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Culture politique et culture des femmes
(Signposts for the next millennium)



How can we dare to speak of signposts for the next millennium?

Can we try to see, at least, signposts for the next years, for the next months?

Can we ask for clear directions in these times of uncertainty?

Can we expect firm indications in these times of turbulence?

Can we attempt to see some signs shining in a period where everything seems to get sucked up in a historical black hole?

- And yet, speak / see / ask / expect attempt^{to} / we must.

Because: it is in the depth of the black hole that energy is renewed and new forces can emerge;

it is in periods of uncertainty and ²-
turbulence that ~~we can~~ complexity
is at work; systems are reorganizing
themselves
and new patterns may emerge.

— " —
The events of the last months and
weeks have shaken the world picture
of, for most of us, a ^{whole} lifetime.

At the heart of it all, we discover
an overwhelming + breath-taking complexity.
^{We discover} the existence of different autonomous and
yet interdependent systems. ~~the~~ The
simple mechanism of cause / effect ~~is~~
within one single logic is outdated.

The striking events in Soviet Union
are a sharp illustration of the several
systems and processes in presence.

- a) The collapse of communism as a
political regime is one of those systems.
- b) But equally important is the
breaking down of the last European
empire.



c) And together with these two systems 3
the process of ~~growing~~ ^{increasing} economic under-de-
velopment + social deterioration is a ~~the~~
most important one.

Of course, a more refined analysis would
enlighten other systems at play, such as,
for instance, the ethnic + linguistic system
providing social cohesion to otherwise
scattered groups. Or, at another level,
the religious dimensions of individuals
+ groups providing ~~side by side with~~
~~the archipel of gulags~~ ~~the archipel~~
~~of~~ islands of hope.

~~Whatever the~~ This interplay of
different systems comes sharply into
light with Soviet Union. ~~??~~ But it is
a general condition of our contemporary
world. Even in the most remote and
apparently most homogeneous situation,
there are different systems, each with
its own logic, each demanding a new
type of analysis, each contributing in
its own way to the shaping of
political culture.



At the end of this Conference which 4
was guided by the desire to find out
"new theological directions", and where
~~so much has been done + exchanged,~~
it is the political organisation of the
world we are trying to come to grips with.

The world governance (as well as
governance "tout court" in relation to any
social + political entity) is a major
concern of contemporary ^{political} thought.

We cannot fool ourselves: the
traditional political culture is over.
We need: new tools of perception of
the political mechanisms of every
society;

We need new mental categories to
establish the links between the
actors + the issues of political life;
We need a renewed ~~determination~~ ^{imagination} to
take the decisions demanded by
the novelty of the times we live
in.

The political culture is in search
of a new paradigms.



The so much fought for participation of women in political life is relevant in so far as it carries with it the possibility for new paradigms to emerge.

That a change of paradigm is the key-question of political culture

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At the end of this Conference which was guided by the desire to find "new theological directions" for "liberating women," and where so many ideas & experiences have been exposed + shared,

we are apparently narrowing down our concerns by concentrating on political culture. I hope that such is not ~~is~~ the case. The political scene is in fact a living (and puzzling) metaphor of what goes on in many other fields in the world. It can even be considered as a metaphor of the world in its historical contingency. (I often say to journalists that the difference between the political scene + the other fields is that ~~every~~ what is political is all throughout public + visible. ~~but not different~~ There lies the only difference!)

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It is my deep conviction that only now do women begin to be ready to take stock of their own culture and to help shaping the so much needed new political culture.

If their (our) own culture is deeply anchored in the contemporary reality they will intervene in a original way in the shaping of the political culture.

~~Moreover~~, The political picture of today's world seems to demand exactly the perspectives, vision, and attitudes that women's culture carries with it.

Moreover, ~~and~~ if the political culture is in search of its new axes, so is the women's culture. We have then two open systems. The period of ~~new~~ gestation of a new political culture does offer a rare opportunity not only for women's contribution but also for women's culture to find ^{clearly} ~~sharply~~ (and also more realistically) its own foundations and expressions.

I will concentrate on three main chapters:

1) some key-questions of political culture today

2) ~~the interface between~~
political culture
+ women's culture

2) the different approaches to
~~the questions of~~ women + politics

3) the interface between
political culture
+ women's culture

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1. Let me then concentrate on some 6 of the ingredients of the political picture of the world.

1.1. If there would be no other proof, CNN news would have convinced us about the globalisation of all ~~the~~ issues the interdependence of all events.



Surely, we had felt already during the last 20 years (since the dollar became world currency) the economic interdependence.

Those of us who had to deal with the international financial institutions (IMF/World Bank) were almost magically aware of the grip ^{with which} the international system was ^{seizing} ~~putting~~ ^{most} countries + their populations.

Surely, Interdependence was also present during the Cold War period, each country being caught up in the zone of influence of each of the 2 super-powers. - What is \neq then?

Today, it is at all levels of the world scene that interdependence is felt. And yet it is not clear how such an interdependence can be managed. The case of Yugoslavia is a clear example: EEC? CSCE? The Security Council? ~~What~~ ^{who} else?

7.
A world of globalized issues can easily become a world of a one-power domination. In the military + security field the situation is clear: we ~~are~~ have moved from a bi-polar world to a uni-polar world.

If a "new ~~is~~ world order" would be based on such imbalance + domination, it would be no order at all!

This is why the globalization process demands "new instruments, ^a new definition of world interests + national interests, new forms of political leadership".

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The task of redefining the conditions for the organization of a multipolar world is imperative. (Some ~~timid~~ steps are taken for a Conference of Security + Cooperation of Africa, the forgotten continent. And some have already expressed the desire for the same type of institution for the Mediterranean region.



The interdependence of all political 8 entities and the globalisation of all issues shakes the very basis of the idea of sovereignty, as it has evolved in the modern times.

From the ^{law} ~~right~~ of non-interference we have moved in the last years (with Ethiopia, Soudan + the Kurds) to the right of humanitarian assistance.

From the law of untouchable boundaries we seem to be moving to new political entities with new types of links among them.

A few months ago, within the frame of the EC, it was still possible to speak about delegated sovereignty and enlarged sovereignty, in so far as each country would have increased responsibility. But the sweeping movement in the Balkanic region + Soviet Union puts into question the notion of Nation-State we have ~~so~~ applied ~~that~~ to countries which were not states or to entities that were still in the process of formation as nations.



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This means that the very basis of political culture — sovereignty, citizenship — is in process of being reshaped + redefined.

~~Then~~ Old categories don't hold anymore. New forms have to emerge. New concepts are needed.

This is why we can ~~understand~~ acknowledge the need for a new world order. But certainly not linked with the Gulf War as ^{President} ~~the~~ Bush has done at the beginning + at the end of the War! Rather, a new world order ~~that~~ based on the ~~the~~ globalisation of issues + events but ~~always~~ geared, at every instance, to the rights of individuals + peoples and to their solidarity.



1.2: The market economy as ideology 9

The new world order that seems to take shape is not devoid of ideologies as some appear to think. A ~~new~~ global ideology is taking over: the ideology of the market.

The market economy is viewed as a universal remedy to all problems of governance the world is facing.

Of course, the collapse of the centrally planned economies has left us with only one tool: the market economy.

No doubt that the Eastern + Central European countries see the market as the path for better standards of living.

However the globalization of the market system has put into the lime-light its shortcomings:

— the "free" market is not truly ^{free} at the world level, as most of the countries enter international trade under the heavy + unbearable conditions put on it by the rich ~~and~~ countries, with their protectionist measures;



- International financial credit functions in such a way that many countries are paying back more than ~~what~~ ^{the amount} of wealth they produce annually;

- The boundaries having disappeared for the new armies which are the transnational corporations, direct investments are growing at a unif rate. (27% last year), half of which ^{is} invested in USA and the 20% invested in the South going to a handful of countries;

- the flux of capital is not moving N/S to help the development of the South but rather S/N, with in the last 8 years more than 300 billion dollars from LA

This amounts to what it is: an organized international disorder. It gives the impression that it functions because the institutions proliferate and go on accomplishing their rituals. But in fact it is creating a massive imbalance, marginalizing the great majority of mankind. The ideology underlying it all is based on the acceptance of exclusion as a

legitimate social + political principle. ??
Therefore it assumes a philosophy of inequality among ~~all~~ human beings.

This is not an accident of history. Since the 80's the OECD countries have evolved the concept of structural adjustment as the basis of ~~set~~ for strengthening our economies.

It defines itself as the "whole set of transformations necessary to in order to allow the balanced functioning of the economy."

What does this ~~too~~ mean? That every thing in society is geared towards economy and its health.

It means that a purely economic concept has replaced the all-encompassing ideas of "social change" or of "project of society".

~~In this subordination of everything to economy,~~

~~If the market is the conducting thread and~~

But the market ^{economy} doesn't see ~~what~~ anything that cannot be translated into money.



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Therefore, the market is "blind": 12

- it doesn't see poverty + weakness
- it doesn't see the environment
- it doesn't see the spiritual ^{the power of}

Its basic paradigm is one of Force,
~~of the winners~~ the supremacy of

the winners. (The arrogance of the W is relat to East. E.
→ no W economist has any solution!) Geoffrey Sachs

No astonishment then that the
international economy is ~~is~~ at ^{the} stage
of institutionalized ~~is~~ injustice. While
(EC, Japan, USA)
the economies of the triad are rein-
forcing each other, the economies of
the S hemisphere - Africa, LA and
the south of Asia - are perishing and
entering a period of almost invisibility,
continents + the majority of mankind
drifting away to marginalization
+ destitution.



?? (This is why ~~what~~ gradually ~~is~~ and without 13 ^{political} any calculations, from the South start emerging ^{more} strategies of survival?)

They are already at work in visible problems:

- in the ~~growing~~ attempt of growing masses of people from the S to reach the N and to come to ^{have a} share in its wealth;

- in the astounding population growth of the South - while EC grows 0,3% up to 2000, the Arab countries of North Africa ^{will} have a rate growth ranging from 2% to 6,7%

- ^{They are present} even in the production and in the small organizations of the narco-traffic among the poor (in the favelas of Brazil, in the fields of Colombia + Peru)



1.3. Democracy at stake

Democracy doesn't stand out undamaged in this picture.



It is true that the Western countries have succeeded to impose a new + positive conditionality to all other countries:

- the establishment of a State of law;
- the multipartism and free elections;
- the respect of human rights as a basic moral guarantee of ~~and~~ the legitimacy of any constituted power.

However, at the same time, we see the growing uneasiness ^{with} ~~of~~ the forms of democracy established in the N hemis-
phere.

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The existence of a political ~~power~~ ^{class} does exclude from the political decisions most citizens:

- who decided the Gulf war?
- who " about the independence of the Baltic States?
- who " the condition for Yugoslavia?
- etc. etc.



In the 70's a "professional political 15
class" was ^{skill the object of a} debated; today it is seen
with distance + contempt. (In a recent
French program after a very good performance
of the Sec. of State for them. Questions he
was considered by more than 60% as
competent, his action as necessary; yet
to "does he have a political future?" ~~the ans~~
only 85% said "no"!!)

The fact that electoral campaigns are
more + more empty of the real issues and
that ^{very} few ~~system~~ countries have a built-in
system of democratic accountability
puts into question this kind of representation.

From ~~these~~ ^{fundamental} ~~facts~~ we are still using the
~~democratic institutions + traditions~~ ^{Fundação Cuidar o Futuro} ~~contemporary~~
of the beginning of industrialization.

- When the phenomenon of urbanization
at a massive scale had not yet taken
place;
- When life expectancy was much shorter
and one was supposed to dedicate
oneself to the same activity through a
lifetime;
- When women didn't exist as citizens.



From another side,
 we are today in a era of ~~mass-media~~
 of communication. Mass-media have
 introduced into social relationships
 totally new factors. They have established
^{the relationship between} ~~among~~ the citizens + the elected ^{officers} ~~people~~ a new
mediation whose laws transform that
 very relationships.



Democracy is also at stake at the
 world level. There may be lip-service
 to the United Nations. But who are
 those who are deciding now about
 the new configuration of Europe, about
 the future of Soviet Union? The G-7,
 whose status is the one of "most in-
dustrialized countries"! ~~What a~~

~~(Of course, there might be a napoleonic
 vision in those who speak about "world
 governance". One thing is the interplay
 of phenomena, another their government!
 paradox to demand democracy from
 the all countries + to lead the world
 without any democratic basis but
 the one of wealth! ~~It's~~ World governance
 on a democratic basis is imperative.)~~

1.4. Environment as a new social actor 17

The shortcomings of the world governance, as well as the urgency of some form of decision-making body or binding international law, are made sharply clear by the questions related to environment.

The Brundtland report, the Toronto ^{the 'Int'l Climate Conf.} summit, The Hague Conference, and many other ^{worldwide} ~~important~~ events have been successive steps in ~~the~~ defining the necessary measures to be taken in order to prevent ^{more} climate warming, ^{and} the depletion of the ozone layer, and fundamentally in order to render the earth habitable and to preserve the harmony + beauty of all living organisms. life-systems.

~~It~~ More sharply than any other factor ~~until the recent events~~ ~~it~~ ~~is~~ environment emerged as a social actor at the world level.



~~For the first time, history has to~~ 18

~~take nature into account~~ With the
birth of industrialization, nature
~~had~~ entered history, ~~without~~ in The
exploitation of natural resources to
feed the process of industrialization
in its first stages, the disorder
created in nature by the huge human
settlements due to ~~the~~ accelerating
urbanization - these are just the
two most striking elements of the
encounter between nature and
history.

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~~The~~ consequences are not ignored
anymore. For the first time, history
- political evolution, economic &
and social development, international
relations - has to take nature into
account.



Of course, I am speaking of this 19
new actor whose rebellion pleads
finally for our own survival.



But I am also speaking of the
interlinkage between nature and all
the other political/economic/social
processes. I am referring to the
orientation of science + technology.

Again it is the question of a change
of paradigm: science was supposed
to contain in itself its own self-correction.
This was the illustration of ~~the~~ a end-
less progress, of the mastering of men
over all natural processes.

Moreover, science could be pure ~~into~~
~~technology~~ ~~attached~~, ~~no application~~
and neutral. Pure because there
were no ~~present~~ immediate applications,
neutral because it was conceived in
some kind of political limbo...

Today all science ~~is in itself~~ brings with
it the technology it leads to. Today

Physics since ~~August~~ ⁴⁴, Biology ~~and~~
~~over time~~ have shown that they have
deep political meanings.

This ~~only conviction~~ that we enter 20
a new type of civilization:
a civilization with a deep sense of limits is emerging.

Not the abrupt limit of a linear
progress cut somehow by ethical
considerations

but the limit coming from the
interdependence of systems + beings,
or, as psychoanalysis ~~leads~~ tells us,
the limit coming from the inner
law of every being, ~~for beyond the~~
where the root of life is reached
and the depth of meaning
is perceived.



2. Women as political actors 21

2.1. Beyond equality: the option of difference

What about women's culture then?

We cannot overlook the fact that most of the actions + decisions taken at national + international level ^{concerning women} during the last 20 years have accepted political culture as it ~~is~~ was perceived: ~~a~~ institutions / elections / careers.

The main goal ~~seemed~~ ^{was the} to be equality with men in the management of political life; left ^{thus} unchallenged.

It was not only the acceptance of the traditions, of the ^{established} cleavages, of all the steps that led to the global injustice and indifference to the global conscious.

It was also the very rules of political management.

Politics ~~has~~ is in its practice one of the most ^{over-simplified} ~~simplistic~~ systems one can think of; Different areas of political decision-making are disconnected, separated, each Ministry dealing with one single aspect of life as if the others didn't count.

This view has been often assumed²² by women in denouncing the fact that women have ~~been~~ held "soft" ministries (by that meaning health or education) while men would hold the "hard" ones (defense or foreign policy).

Of course, it was important for women to participate at all levels of political power, ~~but leaving politics as it is is not, for~~ ~~corruption doesn't appear a very~~ → It ^{was} ~~is~~ the end of forbidden territories, it ^{was} ~~is~~ the path for a more just distribution of social functions among different groups in society.



Gradually, some women
began to see that their presence
was relevant in so far as it made
a difference.

The reparatedness of political
thinking,
the mystification of political action,
the acceptance of injustices + exclusion
under the disguise of ~~so-called~~
distorted pragmatism; ^{the submission}
^{of politics to}
^{economics;}
the pompous rhetoric of the political
class; ^{the elections tied to the media}
^(so well illustrated in the series Mr. Minister)
the growing disparity between ^{those} who
are wealthy + thus ~~consider~~ are
self-righteous + powerful,
the paraphernalia wrapping up the
political functions,
- all these are traits that have
nothing in common with women's
culture, even when ~~these~~ women
are their practitioners.

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The laws of the internal functions²⁴
ing of the political institutions, with
their dogmas, codes + liturgies,
appear as ~~to~~ the result of one single
pattern, ~~they~~ ^{and} bear the mark of the
masculine.

~~The joining of women in such~~
Whenever women accept this kind
of political culture, they reinforce
the status quo, giving an alibi to all
those who want women to be present
everywhere ~~where~~ on one condition: that
things may remain as they are!

~~(I am ~~not using~~ speaking on the basis
of an enquiry made by the ~~European~~
Commission of the European Community.
People were
when asked if they agreed with several
goals of women's movements. More than
~~two~~ ^{half} agreed with the goal of providing
a climate of solidarity among women,
a bit less than half still agreed ~~that~~
with the goal of achieving equality
in professional life; but only 7%
agreed with the goal of "changing
society" !)~~



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Moreover, experience has shown 25
that very often, in order to function
on equal terms with men, women
are "forced" to assimilate the cultural
values and the codes of masculine
behaviour which rule the public space.

Access to political power is often
obtained at the expenses of the
silencing of women of their own
attitudes and ways of being, ^{of their own doing} of their
own culture.

Those who ~~se~~ plead for the difference
denounce the perverse effects of an
equality that finally reduces
~~cont~~ women's contribution in
the political field.



The path to difference in politics 26
is most important at this juncture of
time. New ingredients, new approaches,
new systems of thought + ~~feeling~~ are
needed, we say. Women's culture
provides ~~certainly~~ already new
ingredients + approaches. It is pro-
bably on its way to provide ^{new} systems
of thought.

?) A new cognitive process is already
'visible' :- a concern with the human
person and the concret rather than with
the ~~poor~~ ideologies and the slogan-
ized abstractions of political thought...
- an attention to those whom the
forces of economy leave marginalized,
unheard of, ~~inca~~ unable to de-
monstrate and to reivindicat ...
- a continuous search for new
solutions, seen as organic develop-
ment of what is already there rather
than reasons for electoral farfare...
- a presence of the symbolic in its
simplest forms...



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Most of all the difference expresses itself in the connectedness of problems, of persons, of sectors of decision-making. Women connect + connect, and because they connect, they invent.

As Judith Schluger ^{shows, when writing about} ~~writes about~~ "innovation + history of science", a different intellectual frame is still within the national space ~~and~~ (she argues) "there is a plurality of frames, all adequate but partial + probably temporary, in such a way, that one can go from one frame to another, to invent a new one".

Moreover, as she ^{writes} ~~explains~~ elsewhere the birth of a new thinking depends on the state of the art in a given field.

In the realm of political culture we can say that the situation of complexity is a propitious condition for ~~women's~~ the capacity to connect of women's culture to reach its full fruition.



The sense of connectedness is basic in ~~the~~ ~~a~~ ~~human~~ ^{the} exercise of political power, ~~with~~ ^{which has} the human persons at the core of it.

~~It connects persons~~, It sees the person as a whole. Therefore all political measures are centered on that wholeness.

(Contrarily to the traditional politics who sees in the human persons:

- in time of elections: the electorate
- in the ^{news} papers: the public opinion
- in the official speeches: the citizens.)

• It connects problems and discovers the knots, the hard-core to be dealt with. Therefore, it doesn't waste time, it accomplishes all ~~but~~ it can.

• It connects mechanisms: so it works in a intersectorial way.

~~Disregards existential commitments as it is~~ • It goes beyond the split between different disciplines as so many are needed to solve problems...



- It establishes the necessary ^{Cross-fertilization} ~~connections~~ among ministries, institutes, agencies - It decompartmentalizes. It provokes interaction.

- It ~~establishes~~ links persons, their concerns + interests. Therefore it is all the time in search of # new forms of building up active consensus.



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1. (Women + new world order)

At the dawn of the XXI century, the women's movement, ~~like this~~, remains the most international of all social movements. I said "remain" — but shouldn't I say "can become"?

The women's culture can give an irreplaceable ~~and~~ contribution: ~~in order~~ to help the world to speak beyond one's own region, nation, ethnic groups — to give room to a "we" that encompasses a plurality of situations, convictions, attitudes.

— to create forms of ~~prejudice~~ dialogue free of prejudice;
— to establish the transnational character of all initiatives as the best way to express the interdependence of today's world.



It is important, vital for the world, at this time of such striking interdependence, to ~~do~~ denounce the fallacy of the outdated concept of "enemy" — and therefore of building up new concepts of security + defense.

Of course, women, like ^{women} in Yugoslavia from both sides, will ~~claim~~ demonstrate + protest against war. But let us seize the moment to plead, ^{for} ~~and to~~ to establish the rationale and if possible to decide for the systems + "weapons" in times of peace.

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and Women's culture of care ~~and~~ connectedness is needed to create the bridges among ethnic groups, to accelerate the formation of nations, to relativize the importance of the state as it evolved in Europe in the last 200 years.



2. (Market)

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We can ^{also} expect women's culture to correct the excesses of the market ideology:

- to introduce the necessary regulatory + redistributive mechanisms, even if it is a trend now to undo all the state interventions;

- to approach the world of economics with imagination and never, never allow economy to be the guiding factor of political life, ~~because~~ as all processes of economic development are not an end in themselves but at the service of the human persons.

We can even expect women's culture to re-orientate the market economy by obliging the economy to acknowledge, within its own logic, the value of the quality of life, of the flexibility in patterns of work, of the mobility of people according to their needs + desires...

(OECD)



Women contribute the most powerful agent of consumption.

They can counteract the perverse effect of publicity (creating passive persons who unconsciously obey to its suggestions) by becoming lucid agents of consumption. Thus can they fulfil an economic function, capable of regulating the predominant model of "always more". (IAC-Futuro)

(7)

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(We can do one thing. As women, ~~we~~ we cannot go on pretending we cannot do anything about the prevailing economic disorder. For years, 4 decades now, the UN has been asking in the Int'l Strategies for Development that the rich countries give 1% of their PNB to develop/aid. So far only NL and Sweden have done so. My proposal: Didn't time come now for the int'l community to establish a conditionality for the rich countries ? What if all of them, in order to vote in the UN would have to contribute their 1% for development)

Me Adams

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3. (Democracy)

34.

Women's culture has also to take stock of its own experiences in the sharing of responsibility + power.

Women experience that there are many more instances of power than those offered by the political institutions. By making such situations more visible women help to reconstitute power to everyone in society, they do empower others, most of all those whose voice ~~can~~ is not heard.

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~~Moreover,~~

The manifold tasks of women, the way in which their culture has integrated such tasks does not only express itself in responsibility as a political component but also helps the socio-political reality to organize itself around new issues + with the participation of new actors.

The school, the medical services + the hospital, the public services of all kind, the media - do concern all citizens in a paramount way at different stages of their lives. Therefore the social partners cannot anymore be confined to the binome ~~of~~ employers / trade unions ~~as~~ inherited from the industrialization era.

The big institutions which are a pillar of society merit to gather around a table all the social partners whose life or work is directly associated with them.



Women's culture cannot accept as a permanent ~~obstacle~~ compromise the party discipline. Women in political life have to introduce the primacy of ~~self~~ autonomy of decision and consequently of majorities not according to party lines but according to ideas + their value. (PS)

4. (Environment)

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Women's culture can reinforce in political culture the all-encompassing value of the primacy of life.

The relationship of the woman to nature which prevented for so long the expression of a women's culture can be taken up by this very culture ~~from~~ and transformed from an ~~an~~ handicap to an asset.

(It is ~~so~~ a sign the fact that many women's groups are involved with the Conference on Env + Dev. in Rio?)

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Moreover the influence of women's ^{culture} can be decisive in some concrete aspects.

Women are the main agents of a sustainable development as they ^{are} the pillars + inspirators of new life-styles, ranging in concrete ~~afflictions~~ consequences from energy's conservation + sources to new cultural models of consumption.



The presence of many women 37
in the scientific + technical world
can lead to a greater transparency
in the perception of the meaning
of scientific + technological choices.

They ~~can~~ ^{can} + must ask the questions:
- are ~~the~~ ^{real} human needs answered by
this knowledge, by this technology?
- are they seeing valid human values?

~~(What the women scientists in the
fields of relating to bio-genetics
are doing: really scientific thinking
with impact bearing on ~~revisal~~ of the national
councils on ethics)~~



Concluding remarks

The years, the months ahead are decisive. What I said concerns all women — it is not a question of being in political office... it is a question of being present to the times we live in...

~~As Christian women,~~ This challenge has a particular echo for Christian women. ~~If we don't~~ ^{to bring closer} live fully the Kairos, ~~what is then~~ the horizon of our faith?

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~~The world God loved so much that Christ his Word came into it and his Spirit ~~is~~ goes on~~
 is ✓ To live fully our time is to live already now the fabrics of our eternity.

("Events were his instruments of work")



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Our spirituality cannot be parochial anymore.

The context for ^{our spirituality as well as for} our theology is the whole world in its interdependence & complexity. ^{of course,} It is not a question of being aware of everything at once. It is rather the awareness of the interlinkages, the connections,

and daring to break new ground by speaking there at the edge of \neq ways of seeing the world, at the frontiers of what ~~is~~ appears in the official discourse as separated + unrelated.

9



But no contribution will be possible without the deep labour in ourselves, about ourselves.

Spiritual vision + wisdom can only be encountered in the journey of the person to her center.

It is that journey that makes us at once vulnerable + strong, assertive + humble, utopian + realist.

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We can then say with Marguerite Yourcenar:

"... we are probably nothing else but crystals through which currents went.

Everything comes from far away and goes much further than we are going.

~~Everything~~ And we feel humbled and amazed for being so pierced by currents

which go through us "
+ further than we go.

~~This is, for me, the Mystery of God in our lives,~~

... Currents that go through us + further than we go... we call this the Spirit of God who, ~~with~~ ~~penetrates~~ through us, makes all things new.