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*New Issues, New Actors, New Perspectives*

by *Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo*

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



Listening to the two previous contributions, I was almost thinking, well I should change the outlay I wanted to say because there are so many concrete aspects in both presentations, the way they put their concerns here on the table, well, it would be very interesting - but maybe we could do that during the discussions - I will add just why I am so interested in what they said because apart from functions that somehow we get from the masculine traditions to be elements, to define herself, apart from that, since a long time, since my youth I have been groping with the question: "What is to be a woman, what can women do, and what can women do together?". And this has been determinant in the studies I have made, I am an Engineer by profession, and it was the first time as a challenge to say, well let me see if a woman can do the same as a man does, in the same environment. And I was the first engineer in my country to be in a factory, in research for industry. So from then on, I was all the time asking myself: what is different? Do I approach Physics, Mathematics in a different way? And I had the chance to have a fantastic class of excellent fellows and three of them were excellent students, and the four of us we formed a group, we studied together and very often we stop in the middle: what is different? And this was in the late forties, beginning of the fifties. And throughout my whole life, it has been this question: "How to make a difference? How to be different?" and then "How to be involved with other women", being very much aware of what you said, that one woman can do anything to change but you need to reach a certain critical mass in order to be able to influence and also you need a social basis that complicity that is always spoken about men, in fact ought to exist among women, and very often it does exist. So part my committed life and my energy through all my life have been devoted to help bringing the experience and the thought of women together and at all levels for before my country was not a democracy, stimulating conscientisation processes in rural areas and in the slum areas, and then after that very much with the .. ? (titled) women. Also I am very fortunate to come from a country where we have a fantastic group of women, mainly writers and journalists who are absolutely top in their own professions, for example inviting with a tremendous boom (?) of literature of today in my country. But women writers rank exactly at the same

level as men. So they don't need to be condescending or anything of that kind. And there evolve (?), which is the fascinating thing, since the early seventies, some of you certainly know, the new Portuguese letters, the Maria stories which I don't think you can lead any women study without this book because it is as important as "The wonderful wives". It is the first time that women speaking about women have said at the same time what is wrong in society, by the analysis of the situation of women. Though it is written in a barroque way because it is supposed to refocus and reproduce the language of the 17th century's book of the Portuguese letters by a Portuguese man. That gives discussion between the Portuguese and the French because finally it seems that it was a French who did it, not a French woman but a French man. There is a big literary research on that but I don't take side, I think it was opportune that the book existed. Who has written it is secondary. And I think these women, many of them, also those who are now writing, they are still going on great writers but others have joined and their book really do reflect not only what we can call the women universe and a complicity on a very deep way like for instance you have a novel where there are two women, a rather youngish woman who is married with a man during the war, because we had for thirteen years, between 1961 and 1974, colonial wars, we have that young woman whose husband is in the war, and you have her mother-in-law, and the complicity is such that you don't know throughout the novel who is saying what. And then you have to make a real analysis of the novel in order to understand who is really speaking at every moment. So, many other books who, for example, the women writers have been the first to come up with books about migrations, because there are lots of migrants in other EEC countries, and other outside European countries and about the real living and recapturing of what has happened during the colonial war. So I am just one kind of great friends of that, that's all, but I have felt very much they supported me and also their ....(??) between them, that is what I mean to say.



When I thought that I was coming to this meeting and what I was about to say because in practically no European countries the so-called women issues regardless of the facts that we have heard from the two friends here, all the women issues have been taken up in institutional and private governmental issues bodies, for which there are some times real ministries, other times a commission and always connected with the policy of the government. In my own country I started a commission on the status of women in 1970 with the platform of a non-governmental organization of forum to which all the time this ministry or commission is supposed to refer and to consult on different issues. But this is not enough. However, as this is going on, and it's not only more that we need, more on that of putting everything in practice, it is also that I think we are reaching a third wave in Europe of the women's questions.

The first was at the beginning of the century, then the one of the sixties-seventies, and now there is something else and this something else is this basically in a nut-shell: women have tried to be in the same situation as men, to do the same tasks, and then now they ask themselves: "well, what is the result?" and very often what we observe in this continent - and I think (?) that in some other parts of the world it is not so - originally in Europe and fortunately it is the same everywhere, women have been taken up in a world of men at the expenses of the formulation of their own culture, without speaking their own language. So we all can speak 'masculine' anyway. It's a language that we can speak. English, more or less broken but nevertheless we can speak masculine. But our own language has been suffocated by the domination of the dominant language and by the rituals and the other aspects that are shaping the masculine world. So that's why we come now to what I call a third wave where we are taking stock of women's culture and we are asking; "how can this culture, this women's culture affect societal and political issues?"





And I would say, women's issues today are survival of persons, of groups, of nations, of the planet. So if as it is all the time said, women are concerned with life, women are concerned with rather mysterious, special resources, OK let it be, because now it is survival that is at stake. And I can't imagine women dealing with specific women issues if you are not aware, for instance, of the Indian people are living at the level of absolute destitutional poverty. So in my understanding, and this is a very important aspect, and a new way of looking at women's presence in Europe. When I say that, I am not saying that all women who are in public life in Europe are thinking this way. And in that I can think of only (??) three reports of women studies of all contributions that can awaken women who are in public office towards their responsibility for these societal questions.

People here in Europe we have in a way which we could say a window of opportunities because we are facing two open spaces. We are facing the geographic, and political and cultural space of Europe, and by that I mean the big Europe, from Atlantic to Ourals, we have a tremendous complexity of institutions: the EEC, the CSCE, the Council of Europe, the Western European Union, and so on, and so on... So we have endless institutions which also account for some paralysis in decisions like we are seeing for our shame in the situation of Yugoslavia, and we have also a tremendous, at this time, in this open space, a tremendous unpredictability about the evolutions of the components of Europe. We don't know where things are going. We don't know if what is happening in the Balkans, where from Monday to the next ... what is going to split. We don't know whether this is going to take over, I am sorry to say but, in Britain, or if it is going to take over in other places where there are different ethnic groups and where people can out of a sudden arise to another level of conscious and say, well that is not any more what we feel for. Because if the Soviet Union disappeared, or was dismantled, it was really the end of the colonial empires. And with the end of the colonial empires a deep message came within Europe and at the outskirts of Europe, well I am sorry to say that for the Asians, Asia is not the outskirts of Europe, as it is the other way round, we are facing in Europe a geography, and therefore a

cultural, political composition of which we know nothing. At the same time, we see these contradictory movements in Europe: integration on one side, and on the other side fragmentation. Some of us say we are beyond the Nation-State and other say, we want to become a Nation and a State! So, what is it? How to reconcile these two absolutely, apparently, contradictory elements? And time is going so fast that for instance in 1989 we voted in the European Parliament that Europe, EEC should first be deepening its own composition and then moving towards the Maastricht Treaty. And only after that when that would be realized, only after the 1st January, 1993, we would be embarked on an enlargement of the Community. A few months ago, the discussion between deepening versus enlargement of the European community was still part of official discourse. Everybody is now working on the calendar. How Austria, Sweden, Switzerland are going to join? What would be the time for other countries in the so-called Western Europe? What would be the time for the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe? So, we are now moving at a speed that is really making very obvious that we are in an open space.

But I said, this is the meeting of two open spaces. The other open space is indeed what we can call the social territory of women. Theoretically, the social territory of women would embrace all sectors of life; in practice, it is very often narrowed on to a very small territory as women have been by-sided (??), absent from decision making. If some of you looked at newspapers last week-end about the Council of the EEC meeting in Lisboa, it was very nice, it could be a football-man team, you know, a very nice picture, just men, that is as it is, in spite of the fact that in all countries of Europe, there are women with a tremendous capacity and who have given proof of what they are able to do in their own country and elsewhere. So, in this social territory of women, in this open space, we are still very open because we don't seem to have access to other fora, we are still very often focussed on women as the receiving end, as recipients, as objects, as victims, which is true and many of this victims syndrom is becoming very analyzed with the battered women, with the rapt and incests that are coming to the surface and are talked about everywhere.





But I think that we have to seize the opportunity of the meeting of these two open spaces to allow and to provide companionship ..... for women to be subjects, to be actors of the current change, to influence, to decide, to act. This for me is a very, very important point at this moment and to act in a way I think we are living a time, not only in Europe but in the whole Planet, of interdependence at all levels among issues, among countries, among actors. And we can say that even without the process of integration that goes on in this continent, European countries would be facing the consequences of globalisation of issues. Everything. What do we have in our concerns? The other day there was .....in Portugal, and then there was the Dow Jones index. And I was thinking, with these poor simple cousins, what have they to do with the Dow Jones but they have, they have. And that is how the world is today. And I think that this interdependence, which is very obvious in security matters but also now very obvious in economic and financial matters, either a new given (....) is that with the collapse of the great ideology in the Soviet part of this continent with the breaking down of communism, I think, and I wont elaborate on that but I think it is a very important question, also the dichotomy subject/object has disappeared. We have not anymore handbooks to guide political actions because the political actions, of course if we were not communists, were all in a way a response to the communism as we see now with this big thing about privatisation everywhere. How can they privatize if there is no capital available, if there is no managerial possibilities there? I have had very in-depth discussions mainly with people in Czechoslovakia and there is as much a kind of fanaticism about means, privatisation is a means for the market economy, not a goal, as there was in the past about the collective appropriation of the means of production in the hands of the Communism. So in a way there is also in this breaking down the end of a dichotomy subject and object. And this for me is a very important thing because women deep down feel as subjects and in society they react and they are seen as objects. So I think how we need to think anew these issues which are interdependent with new actors and it is why we can then face new perspectives.

I would like to make four points, if I may, about these new issues that I consider fundamental in Europe.

The first one is political governance as such. We are, and it will be the first point of political governance, a diversity of groups, ideas, modes of thinking, which in a context of interdependence become part of a very complex system. So we are dealing in Europe with complexity and women cannot cope to deal with politics and deal in a different way if they are not aware and able to put on the table the very fact that in their women's contract (?) dealing with complexity is their daily bread, but they have to call a spet a spet (??) and cope with all these things, going from one place to another, taking care of the children, bringing them to the doctor and to the school and buying the things, and going to work, all that is dealing with complexity. The word "polyvalent" was used by Mary Gould and I think it is very important if you deal with complexity, you are necessarily polyvalent. So therefore we don't need to introduce us as men are, well, I am a doctor, an engineer, I am a professor. No. I am I, you know and regardless ... or Catherine ..... (??) has written in a very nice autobiography "me", you know, "me" is just something we are all ... OK.

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In this political governance and in order to cope with this complexity, there are regulation mechanisms that have not yet been discovered, and there are delays in decision-making and there are contradictory gestures in these countries. For instance, just after the Maastricht meeting, when all the European Community were stressed and the move towards economic and monetary union, all of you friends from Germany excuse me and for Mr Kohl .... just decided two things, to change the rate of interests unilaterally, and they decided to recognize Croatia unilaterally. And now two days ago they were making everything beautiful, they were all in elements (?), and then Mr Mitterand goes to Sarajevo again. So we don't say anything to anybody. So these are contradictory gestures and because regulation mechanisms are not enough. If I was to examine to my country I could give other examples but they are interesting. Anyway.





In this new political governance, one other important element is the question: "What is democracy in this new space"? What is democracy at the level of that space and what is democracy within the units of that space, within the different countries. And this is amazing we have been together, of course, all the friends come to the West, namely the North America continent, we have been now imposing a new political conditionality to all countries, first of all European countries and after that to Latin American, African and Asian countries, political conditionality which is the multi-party system, free elections, respect of human rights, therefore democracy, and the market economy. And our own democracy is shrinking, is becoming almost a farce in many countries. That is the case in my own, with .... always the same fellows, they control TV, and so on. And you can see in Italy we have seen the difficulty to get men by when way a woman could have been elected, the President was the Head of the Parliament, but of course nobody wanted her, also she had been a member of the Communist party, there was still echos about that... So we are in a democracy where poles are replacing votes, everyday you get poles, who is who, who is where, and this is defining the behaviour of the politicians. This is a very important question. So politics is really perverse at this stage on this continent. I speak of this continent but of course I am reading news and I know a little bit what is going on other continents on the other side, but I feel more secure to speak about this continent.

New type of external pressures and these external pressures are enormous, enormous. For instance the extreme liberal people from the West are saying to the Central European countries to privatize and when they privatize, who goes there to buy? The public factories of the Western countries, the state-owned enterprises of the West are those who go to the privatized enterprises of the Central European countries. Everything is going mad, and together with this, the role of the media, which is really alienating the public with practically daily(?) political events, and we have no time to form our opinion because immediately you have the comments from the right, from the left, from the centre, from any place where a journalist happens to be and whose opinions we have to swallow. Anyway, in this democracy which already in the 70s, for





example in France it was a lot written about the professional democracy, professional politics was something absolutely outside of reality because those professional politicians don't have contact anymore, they don't know, they only take grassroots in times of elections, then they may go to the right places to meet the right people.

Therefore, our question would be: "How do we move towards a participatory democracy, a democracy where everyone can be present and can say something". Of course to say these own words, in own words, means also that a very strong affirmation of individual rights in the context of collective rights. In Europe, I think we should stress very carefully that the collapse of collectivist political regimes should not erase the reality of collective needs, rights and obligations. The adjective "collective" can be used and I think very important for several people who sometimes are wondering what is it but this collective rights and needs and obligations are the context in which individual rights can be affirmed. Individual rights of participation of decision-making because what do we want as women ....(??) The supreme dignity of each person, his or her capacity shaping the political reality, because we affirm that politics belongs to everyone and we know that it does belong to everyone. And only an analyst frame of mind would say that politics belongs to those who make the final decision-making.

Again with the political governance we have another very important question which would lead us very far, which is the question of, flowing (??) from this one, of citizenship, and now does this citizenship shape the sovereignty of each country. For some we are giving up sovereignty, for others there is excess of sovereignty, but we need new forms and new concepts to emerge how do societies sovereignize themselves and how can we move from the concept of sovereignty that is still kind of middle age concept defending your own borders, towards an hyperdependent world, towards a concept of sovereignty which is enlarged, and much deeper and much richer. When you give up the concept of sovereignty apparently, what you are giving up in fact is sitting around a table with other peoples, so you need to be much more competent, you need to have much more knowledge about the situation of everyone and you need to be able to push



for your own opinion with much more strength. What I am saying I said it often to my fellowcitizens, I said it during the last six months when Portugal had the Presidency of the Council of the European Community. Anyway. But not everyone thinks this way, they just think that you are coming to interdevelopmental bodies. It is not that. You become responsible for more people, and for more realities, and you have to encompass all those realities without betraying your constituencies and your fellow citizens.

The second cluster of which I should say just a few words is the management of the economy as economy is becoming a substitute for philosophy in Europe. In most schools economies are the overall embracing concept and in fact we have already in the current language somebody who says: "No, I am not going out with that man anymore, I am investing in somebody else." Well, I could give thousand examples of how the economic language is penetrating everything and is trying to explain all behaviours.

Well, but economy is not a goal, it is just a means, it is a tool like any other tool, so it is very urgent that women redress the ethics of how this functions, and how the different disciplines and sectors of activities have a role in a management of the policy. Understanding very well, even seeing and showing the limitations of the economic science, so far unable to devise new instruments for what we call the economies in transition. Your, for the Americans, your fellow citizen Jeffrey Sachs has been a ....(??) Minister Deputy in Poland and now in Mongolia (??), in Russia (??), everywhere I have been reading what he has been publishing like mad with all these teams of .... (??), he is from Harvard, and no solution so far. Do we have the economic sizes among the best people and new instruments for those economies in transition? So economy is not a dogma, still a very imperfect science, very much in the beginning, such an imperfect science that it can be put in a computer. In this matter, the science of economy, new regulatory and redistributive mechanisms are necessary in order to compensate for the blindness of the market. I think it is extremely important and I think that women have a tremendous role to play in order to find these new regulatory and redistributive mechanisms. I wont say more, but ... OK.



Well, I have to say this, our difficulty in Europe is that at the moment when we should be discovering these new regulatory and redistributive mechanisms, the most advanced countries in terms of welfare societies in Europe, namely Sweden and the Netherlands, are cutting on their social policy programmes. So, there is a contradiction and for instance the Green partners in Sweden very much in Sweden join .....(??) because we don't want to loose what we have and what we consider as fundamental. So there is quite a tremendous battle going on underground in this continent.

And also let me say that this management of economy because the market as a logic of internal and external exclusion, the market when let to itself and all the countries of the OECD have decided in the 80s to go towards the deregulation of the State by which they sat the natural law of the market could function. So market as a nature, it is very interesting philosophically. And we have seen how this has led in many countries, say in Britain but I would say in the 80s, maybe it is still now in the United States, how this has led to a growing exclusion of sectors of society and, more than that, on the world level, this has led to the exclusion of the South, with the exception of a few, some ten countries that are considered important by the North, but all the rest is really a mechanism, building inequality, leaving aside the poor, the vulnerable, the disorganized. So we need another logic, we need this market economy, I am not challenging the market economy, I am saying that we need another logic to deal with it, I think very much that women with their patterns of consumption, their patterns of production, and also the conscious decisions of individuals.

A third cluster I would stress it what I call survival process. On two ways. One from war to peace. And I think there is a lot to do, making clear that and fighting for instance for a revision of the Chart of the United Nations, moving from "peace-keeping" to "peace-making", and as early as January this year some of us, and I said it to my own Government because of its responsibility in the Council of the Community, that we should at that time have created corridors in Bosnia, corridors occupied by UN troupes



so as to prevent the two factions to come into these corridors .... (??) we are seeing, but .....(??) didn't see it that way.

So we also need transformation of military industrial complexes into peace instruments. We need to stop the arms trade because the five greatest merchants in arms in the world are the five permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations. What is this Security Council in that sense (??). You know? Big question-mark! And, of course, leading the process of the comprehensive banning of nuclear tests as we move towards the denuclearization of the world. Not only in the sense of the weapons but also in terms of so-called peaceful use of nuclear energy which leads us (??) much further.

In this survival process, and of course in the aftermath of Rio I don't need to say anything about that. I always think that this continent where Science and Technology were born we need to think anew the political role science and technology have to play in the general management of this planet. I think that here, in this survival process, it is very important the change of lifestyle and what we make with all soft .... (??) that women are able to introduce.

And finally, I would speak of the cultural and spiritual primacy in everything that has to do with human life and organisation because it is only at that level that we can find new paradigms. And I think if some women go in fields where they have not been since the beginning of history is exactly to take advantage of a new force that can bring together with it new factors, new elements, new values in it, and deeper than that a new paradigm. And for that we need to be deeply rooted in our culture, and to bring around our own culture without being deprived also of the complexity of the world, because it is fantastic and very interesting.

Thank you very much.