

...ivity is not the monopoly of the trained intellect. It is a realization that makes it the more urgent for us, while redefining self, to be simultaneously engaged in helping to restructure our societies.

Finally, I would like to comment briefly about the role of man vis-à-vis the creative woman. My own view is quite simple; it may even be simplistic. I know from experience of the profound misogyny of many men, and in particular of many competitive, creative men. However, I would also like to say that some of the most supportive and most inspiring creative persons of my acquaintance are also men whose creative range and generosity are both a source of stimulation and support. And I fear that if, as women, we need to have Man-the-Enemy as a foil to our creativity we may well be creating another trap of dependency for ourselves. Is it possible for men and women to begin to see each other as neither Muse nor Antagonist? Is it ever going to be possible, at the end of the process of definition of Self and Other, to see each half as equal, and therefore as any of the hundreds of possible things that human beings could be, one for the other? Is this the ultimate and greatest challenge to creativity of both Woman and Man?

Fundação Quilombo

les \$ en politique
a) qu'est-ce
q'on désire
avec le
bonheur

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a) critère de la vision linéaire

Creative women are not necessarily those who have acquired some reputation or hold political power. The linear concept of human beings going up a ladder, and following the clear-cut patterns of a career, may still be the one most people associate with success as typified by a public figure. But isn't there another form of being in history? The spiral evolution of the "zigurat" in Mesopotamia (I remember looking endlessly at one near Baghdad) may well be the image of another mode of intervention in history. Aren't women familiar with circles, with understanding from within the meaning of a path other than linear? Isn't their sociological invisibility a present handicap from which an asset for a new intervention in society can be drawn? What is at stake is not an evaluation or a comparison between women's and men's achievements in different fields. Creative Women are those who introduce into life other and new dimensions of the human experience and vision. Their creativity has neither measure nor standard.

Are women seeking political power? I am not sure. Certainly not in the same way as men. The concept of power underlying the expression "political power" is a mechanistic one. Power becomes a force exercised by A over B (person, institution, state) minus B's capacity to resist it.

In the institutions of power, even when there is wide consultation, certain events and decisions are taken alone by one man. Aren't all those consultations a pretense? Aren't they the paraphernalia of power to disguise both its diffusion throughout the social body and its concentration in the hands of one individual?

In many cases, perhaps the only justification for power is "the realization of the purposes of the power wielders, whether or not these are also the goals of the respondents."¹

1) Burns, James MacGregor *Leadership* Harper and Row, New York, 1978.

b) Le pouvoir - énergie est le leadership

But we no longer live in the realm of simple and harsh mechanical facts. Power can be seen in the thermodynamic equilibrium of the whole cosmos and of society. It requires another concept, that of energy: energy which is at once heat and animated matter; energy which can only be grasped in the systematic balance of different living organisms; energy which partly dissipates itself and partly animates from within all the matter involved in any physical transformation. Power in this context is leadership. It means sense of purpose and direction, the capacity to generate energy.

I am convinced that women, though exercising functions which traditionally belong to the "political power" sphere can only succeed insofar as they exercise leadership, and not power. (Of course, leadership is a very complex process whereby an empathy is created between the leader and the followers, so that "the leader induces followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations, the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations of both leaders and followers.")² Political power for women always risks appropriation of its goals by those who have no interest in the issues for which women are fighting. Leadership cannot be wiped out by electoral vote. It is a permanent commitment to others and to society.

c) les
ps
pour
voter

Women can become political leaders in the same way as men. However, it is the responsibility of women to infuse into their political roles alternative concepts and ways of relating to people in their hearts, minds, and bodies. My Portuguese compatriots, the well-known Three Marias, have expressed this most clearly: "...revolt on the part of women is what leads to disruption in every social class; nothing can ever be the same afterwards, neither class relations, nor relations between groups, nor relations between individuals. The very roots of repression must be destroyed. . . . Everything will have to be entirely different."³

There is no creativity without rebellion. In the words of Rollo May: "Out of rebellion, the creative act is born."⁴ I am not speaking of a mild, superficial revolt over some minor injustice.

2) Burns, *op. cit.*

3) Maria, Isabel Barreno, Maria, Theresa Horta, Maria, Velho da Costa, *New Portuguese Letters*, Bantam Books, New York, 1976.

4) Rollo May, *The Courage to Create*, Bantam Books, New York, 1976.

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I am referring to the specific forms taken by the universal struggle of mankind against the supreme injustice that we must die. Of course, we do not experience every minute that metaphysical "Angst." But women's revolt has too many facets, and is at its root too tragic, not to be part of that very human attitude.

d) la
création
à l'échelle
politique

Born of rebellion, the creative use of political power confirms the thesis of leadership. The liberation is from some injustice towards some "promised land."

Thus, the attitude of women can change the nature of power. (But be aware: that is threatening to the Establishment!)

Another set of questions before us is connected with "women working together politically on issues of primary concern to women." Three types of situations come to mind. The first of these is the "reformist trend"—preferential rights, access to equal conditions, assured promotion. Even the quota-system has many pitfalls, i.e. the woman is given positive discriminatory treatment, everybody bowing to her because she is a woman . . . and often charming. However, this remains something that is very often needed, or even the only possible course.

Secondly, we can see women's action as totally autonomous and exclusive. It springs forth usually from a new awareness among women. Often it is the only action they can undertake. However, it runs the risk of isolation from the "global" issues of society. It can easily segregate women from society in general and enclose them in a female ghetto.

Thirdly, there is the type of action which chooses the adequate strategy for each situation. It carries on its struggle at two levels: at the level of women's questions and at the level of all society. It asks both for the liberation of all and of each one. In a world shaped by men, it provides alternatives making visible values and insights that all human beings can grasp.

The type of decision-making and the impact of the institution may determine which of the three types of action is needed. A thorough analysis of the particular society is always necessary. Not all societies, either in the Northern or in the Southern hemisphere, are in the same category. Within the same geopolitical boundaries, the strategy for women's exercise of "political power," or rather, of leadership, can be very diversified. The correlation between women's struggle and the struggle of the whole society can only be perceived from within, not based on empirical, quantitative factors, but on qualitative analysis.

d'achete creative des
a) *la sub-culture non-americaine*

Creative women do not fit into the culture around them; because they are women, they are part of a sub-culture which thus far has had no possibility to shape society and events. Every time they make a genuine gesture in society they introduce a new type of creativity. As in the labor force, the point is not in adding neutral, asexual figures to the statistics of available manpower. The point is rather: the new "things" women create, the new gestures they make—what do they mean, towards what are they pointing? Do they "speak" of something different, or are they only another voice in the general chorus?

Women are creative in a twofold way: by what comes from their hands and by just being. What is at stake, in creative women, is both the object of the creative act and its subject.

Women are emerging from a silent sub-culture, and as individuals they have to overcome being judged according to established male norms. Their act of creativity has, at its base, the courage to expose themselves to others, to be vulnerable, naked in their feelings, and transparent in their intentions.

Creativity, according to Rollo May, represents "the highest degree of emotional health," and is the "expression of normal people in the act of actualizing themselves."⁵ Emotional health is of extreme importance. So often it is said of women that they are "emotional." But could not the world do with a bit more of emotional concern, of involvement, of caring? Once again, to quote Rollo May: "Creativity occurs in the act of encounter and is to be understood with this encounter at its center."⁶ And have not women thus far been relational beings? In a world where human beings are fleeing from each other, women can cultivate encounters.

On another occasion, Dr. May has said: "Creativity cannot exist without a centeredness within our own being."⁷ There is in all women an unexplored continent—themselves. Their creativity, springing forth from that centeredness within, is at the same time the very condition for their own liberation as human beings. Regardless of the scattered aspect of one's own life, the task ahead is the discovery of ourselves—who do we want to become? Who can we be? As one of us writes so clearly: "Finally, there is 'my place' which is distinct from the 'third place'; and in fact 'my place' is a psychological time and space—which

can occur at any time of the day or night—and to which no one is admitted. In 'my place', a woman can discover how she really feels about her immediate world. Unlike the 'third place' therefore, which is an emotional sanctuary, 'my place' is a working laboratory where the professional woman strives to understand her real feelings."⁸

So, the creative act is at once outward-oriented and flowing from an inward movement.

As "changers of society," women have no models. This is at once an asset and a handicap.

It is an asset insofar as there are practically no established norms for women. Most women entering traditional masculine fields have the conditions to be creative as there is no model for their lives, but only the personal process of "change" can endow one with the freedom to create her own model. Again quoting one of us: "Women must be awakened to the fact that they cannot 'follow somebody' all their lives."⁹

It is a handicap as "creativity arises from the tension between spontaneity and limitations." Those limitations are not always very clear. They tend to appear far away, and women often project their energy on "what could" instead of "what can be." But it is from what can be that the creative act emerges.

What society are we committed to change? Just our little corner? The women of today are part of the most international of all social movements. Therefore, our struggle is a planetary one. Wherever we are, our destinies are particularly interwoven. This is why I could not agree more with E. M. Broner when she writes: "We could be the most radical force of all, refusing to allow drawn borders to separate us, insisting that all maps are wrong and that our experiences be translated, transferred from one tongue to another."¹⁰ The same tune of change rings in the forceful statements of the Three Marias:

Those who draw closer to us or spy on us can already hear, between this exercise of ours and the patterns that each of us is tracing in her life, the surging tides of love that are swelling between us, tides not of nostalgia or of vengeance, but rather,

8) B. Marie Perinbam, "Creative Women and Changing Societies: Some Perspectives from the American Historical Profession", Paper prepared for the UNITAR Seminar.

9) Keiko Higuchi, "Bringing up Girls-Status of Women in Japan", Paper prepared for the UNITAR Seminar.

10) E.M. Broner, "The Creative, Changing Women in Traditional Societies", Paper prepared for the UNITAR Seminar.

like those between mothers and daughters of one and the same house, or what is even more scandalous, like those between women workers confronted with the same resistant material, competent workers, competing and drowning cares and setting our boots down at the edge of the bed, living the disciplined life of the barracks or the convent, withdrawn from the world; guarding against the corruption of hierarchies and strict rules, instituting the law of a new sister (brother)hood—do outsiders realize the danger?¹¹

It may be a danger. It is also a tremendous challenge fraught with possibilities. Who will be afraid of it, if it is a changed society which is at stake?

GROUP REPORT I CREATIVE WOMEN IN POLITICAL CHANGE

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Portuguese Letters (see footnote 3).