idea has disappeared of mastering the world and mastering nature. Ecology has suddenly become of more importance. We are not now considering mastering nature--our ultimate goals are to live in communion with nature. What radical change does this bring to our own fulfillment in our work? We are in a new acknowledgment of others, an acknowledgment in which the feelings of others are sometimes much more important than rationalized statements. I have just come back from a small town in the north of my country where last night I was speaking to a huge crowd packed into a small room. At the back of the crowd, there was a very young woman, in her early 20s, with a small baby in her arms. At first she could not see because the crowd was really huge, but then she found a table and climbed up on it, and there she stood for more than two hours with the baby. Everything that was said which she agreed with was really an acknowledgment. The fact is that this woman may be illiterate, since in my country 7% of the women are still illiterate, but nonetheless there was present this mutual acknowledgment that is transmitted between people, regardless of their positions, which I think is tremendously important in that "pass to wisdom."

We need a capacity for wonder before beauty and newness, to enter into what a French writer called "the circle of charm." We ought never to be



afraid that charm really will encircle us for it is at that very level of charm and desire that we can meet the fundamental roots of our happiness. Present in all of this is a tremendous search for meaning because without meaning work may become just a chore.

What, then, I want to say is that in a seminar such as this one the seeds for the future are deeply rooted in a communion of thought and feelings. I once read in an anthology of poetry that came from Greenwich Village some lines that moved me very deeply. At one point it was very dearly said, "What are we? We are just men and women of average height all wading carefully into the world."

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro