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**WOMEN, CULTURES AND
DEVELOPMENT: VIEWS
FROM LATIN AMERICA**

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT**



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	5
1. The background: metamorphoses in the Latin American ethos	7
2. Culture and development	10
3. Women and cultures: the traditional roles	12
4. Women at the crossroads between cultures: contemporary roles	19
5. Conclusion: towards a more astute interaction	26
Notes	28

Introduction

Some months ago the Women and Development Unit of the Social Development Division organized an expert meeting on the cultural aspects of the participation of women in Latin American and Caribbean development. Participants included experts from several countries of the region (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Cuba). The present document attempts to summarize some of the discussions held and papers presented at the meeting and to cover some of the most significant issues that arose in relation to Latin American cultures, women and development.

The paper has been divided into several sections, the first of which attempts to place the cultural debate on Latin American identities in the context of the current changes in the world situation, both at the political level and at the level of ideas, and to examine the resultant upheavals undergone by the Latin American ethos. The second raises the question of culture as a genuine component of the development plans of the region, and asserts that if culture is regarded from women's perspective, it is circumscribed mainly to the consideration of its day-to-day aspects. The third section deals with those areas that have been traditionally occupied by women in the culture of Latin America, and highlights in particular the subject of maternity and its particular characteristics in the region. The next section examines the subject of Latin American women today as "subjects trapped between cultures" -exposed both to the changes inherent in contemporary society and to the rich and complex substrata which in some measure will determine the effectiveness of their responses to the challenges of global changes-, and presents an illustrative list of the new cultural spaces which they now occupy. Finally, and in conclusion, the study briefly examines the interaction between cultures and the contribution which women have made and can make to a more advantageous participation by the region in today's changing world.

This is a preliminary version of the document and is intended to elicit comments with a view to complementing and improving it.

1. The background: metamorphoses in the Latin American ethos

This paper is being prepared at a time when a change is evident in the way in which the subject of cultural identities in Latin America is understood and perceived. This change does not seem to flow from the reasoning implicit in earlier thinking, but appears rather to be the effect of external events—ideological and political upheavals in the world, economic crisis in the region— which have exceeded many heretofore observed limits and certain established lines of thinking on the subject. One may even speak of a crisis of the Latin American ethos, if this is understood—as it was in the 1960s and much of the 1970s— as "a vocation for the historical construction of our utopia",¹ whose privileged spokesmen were artists and intellectuals. It is too late now for triumphalist discourses, and a retreat is being observed towards less schematic positions and towards a search for different codes from those provided by the major interpretative doctrines that until recently predominated in public life.²

Latin American intellectuals have in the past embraced with great enthusiasm the subject of national and regional identity, and in some cases have even claimed to represent it. Many of the region's creative minds have in fact been major political spokesmen. The common ground achieved at the cultural level has been described as a "feat of continental integration not achieved at other levels".³ Throughout this century, Latin American culture has often been perceived as an awakening of a regional consciousness, the precursor, herald or even catalyst of historical changes. Sources from outside the region, for example, have pointed to the essayist vocation of the major Latin American novels (Leenhardt), and more than one author has stated that "the cultural identity of Latin America has been largely defined by its novels".⁴ In this regard, special mention must be made of poetry, and in particular the representational efforts of America—and of the creation of a Latin American consciousness— undertaken by Neruda, Cardenal and others. Nor should the visual arts, beginning with the muralism of Mexico, be forgotten.

The relationship between intellectual culture and the heightened consciousness of national and regional identities was not limited to Spanish-speaking Latin America. At different periods of the century, Brazilian intellectuals were also "for the moment convinced that ideas directly determined the course of history". With respect to art, in the words of the film producer Arnold Jabor, there was "a

special, extraordinary, infantile, noble, delightfully ridiculous belief in the power of art to bring about change. Never, in any other part of the world, has such great faith been placed in art as a political force ... perhaps [this may be] the only patented creation of Latin America..."⁵

As is well known, the world of culture experiences pendular swings. The current period is characterized chiefly by perplexity and confusion. The swing towards anti-utopian thinking is expressed, for example, in such statements as "every time man attempts to create heaven on earth, the result is hell".⁶ Against such a background, less programmatic works are once again coming into vogue and are being created; there has been a return to more private, more intimate and at times more ironic dimensions. Graphically speaking, for some time now eyes have been turning away from the work of Diego Rivera to that of Frida Kahlo. There is thus little risk involved in establishing a link between the temporary exhaustion of the all-embracing epic impulses (in literature and in the visual arts) and the end to the advocacy of Latin Americanist utopias, brought about by "the loss of value of certain traditional ideologies as a compact body" which José Medina Echavarría had foreseen as a possibility.⁷

Mention should also be made of a certain unease, doubts as to the capacity of artists and intellectuals to validly assume, without question, the task of fully representing peoples and nations. The diversity of perspectives and interests among groups not yet incorporated into the frameworks of analysis is currently being recognized; "cultured" discourse contains references to antagonisms (such as those arising from ethnicity, age and gender) which cannot be defined with reference to class distinctions. The widespread use of expressions such as "civil society" or (in election terms, in Chile) "la gente" "people" -where "el pueblo" "the people" would have been used before- is an indication of this unease. The following observation made with respect to Brazil may perhaps be extended to other countries: "at the present time, democracy in no way promotes the great unifying myths [...] the agreements and compromises which it requires prevent any social group from seeking to monopolize the representation of the nation".⁸

The Latin American ethos, if thought of as a comprehensive and all-inclusive construction, has experienced its fits and starts, and it is perhaps this phenomenon that best characterizes its current situation. If it is borne in mind that the region consists not only of territories, peoples and governments, but also of constant efforts to articulate meanings, to create exemplary stories and symbolic systems that are capable of generating loyalties and ties,⁹ then it can be seen that it is this activity that is changing its modalities. This fact is not at all surprising, in view of the magnitude and rapidity of upheavals occurring throughout the world, which necessitate a re-examination of many of the issues in the debate on Latin America.

Indeed, as is the case with the economy, the trend in culture is towards a detachment from territory, on the one hand, and towards

decentralization, on the other. Culture these days recognizes no unifying axis, whether of class, ethnicity, gender, history or ideology: attempts to impose such an axis "are seen as reductionist, dangerously totalitarian or purely rhetorical". To speak of culture today is to refer to something more complex and varied, which reflects the heterogeneous components of society: it exists in official forums and in the marketplace, in rural traditions and urban fashions, in the educational system and in the communications media, unfettered by frontiers. In these circumstances, it has been said that "national identities are built upon the decentralization of culture and its detachment from a given territory, accompanied by an ever-widening process of incorporation into international markets".¹⁰ If the identities of groups were based on the sharing of a territory and of objects, monuments and rituals -having a region, a country, a city, a neighbourhood- it is pertinent to ask what remains of these in an era of decentralization and worldwide expansion of large enterprises, of the transnationalization of communications and multidirectional migrations.¹¹ Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this flux in the Latin American ethos is to be found today in experiences in the most diverse fields -from the visual arts to the economy- in the area of frontiers, borders, traffic: in that sphere that combines the "specific local" with the global,¹² and which appears to be the grand scenario for the changes of our time.

In this regard, the Caribbean experience deserves a separate paragraph. A region of multiple languages and cultures, the population as a whole, "beyond class distinctions [...], except in the cases of Haiti and Suriname [operates] in both the dominant and dominated cultures and languages".¹³ The great diversity of ethno-cultural substrata and the immediacy of the presence of the colonizing powers combine to give their experience very specific characteristics, which situate this experience at a point where it "exacerbates" the problem of juxtapositions and transculturation. (Here one cannot fail to mention the novels of V. S. Naipaul, for example.) Because of this characteristic, a figure like that of Aimé Césaire has been seen as a representative of an experience that is not only Caribbean but also pioneering at the world level: that of the possibility of an "organic culture, re-conceived as inventive process of or creolized 'inter-culture'", which from a history of degradation, mimicry and violence -but also of rebelliousness, syncretism and creativity- is capable of developing an inventive and mobile cultural identity, not necessarily rooted in ancestral plots, which lives by pollination, by (historical) transplanting.¹⁴

Against this background, therefore, the theme of the cultural dimension of the Latin American experience is fully included in the description of the contemporary situation in general, in a future dimension which is more than mere aspiration. There is no question of dreaming up a new project to create a heaven on earth, a new utopia: the circumstances seem to impose an awareness that the future presents certain characteristics which do not depend to any great extent on individual will or national or regional projects or plans, but

above all on changes and balances of a universal nature which affect all countries and regions. Perhaps in the context of the countries so often described as "third world", the distinguishing characteristic of Latin America should be the cultural element: the experience of five hundred years of continued incursion of the foreign and the new, which has produced a history full of clues to subjects which, like the crossing of the Indian and white races, hybridization, syncretism and transculturation, today transcend the problems of Latin America and have acquired new cultural currency in a world that is being increasingly internationalized.

2. Culture and development

The pendular swings in the field of culture cannot erase the fact that time as it refers to the rhythm of cultural changes, the periods over which they occur is very different from the concept of time in economic terms. While in the economy, "long-term" may mean ten years, cultural changes take place in the "particularly slow (history) of civilizations, in their abysmal depths", to use the words of Braudel.¹⁵ It is perhaps for this reason that the cultural dimensions of societies are in the final analysis something that is often associated with the notion of the "mysterious": there is no rationality which in and of itself could embrace them all at a given moment in time.

This may be one of the factors that makes it so difficult to integrate these dimensions into development proposals. Historically speaking, economic and technological changes have not as yet generated parallel and simultaneous changes in cultural patterns. It would perhaps be too simplistic to merely state that cultural models are outdated with respect to the changes which the society is actually undergoing as a result of the diverse effects of modernization. It is clear that the problem is more complex, particularly in Latin America. Changes in the economic or educational field certainly do not take place in a vacuum and the direction of such changes will depend on the relationship which they finally establish with the many pre-existing substrata: the difficult task of the cultural analysis is to get to know these substrata, to capture the diversity that characterizes them in different countries and places, to characterize the changes brought about by the process of transformation, to link both aspects and to form ideas about the nature of the interaction that exists or that could develop between them, from the perspective of the development of our societies. Together with the criterion of reality inherent in the "convergence of interests", "development [...] must come to grips with the criterion of reality that stems from the cultural question".¹⁶

As a criterion of reality, the cultural question is an inescapable dimension of proposals for development and change. A systemic approach to competitiveness, for example, under which companies are

positioned within a network of linkages with the educational system, technological, energy and transport infrastructure, and all the other aspects that comprise the socio-economic system,¹⁷ necessarily raises the question of the cultural substrata. These have a significant impact on education, labour relations and institutions; over and above the uniformity of terms used in the explicit declarations of principles, they help to determine the specific content which expressions such as "pluralism", "democracy", and "equality" will acquire in a given society; to describe how the poor themselves view their situation; to establish standards for the quality of life, and other development-related aspects which place development within the framework of the region's social and political history.

From this development perspective, at what levels can one seek responses to the cultural question? So far the custom has been to have recourse to literature, and to the written word in general: throughout history, literature has expressed the awareness felt by intellectuals of the Latin American cultural identity and the various continental projects and images presented through essays, novels or poetry.¹⁸ It is commonly held that the "mirror of Latin American identity" ¹⁹ throughout its history has been in that dimension of culture, and it is certain that "written culture", homogenized and constructed by history and criticism, is one aspect of the growing interest in research into the Latin American question.

The thrust of this study -in which the subject of culture is interlinked with that of women and development- suggests, however, other dimensions as well. As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the Latin American ethos, in general, which is based on a sort of Latin Americanist and utopian macro-narrative, has undergone a number of changes, and it is recognized in many quarters that the "culture of the text", and of the recognized and predominant text, does not contain all the keys to the Latin American reality.

A renewal of interest has been noted in oral cultures, up to recently the preferred vehicle of identity for large sectors of the region's population.²⁰ This means that greater value is being attached to popular, Amerindian or Afro-American cultural forms whose access to the written text -where such access existed- has been problematic, to say the least. It has been recognized that the plurality of cultures, sometimes within the same nation, "has been the form of existence of our culture since at least the fifteenth century".²¹ Moreover, the complexities of the culture of the written text have been pointed out: "in a single society, elements are functioning at the same time which are part of the popular system, the cultured system, elements inherited from previous systems, elements that are precursors of new systems and residual elements".²² Within a conception of culture that is becoming increasingly pluralistic, and in which diversity is becoming a value in itself, more and more efforts are being made to "rescue" the different forms of culture that have been present in the "network of negotiations that take place in a dynamic society", although their role in this network has not been a dominant one. One may thus conceive of and attach value to the existence of

"synchronic, dialogic, relational and interactive cultural practices", which include "subjects whose ethnic and gender identifications" are not the same as those that have predominated in the written word.²³

It is from this perspective on culture that the question of the cultural production of women is approached, and it is also this perspective that can link this production to the development of a society. In doing so, the expression "cultural production" is defined differently. It loses the emphasis which links it in the first place to "the learned city"²⁴ and to the "tradition of the text",²⁵ and opens itself up to other dimensions of the Latin American ethos in which women have had a greater and more decisive presence.

The sections that follow deal with the subject of the presence of women, first in the traditional roles which they have played in Latin American cultures, and then in their current roles, within the process of transformation. Latin American women today are thus perceived as subjects at the crossroads "between cultures", in contact both with the dramatic social and technological changes that characterize our time and with the rich and complex cultural substrata which, to some extent, will determine the quality of their responses to the challenges of global transformations.

3. Women and cultures: the traditional roles

a) *Outsiders in "the art of letters"*

Relegated to the traditional ambit of culture, i.e., the "art of letters", by the "ruling intellectual elite" (according to Angel Rama),²⁶ the presence of women has given rise to a clearly uncomfortable situation. Whether as a rhetorical artifice, as a defence mechanism or as any other "stratagem of the weak",²⁷ the most distinguished women of Latin American letters have had to "mind their place" -which is that of an inferior- in taking to the written word. Two examples, because of their transcendence, suffice: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Gabriela Mistral. One from Mexico and colonial times and the other from Chile and our century, these two women, though highly skilled, explicitly put themselves down as regards the art of letters. Sor Juana, seeking to keep out of trouble with the Inquisition, declares that she is ignorant, and adds her famous statement: "What do we women know but our homespun philosophies?"²⁸ Gabriela Mistral, for her part, says in connection with her poetry on the Americas, that she "stutters on the subject to announce her presence to men, that is, to those who are better endowed than we are" and that, "as on other occasions, I confront the ridiculous with the smile of the rural woman when she ruins her strawberry bed or spoils her grape syrup on the fire...".²⁹ These statements, coming as they do from figures whose competence in the literary

field needs no defence, speak volumes. The subject of being "out of place" is strangely enough present in the work of both of them, and both relegate themselves to areas considered the proper place for women: the kitchen and the family garden, for example.

There is no need to enter here into the numerous contemporary critical studies analysing the situation of women in relation to "the art of letters".³⁰ In keeping with the focus of this document, it is important only to note the distance between women and the public discourse prevailing at any period of Latin American history. Access to the language of women "was born of whisperings and murmurings, retracing the microphonic world of high sounding truths [...]. Their relationship to the martiality of the established discourses has always been low-key and indirect...".³¹ For example, a critical interpretation of Mexican culture from the perspective of women published last year speaks of the struggle for interpretative power, often outside the orthodox genres, in correspondence or biographies; it refers to women who established "low-key and indirect" relationships with the discourse of religion, during the colonial period, with the discourse of nationalism later on, and then with the discourse of modernization. The nuns of the colonial period established this relationship in literature and in autobiography. Antonieta Rivas Mercado "inexplicably" leaves behind years of correspondence, piercing herself with a suicide bullet which simultaneously perforates both her body and the "messianic" discourse of Vasconcelos. Frida Kahlo, when painting, "uses her mutilated body to call into question a system of representation that still identified women with nature".³² Thus, and even in the examples closest to our time, the notion has been forming of a disharmony, a muffled discordance, between the experiences of women and the expressions of the predominant intellectual culture.

This notion of disharmony, or lack of fit, places the expressions of Latin American women within the framework of the interest in the cultural codes found in "a low-key and indirect" relationship with the culture "of the text": it situates them alongside popular, Amerindian or Afro-American cultural expressions whose access to the written word has been problematic, and consequently also makes them reserves of potentially creative cultural differences. They are thereby transformed into elements of the definition a Latin American identity that is increasingly pluralistic, closer to the hushed multiplicity of the real and further from the "microphonic world of high-sounding truths", where not all the dimensions of the Latin American ethos are found.

b) *Their own terrain*

Preoccupation with the question of Latin American culture has other dimensions if culture is viewed, from a different perspective, "within the framework of a broad reality, which embraces family and sexual relations, food, clothing, dance, reward and punishment,

monuments and floral arrangements, the psyche and political life, love, laws and desires as they are affirmed, denied, expressed, or finally enter into play in the process of communication", as Carlos Fuentes sought to express it vividly, based on a second and more anthropological meaning of the word culture.³³

From this second perspective, "culture" refers to a way of life (a manner of being) and to a certainty: being certain of what to do and how to do it, of what is good and what is evil, both in nature and in other human beings. It refers to a manner of being and to certainties that are acquired, transmitted and changed over time, and which are manifested in products, instruments and inventions, according to the pedagogical definitions prepared by the competent international organizations.³⁴

It is within the framework of this definition of culture that women have traditionally had their own space. The nature of this space is also a cultural question: it is not always "the private" in conceptual opposition to "the public". We read that in some Latin American indigenous cultures, the market was the preserve of women and access to it was prohibited to men, unless they were foreigners. There are production and trade activities which cannot be seen as being limited to the domestic ambit, although they are not adequately reflected in the indicators. Common experience certainly indicates that traditionally men were also excluded from certain spaces and activities of a domestic nature, generally the kitchen, and that the socialization of children, up to a certain age, was the responsibility of women, together with nursing care and indigenous forms of medicine, amongst many peoples. Generally speaking, the house (as opposed to the street) has been traditionally considered the woman's domain: and this has extended to the street whenever the family's survival needs have so required.

In Latin America, the traditionally female area has been far from a space of weakness or inadequacy. Indigenous cultures were and are a cultural substratum that is close to the socialization process in a very large number of countries: not only among the indigenous population, but certainly among the mixed population (and also among the population that does not acknowledge itself as mixed, but which has entrusted the care and early socialization of its children to women of the "mestizo" or indigenous culture). In this substratum, the feminine was not regarded as being only that which was deprived of masculinity, "the other" as defined from the point of view of the man. On the contrary: in the Andean culture, for example, in which symmetrical relationships prevail, complementarity is part of the world view: while it is true that men are responsible for the rituals, this functions basically "to achieve a balance of power between the two sexes",³⁵ since the woman is thought to be endowed with the fundamental power of reproducing life.

It should be recalled that the proximity of man to woman does not occur only in the sexual relationship of the couple, but also and more particularly in two relationships of overwhelming dependency, in which the survival of the individual is at stake: that of the child

with his mother (early in life), and that of the sick person with the person caring for him (late in life). In these extreme situations--birth and infancy, sexual copulation, decline and death--the male cannot but experience in the most visceral manner the power of the female. The contradiction between life and death defines social life, the central question which each culture grapples with and attempts to understand.³⁶ At the symbolic level, this contradiction is indissolubly linked to the male/female relationship, and the most diverse cultures give clear testimony of this. In so doing, they define a fundamental part of their identity.

What could the cultural specificity be in the man/woman relationship in Latin America? The enormity of the question precludes a response. The first thing to remember is, of course, the great diversity of situations existing within the region. To speak of "the Latin American woman" is a risk in itself. There are several rhetorical questions to be asked: "Are we speaking of the Latin American woman when we identify a woman of Aymara cultural heritage with one of Polish-Argentine heritage?"³⁷ Apart from the diversity of the cultural and ethnic substrata, historical changes, as well as factors of class and age (to name only the most obvious) make it necessary to exercise great care and caution.

It would be useful, however, to recall a number of elements that provide much food for thought. The traditional role of women, like many other aspects of Latin American culture, is defined by the original fact of the conquest and inter-breeding. The popular Latin American view of women reflects these realities, vivid testimony of which is given, for example, in the essay *El Laberinto de la soledad*, by Octavio Paz, a work of fundamental importance in Latin American culture. The key element in the relationship between the conquest and inter-breeding is the maternal figure, in which the contradictions and ambivalences of the Latin American as regards his condition as such have been concentrated ("we condemn our origin and deny our hybridization"). The opposition analysed by Paz (the closed male world, highly valued in opposition to the open female world, judged of little value) places the problem of the "children of Malinche", who is both a mother who has been the victim of violence, and at the same time a mother who acts as an accomplice of the conquistador and an accessory to the violence that is done to her.³⁸ It also traces the tragic picture of the Latin American male, whose flawed imaginary identification with the Spanish conquistador,³⁹ makes him "indifferent to the offspring he engenders".

Within this framework, the central figure is that of the woman as mother, because of her endless capacity for ambivalence. Within the symbolic framework thus elaborated, the son owes her both his life and his sustenance, but he also owes her something which he experiences as a feeling of shame for his origins, the need to hide his mixed heritage. Recent studies point to the importance of the veneration of the Virgin Mary as a form of imaginary reconciliation of this conflict: a virgin mother, a protective and nurturing mother, but free from original sin. In this figure, through a process of

syncretism that is very peculiar to the regional culture, the Virgin of Catholicism (as mediator between man and God) is brought together with the female divinities of the indigenous cultures, the latter not as mediators but as goddesses in their own right. "Guadalupe in Mexico, Copacabana in Bolivia, La Tirana and the Virgin of Andacollo in Chile, among others, are examples of a worship that extends throughout the Americas. The "mestizo" virgin/mother was held up as the core of the original identity of orphans, "huachos" (fatherless children) and "mestizos" who found in her the possibility of a ritual congregation...".⁴⁰

From the perspective of the preservation of a way of life and a certainty of knowledge, women who are mothers play a major role in all social strata and in different ethnic groups. This "domestic" role includes a very strong socializing element: determining what should be done and how to do it, what is good and what is bad, a form of knowledge which is transmitted far above and beyond pedagogical discourses. This knowledge transmitted through the maternal link is of particular importance within social groups that are not dominant, inasmuch as it is knowledge that does not coincide with the knowledge transmitted through the educational system or through normal channels of communication. Women have primary responsibility for the custodianship and transmission of oral culture, which is the basis of the identity of grass-roots groups, of local traditions and of the various ethnic groups. In the case of the last-mentioned, the way language is transmitted is fully expressed in the term "mother tongue". Among the indigenous Andean people, for example, women were the ones responsible for maintaining the traditions, while the men assumed responsibility for relations with the outside world.⁴¹ Finally, the cultural influence of "mestizo" women was not limited to the working classes: it should be recalled that in most Latin American countries one of their traditional tasks has been to substitute for the mother in the raising and early socialization of children from the upper classes. Indeed, these children -and the literary evidence is abundant- have been subjected to a dual expression of maternity and to a dual class membership in the early stages of their lives.⁴²

Maternity, in its multiple dimensions, is thus the principal traditional preserve of power and presence for Latin American women who, at the level of daily life, have had to strive for self-sufficiency and the protection of their children, and, at the symbolic level, have successfully assumed a key, sacred role. This is their own territory, their undisputed turf, and one that confers social legitimacy to their other roles which are regarded as an extension of the maternal role (nursing, teaching, charitable activities in general). If the power play within the society were to be seen as a zero sum game, the shift by women to other, more public spheres of power and activity should be measured not only in terms of space conquered, but also in terms of space lost, considering the social value traditionally assigned to these spaces.

The cost of the unchallenged proprietorship of maternity must also be taken into account; in other words, the price women have paid for their own territory. The hypertrophy of maternity has meant the assumption of an overwhelming burden, in comparison with the workload associated with the European family pattern. The lack of paternal presence or responsibility has created an age-old cultural expectation, which in many cases has been a real need: the woman has had to be capable of assuming sole responsibility for the family, both in caring for the children and in working to support them.⁴³

From the point of view of relations between the couple, recent anthropological studies have shown that in the Latin American culture, gender differentiation has meant that every woman is viewed as a mother, and every man as the son of a mother. "The son/mother relationship will eclipse the ties between a man and a woman ..." and "a secondary drama" will thus be played out: it is impossible to think of oneself as a man or a woman; "being a mother and a son are the symbolic categories assigned to females and males respectively. This leads to the development of a relationship between the sexes that is never symmetrical and which leaves both men and women in solitude".⁴⁴

If children are viewed from this perspective, it is easy to see the difficulties that have been caused by the relationship with a mother whose role has hypertrophied, both at the level of everyday life and at the symbolic and sacrificial level. Love for the mother has been immense: she has been shelter, food, protection, indulgence ("pura yema infantil innumerable, madre", in the words of the poet, Cesar Vallejo), the only close role model, a model of abnegation. "The average woman will emerge as self-denying and hardworking ... solitary and self-sufficient. This of course does not apply to the wife of the mestizo, but to his mother."⁴⁵ The *mater admirabilis*, revered for her sacrifice and for the absence of the father, has encouraged on the one hand an unlimited dependence, and, on the other, an overwhelming sense of guilt: the son has been the vindication of all the things the mother has lacked. To leave behind this magnified mother, to grow and assume an adult role, must have been a most difficult task in that cultural context. "This places the problem of the definition of what it means to be male in the Latin American ethos in ambiguous and emotional territory."⁴⁶ The same of course can be said of the traditional definition of what it means to be female.

The dominant role of the mother in the Latin American ethos introduces a very special variant into the analysis of the development of patriarchy as a model of socialization. Cultural syncretism modified in practice -although not in public discourses, as will be seen- the role of women within the patriarchal model. In practice women took on far-reaching responsibilities and thus acquired a form of power that found neither expression nor equivalent in the written cultures of the societies. One area of explicit power has existed in written discourse and public social intercourse, and another in the hidden and silent power, at most the object of murmurings and idle

chatter, invisible, kept alive by the co-existence of various generations of women and exercised in a manner that was often unconscious and "natural".⁴⁷

c) *The invisibility of their own terrain*

Nevertheless, the "hidden power" of Latin American women was precisely characterized by being a "counterpower". Latin American cultures share with some of their cultures of origin a world view whose features began to take shape in the colonial period in the written discourse. At that time, "the antithesis was used as an important modality of conceptualization and knowledge".⁴⁸ The values of culture were masculine, gentlemanly and Christian, and on this basis they were defined by opposition to all the "others", particularly the Amerindians. "The paradigm of female characteristics was more frequently used to represent the culturally deficient": vulnerability, "the womanly dim-wittedness" of American natives, the lack of development of the rational faculties, their proclivity for things emotional, their sensuality, all of which justified the constant need for supervision and instruction on the part of their conquerors. In his writings, "the colonial American erased foreign characterizations which identified him with nature, passion, the feminine, the domestic, the rustic and the pagan, in order to identify himself with opposite values: culture, reason, the manly, the public, the courtly or gentlemanly, the Christian". This list is eloquent in that it identifies the symbolic place from which the discourse of educated writers in the region on the subject of women began to be constructed, from the perspective of "the other" and the inferior.⁴⁹

This perspective deserves particular attention, albeit brief, since it has been said, with good reason, that the written word has had "a splendorous imperial history on the continent", and has existed in Latin America "as the only genuine word, in opposition to the spoken word which belonged to the domain of the uncertain and the precarious". Latin American cultures, like their cities, have been "consigned since their origins to a double life": in the face of "particularity, imagination and local invention", which are peculiar to the oral tradition, writing "assumed a superior, self-justifying position: it designed a well thought-out project to which reality had to conform".⁵⁰ Moreover, any attempt to resist, challenge or overcome the imposition of the written word has to use writing itself as a vehicle, which renders even more problematical the expression of any form of oral culture.

The invisibility and undervaluation of the contribution of women is related to this "double life". Thus it is that a schism develops between the learned culture, bearer of the spirit, and the material conditions of life; there is a deliberate omission of the "culpable connection with life, blindly and rigorously perpetuated", and a "concealment of the submission of man to the concrete form of reproduction of his life".⁵¹ As a result, the traditional activity of women

is consigned to the dark, ignored, despised side of this binary world: an activity of which no notice is taken, except when it is absent, an activity that is culturally invisible, which it is thought can never be expressed in units of measurement, because its results do not seem quantifiable.

4. Women at the crossroads between cultures: contemporary roles

This section will briefly examine some of the roles which women play in the social space, in relation to the most recent cultural changes in the region (to which reference was made in sections 2 and 3). The above-mentioned sections have dealt with the dizzying pace of change in cultural parameters and an unprecedented acceleration of the processes of transculturation, all stimulated by technological progress. It is clear that these changes in the world, together with the specific changes in the functions fulfilled by women and in the roles which they play in society, make women what someone referred to as "unexpected social subjects",⁵² the consideration of whom has hardly begun.

It is also clear that women are no longer bound by their traditional roles. The notion that access to written culture is only exceptional for women is now outdated: rather, from now on the differences which they create and have created within that culture are being researched. In addition, changes associated with birth control, paid work and education have greatly modified the image and scope of the activities of women, thereby producing major changes in the family and in the socialization of children; the same maternal space is now a field of study and at times a source of puzzlement, since it cannot be fully understood through its traditions alone, and shifts within it produce major symbolic disruptions, both in the "culture of the text" and in the silent culture of actual practices. "The search for the identity of the male or female is imposed by culture in order to assign positions and functions to the members of a social group. The loss of the difference, which made the dynamic harmony of a binary world possible, has brought us all to a crisis situation ... Culture is confronted with a kind of cultural trans-sexualization ... for which new extrapolations must be discovered."⁵³

The following pages tentatively examine some of these possible new "extrapolations", and their aim is above all to indicate some aspects of cultural change that may be borne in mind in the collection of data and in making development proposals. Since in the previous section reference was made to the "traditional roles" of women in culture, this section attempts to focus on some of the areas in which cultural changes are most significant. This is naturally a very preliminary list, for purposes of illustration.

a) *Presence of women in the international arena*

Spectacularly visible changes have occurred in the status of women during the present century. The meeting of the demands of women for access to public spheres, from the local and national to that of international organizations, has responded to the recognition of their political birthright, and to their increasing presence in the world of paid work and production. The traditional division between male and female spaces had been established in practice, and the manifestation of this reality at the institutional level could not help but come sooner or later.

Thanks to the efforts of women's movements and to the international and national awareness which these very movements have created, in the last twenty or more years the demands of women have been accorded a degree of recognition at the national and international levels. Within the United Nations, the most notable expression of this was the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, which ended in 1985. Its prolongation in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women still offers much hope for the increased participation of women. However, the subject of women has only rarely managed to establish a presence beyond a ritual one in declarations and documents which are not specifically devoted to the subject.

The question of the participation of women in development in Latin America and the Caribbean has usually been approached, with good reason, as a problem related to equity. During the Decade, the demands of women for education, employment, health, civil and penal legislation, representation in decision-making bodies and political participation have led to action and studies, and in many cases to significant progress, as described in other ECLAC documents. The main concern in these cases has been to correct, using different approaches, situations of inequality and discrimination of which women have been the victims, and which were incompatible with full-fledged citizenship. The demands were addressed to international organizations, national government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

The end of the Decade has left us with certain results that seem to pave the way for different and perhaps complementary ideas. We are still fully aware of the existence of a situation of inequality and oppression of women which transcends the frontiers of social class, and which is manifested -with certain differences- in all the countries of the region. There is no renunciation, of course, of the task of pursuing specific demands and correcting injustices. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the general views on this subject, one perceives a certain weariness with "the depicting of women as being passive victims [which] becomes a straight-jacket for any proposal for change".⁵⁴

Apart from the doubts regarding the strategic usefulness of insisting on this depiction, the ethical appeal to an authority endowed with power, although it has been very useful, has shown its

limitations and has become more difficult. The very concept of power tends to vary and to become more complex, within the framework of the setback caused by "the loss of value of certain traditional ideologies as a compact set of beliefs", to which reference was made early in the document. "Power" begins to be conceived of not as something monolithic, but rather as "multiple relationships of force, being formed and having an impact on production, the family and individuals, and being reinforced by operating together in all of these spaces."⁵⁵ It is in these daily spaces, and not only in the spaces of discourses, that the fate of the status of women is being determined today. In this sense, as soon as some of the chief demands of women have been incorporated into the various official discourses of international organizations, national agencies and other institutions, the subject of the demands of women is transferred from the ambit of discourse to that of real day-to-day relationships, with all the complexity and ambivalence inherent therein, particularly in the field of culture. It is noteworthy how the same egalitarian official discourse can, in the case of women, co-exist with the most diverse of realities, due to the influence of the various cultural substrata.⁵⁶

At the level of day-to-day relationships, women have ceased to be victims who appeal to the ethics of a power understood as "the only source of sovereignty", and become subjects that participate in the network of transactions, negotiations, and daily skirmishes which taken together define social power. The force of this complex power depends on its capacity to produce positive results, either at a real level or at a level only of desire.⁵⁷ The traditional subordinate position of women was largely maintained while it was perceived as positive by women themselves, in many cases through the continued existence of a cultural tradition that was no longer based on reality, through illusion or through what has been called an adapted perception, which could conceal conflicts of interest.⁵⁸ The new realities have been highlighting these conflicts and forcing the previous cultural patterns to make major efforts to adapt.

b) *Technology and the role of women: cultural aspects*

A thinking already exists which has embarked upon the long road towards overcoming the age-old invisibility of women's activity, whose cultural origin was adverted to in the preceding section. One of the most interesting approaches seeks to explore and expand the concept of technology, holding to the view that technology covers not only equipment and its operational characteristics, but also the social arrangements that permit the development of productive processes. It is therefore important to have an integrated vision of the pattern of activities which, both within and outside the home, comprise the productive processes in societies.⁵⁹ Consequently, the concept of productive activity cannot be equated with that of remunerated activity: all the domestic activities performed in order to

maintain and reproduce the labour force must also be regarded as productive activities. Thus, the division of tasks between men and women in domestic units—which is culturally determined—affects the production process. It is necessary to explore with a certain thoroughness the cultural biases and stereotypes which conceal, in many cases, the "working" character of certain activities or diminish their value in relation to other, more prestigious activities. An integral view of the production process permits the deconstruction of certain notions that, while culturally persistent, are objectively false: only paid work is really work (hence the mother and housewife are considered economically "inactive"); work in the home is not considered economic activity, for example. These stereotypes hark back to a pattern of cultural discrimination against women which does not match the current situation in terms of the new awareness that exists in the society. Without the contribution of domestic labour (referred to up until recently in Chile as women's work), the current organization of labour would not be viable.

In Latin America, the skill level of the population and its capacity to participate in the ongoing process of technological innovation are the factors on which, according to the ECLAC proposal, the solidity of the region's position in the international market depends.⁶⁰ Two issues—among many possible ones—are noted here in relation to women and culture. The first has to do with the training of human resources in the region: the task of the early socialization of children, a task whose importance is being increasingly seen as vital to future performance, continues by and large to follow the traditional pattern of being in the hands of mothers, as will be seen when we come to examine the role of women in the contemporary family. In many cases mothers, to whose traditional duties is added that of paid work, find themselves in a very inadequate economic and cultural situation in terms of being able to promote in their children a minimally sufficient amount of creativity. The adverse effects of the economic crisis, which have been disproportionately borne by the poorest women in the region, aggravate a situation that is already very delicate as regards the socialization of small children and their subsequent prospects for proper integration into the labour force. In this context, two cultural determinants, which affect the way unpaid work by women is viewed, are manifested in all their starkness: such work by women is viewed, on the one hand, as elastic, "capable of stretching to compensate for any other deficit", and on the other, as economically invisible, in that, by being unpaid, it is not taken into consideration in macroeconomic decisions.⁶¹

The second issue is related to women themselves as workers, and the possibilities for the new technologies to generate new forms of labour which do not replicate the pre-existing discriminatory divisions: the importance of flexibility and cooperation over and above rigid patterns of division of labour⁶² provides an exceptional opportunity to create job opportunities in which the new tasks taken on by women can be valued at what they are really worth, free from the ghost of invisibility which has been haunting them from the cultural

past. The redefinition of jobs may relativize the traditional division of such jobs according to gender; may open up new opportunities for work at home or for part-time employment; and may enhance the value -as has already occurred- of certain skills and abilities that are more highly developed in women. From the cultural perspective, however, unbounded optimism is unjustified. The feminization of certain occupations has historically meant a reduction in their social prestige and in their remuneration.

c) *The role of women in the family: an open question*

The subject of woman as the central figure in the Latin American family, which was discussed above in relation to the Marian model and the traditional roles of women, is one which again arises, at least as an interrogative, when considering the contemporary situation of women in the region. From various perspectives, and particularly if conditions are difficult, certain scattered, repeated indications may be seen in this connection. A study undertaken in Antioquia, Colombia, in 1980, concludes that the male no longer fulfils the role of sole provider, and that he must rely on the contribution of other family members; that women perform, in addition, all domestic chores, and that the mother "continues to exercise an indisputable leadership within the home", the life of which revolves around her, while the role of the father is becoming increasingly ancillary.⁶³ In Ceará, Brazil, despite the model in which the man is held up as the provider, in practice the family relies increasingly on the participation of women, and in the cities, 33% of all families are supported by women.⁶⁴ It is interesting to note also that the same study shows that women continue to perform the domestic chores while recognizing the man as head of the family: one thus observes the existence of a "subjective patriarchy", a cultural remnant that has persisted despite objective changes. The same phenomenon is present in Haiti: "although the large majority of families are not constituted as nuclear families, the reference to the traditional values in relation to the sexes has not lost its validity".⁶⁵ These testimonies, though very partial, are eloquent because of the geographical distribution of their sources. They point to a theme that is very concrete in relation to the reality of Latin American women: it is very possible that cultural factors may tend to conceal in censuses and surveys the true dimension of women's contribution to the household. The fact of being a man, and not that of being a provider, seems to be in many cases that which defines the status of head of household. Even so, existing data indicate that a significant proportion of Latin American households report women as their head, which suggests in addition that the cultural stereotype according to which the salary of women is generally thought of as a "supplement" to other family income is far from being true for the region.

Also in very general terms, the hypothesis may be advanced that the very composition of families does not always correspond to the

model of the nuclear family, and at times not even to the most common model of the extended family. Particularly in situations of extreme poverty, families develop into associations for survival and solidarity, in which the consanguinary links, while extremely important, are not always the decisive factor.⁶⁶ Families become an irreplaceable mechanism for daily subsistence:⁶⁷ they make it possible for young mothers to work, leaving her children in the care of others; they take responsibility for the aged and the sick who have no access to social security, thus assuming a series of duties which would be very costly if they had to be paid for by the community. In these families, thus understood, women generally assume leading roles, and there is a marked absence of responsible male figures. The existence of these non-conventional family patterns would be of interest for statistical research, in the first place, and secondly, where the numbers justify it, for an analysis of their effects on life in countries in such areas as the socialization of new generations, employment and social security.

d) *Extrapolation from the traditional roles*

As mentioned before, in daily experience the former, stricter demarcations between the roles of men and women have been gradually fading. It is interesting to note, however, from a cultural point of view, that the weight of traditional roles and their symbolic prestige have been taken very much into account by women themselves when it is a question of strategies for conquering new spaces, particularly in situations of confrontation. Thus it is that in these times of transition from one set of cultural norms to another, women are entering the space "of the street" as an extension of their traditional roles: as mothers, for example, in the famous case of the Plaza de Mayo. In that case, the canonical role of the mother, which is peculiar to the space of the home, shifted towards the other space, thus creating a disquieting situation. In appearing as mothers in search of their children they were endowed with a legitimacy irrefutable even for the most conservative, which made the job of repression symbolically even more costly. This strategy, known as "symbolic identification", is along the lines of the strategies of "accompaniment" (of the movement of the Bartolina Sisa women in Bolivia), or of "gradual extension", in which women extend their domestic role to include not only their home, but also contiguous spaces, joining together to obtain improvements in their concrete living conditions.⁶⁸ In all of these cases, the traditional roles of women are being used as bases to affirm the conquest of broader areas of action for these "unexpected social subjects".

e) *"No man's land: the domain of affection"*⁶⁹

The entrance of women as social protagonists in many new spaces -those mentioned are but a small part of a conversation which has hardly begun- may lead to the neglect of other spaces, transforming them into "no man's land". It is clear that women are being incorporated at an increasingly rapid pace into the spaces of productive and cultural change; into public spaces in general, and even, within the family itself, into non-traditional functions. The fairness and appropriateness of this incorporation are no longer open to question. On the other hand, if unpaid female labour is given greater value as a part of the productive process of a society, and if there is greater awareness of the major contribution that has been made throughout the years by women to social life, it is possible to ask oneself how the shift of women to new areas of action has changed things, and who tends to occupy the spaces that have gone unattended.

The ambit of early socialization, up to now a basically maternal function, is one of these spaces. The need to occupy it creates great conflicts. At the individual level, these affect mothers who have paying jobs; at the social level, they point to a conflict of interest between at least two different types of rationalities. It is true that for companies, economic rationality indicates that their female employees, whether or not they are responsible for the care of small children, should maintain a certain level of production in order to receive a given remuneration; the adoption of measures that favour mothers has the adverse effect of devaluing female employment in the labour market. It is also true, from another point of view, that the social cost of leaving children unattended is enormous: failure to take precautions against diseases, absence of adequate and timely developmental stimulation and lack of affection are all reflected later in the need for onerous and difficult treatment and rehabilitation, or directly in marginalization and delinquency.

Integration into the society, in which the mother and the family in general traditionally played a very important role, is today accomplished with the participation of many other agents, especially the communications media and peer groups. Generation gaps are thus accentuated and areas of loneliness and lack of communication created, which in the case of the elderly can attain tragic proportions. In view of the nature of the mass media in the region, and above all of television (the "electronic baby-sitter"), a standardized socialization is also being encouraged, the net result of which seems to be to subsume differences of class, ethnic origin and groups -which have hitherto been reinforced by maternal socialization- and to promote patterns of behaviour and values of a transnational nature. In this regard, of particular note is the proposed standardization of consumption patterns, which for some groups might translate into a real power of acquisition, while for others it would mean a standardization of aspirations and tastes without the corresponding possibility of access to the goods. (The voyeuristic consumerism is a subject which certainly deserves deeper study in the Latin American region.)

Other aspects traditionally linked to the woman's sphere of influence, such as group ties through family alliances, the consolidation of non-economic relations of exchange —personal favours, trust, the creation of unspecified future obligations, the exchange not of goods but of a personal readiness, above all, to respond to the needs of certain persons—⁷⁰ may also be thought of as "no man's land", which would lead to a situation in which market laws would also govern personal relationships (the prospect does not seem attractive, nor even sustainable, if account is taken of the limits of economic rationality in relation to children, the sick and the elderly, for example).

The traditional division between the spaces of males and those of females is crumbling. The binary world is no longer sustainable. However, the space which had previously been the preserve of women is an important space for humanity, and in contemporary culture, the loss of difference signals a crisis and a flexibilization of roles. No man's land is in fact the land of everyone, men and women: the collapse of the barriers between the two is also an invitation to accept a concept of the human person which is less fragmented and divided, conscious of the subject of gender, capable of entering the territory of feelings, capable of accepting and recognizing the "feminine" in men and the "masculine" in women, as well as the difference in types of productivity between the two. In the case of Latin America, and given the existing cultural substratum, this implies a very creative and profound review of the concept of maternity, which covers its generous aspects and extends them to the point of detachment ⁷¹ that permits the son to attain full adulthood. It also implies therefore a possible recovery of the terrain of more egalitarian relations between the couple, with a view to overcoming the cultural isolation of "both men and women".

5. Conclusion: towards a more astute interaction⁷²

The example of the relationship between the mass media and their audience may perhaps be a good way of introducing the subject of cultural interaction. It has been said that the space of socialization, hitherto the preserve of the family and the mother, is now largely in the power of these media. Recent studies on television viewing⁷³ give some indications that contradict the notion of passivity or victimization of television viewers. The identification with the persons and situations presented does not seem to represent a loss of identity, either individual or collective, "but rather, on the contrary, an assimilation of the unfamiliar and the new, recognized by some form of analogy with the viewer himself": on the basis of their own socio-cultural contexts, television viewers "interact with programmes to criticize them, identify their deficiencies, attach different meanings to them according to their needs or signal their expectations". They may adopt models of social behaviour, to

apply them for their own benefit in future situations, especially when the viewers belong to non-dominant groups; they may also gain access to knowledge of certain social conventions and expectations, and gain greater insight into the environment in which they are required to function. The astute -as opposed to the passive- use of television is in part a reality and in part a possibility in relation to the medium of television. The socialization thus achieved does not necessarily mean being reduced to passivity, inasmuch as the proposals may be judged by individuals or groups with mediating capacity, which receive them with an awareness of their own situation and of their own differences.

These observations concerning television may serve as an illustration for a much broader subject, which can only be touched on lightly here. The universalization of culture can lead to what someone has referred to as the "drab standardization of the civilizations",⁷⁴ and what is more, if account is taken of the differences in power between the different regions of the globe, to the terrible vision of "a permanent agony, not a total disappearance of the pre-existing culture ... which, at once present and mummified, bears witness against those that belong to it".⁷⁵ It is possible that a region like Latin America might be "irremediably excluded from its own fantasies", if these have to come from other cultures.⁷⁶

This is not, however, the only possibility. A great Latin American writer made a famous statement outlining another very different position. On accepting the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega Award, J. M. Arguedas defined himself as "a modern Quechua who, thanks to his awareness the value of his culture, was able to expand it and enrich it with knowledge, with assimilation of the art created by other peoples who had much more developed means available for expressing themselves. I am not a man of culture: I am a Peruvian who proudly, *like a happy demon*, speaks in "Christian" and in Indian, in Spanish and in Quechua". His proposal is that of an identity which is the product of an attitude of selective, critical and disturbing assimilation; an astute activity, which starts with the awareness of one's own identity of origin, whose vigour is not in the rejection of the culturally new, but in the capacity to incorporate it, taking advantage of whatever good it contains but without subordinating oneself to its perspectives. In this sense, the sad end of Arguedas is not the end of an irreverent, intelligent and dangerous activity, which today has ironic and recent expressions: the identity, for example, "of post-Mexican, pre-Chicano, pan-Latin, transplanted, artsy ... depends on the day of the week or the project in question".⁷⁷

Within this meaning of transculturation, there is special value, as a diversifying contribution, in the knowledge transmitted from generation to generation by women, and their "silent and indirect" relations with the official forms of expression of Latin American culture. It is not therefore only a question of a problem of equity or of satisfying the demands of women: rather, it is a problem of taking advantage of all the existing resources in the cultural heritage of the region, with a view to their serving to ensure that the

region "will be able to face the international dialogue and negotiations from a more favourable position than in the past", which is one of the hopes expressed in the ECLAC proposal for regional development.

Notes

¹ Ana Pizarro (undated), *Cultura y prospectiva: el imaginario de futuro en la cultura latinoamericana*, Santiago, Chile, UNITAR/PROFAL.

² Dramatic testimony is contained in Leopoldo Zea (ed.) (1986), *América Latina en sus ideas*, Paris, UNESCO. It is noteworthy that the texts included in the volume seem to have been written several years before their publication.

³ Ana Pizarro, *Cultura y prospectiva...*, op. cit.

⁴ Fernando Aínsa, "La universalidad de la identidad cultural latinoamericana", *Cultures* (special issue), Paris, UNESCO, 1986, p.52.

⁵ Both quotations are taken from George Pécaut (1989), *Entre le peuple et la nation. Les intellectuels et la politique au Brésil*, Paris, Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, pp. x and 136.

⁶ Karl Popper, quoted by Pedro Morandé, "Modernidad y cultura en Latinoamérica", *Nexo*, Buenos Aires, first quarter, March 1989.

⁷ Quoted by Ernesto Ottone (1990), "El nuevo escenario internacional. Reflexiones en torno a un ensayo de don José Medina Echavarría", Santiago, Chile, mimeo. The text refers, *inter alia*, to the "loss of the central character of bipolarism and the increasing complexity of the spheres of power in the world", the loss of the autarky which is "counterposed to the general trend of things, not only on account of its unrealistic approach to the realities of science, technology, economics and communications [...] [but also because of] the development of a worldwide ethic of shared values [...], the generation of a new structure of international relations, with new possibilities for autonomy, separation, unions and additions [...] [...]", and of "new and glaring contradictions that hold the seeds of fresh tragedies".

⁸ G. Pécaut, *Entre le peuple...*, op. cit., p. 290.

⁹ Jean Franco, *Plotting Women. Gender and Representation in Mexico*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 79.

¹⁰ The last two quotations are taken from "Seis preguntas a José Joaquín Brunner", *Revista de crítica cultural*, year 1, vol. 1, Santiago, Chile, May 1990.

¹¹ Nestor García Canclini (1990), "Escenas sin territorio. Estética de las migraciones e identidades en transición", *Revista de crítica cultural*, year 1, vol.1, Santiago, Chile, May 1990.

¹² Guy Brett, *Transcontinental. 9 Latin American Artists*, Verso, London, 1990.

¹³ Jean Casimir, "Culture, discourse, self-expression and social development in the Caribbean", *CEPAL Review*, No. 25 (LC/G.1338),

Santiago, Chile, April, 1985. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.II.G.2, pp. 149-162.

¹⁴ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1988, p. 15.

¹⁵ Ferdinand Braudel, *Ecrit sur l'histoire*, Paris, Flammarion, 1969. Quoted by Ana Pizarro, *La literatura latinoamericana como proceso*, Buenos Aires, Centro Editor de América Latina, 1985.

¹⁶ Pedro Morandé, "Problemas y perspectivas de la identidad cultural de América Latina", *El Mercurio*, Santiago, Chile, 4 October 1990. "If this is not done", the author states, "modernization will not succeed in becoming a part of the social and political history of our peoples". Perhaps another aspect of the same concern was suggested by Octavio Paz, in a recent television interview in which he expressed his dissatisfaction with the expression "third world", which he felt was too much associated with the interplay of interests at the world level, and did not reflect the tremendous cultural differences which the term embraced.

In this regard, UNESCO, in launching the World Decade for Cultural Development, stated that "no real development project can fail to take into account the essential characteristics of the natural and cultural environment, the needs, aspirations and values that are capable of mobilizing the populations concerned", *Guide pratique de la Décennie mondiale du développement culturel 1988-1997*, Paris, second edition, 1988.

¹⁷ (ECLAC) *Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity. The Prime Task of Latin American and Caribbean Development in the 1990s* (LC/G.1601-P), Santiago, Chile, 1990. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.II.G.6.

¹⁸ Felipe Herrera, "El escenario latinoamericano y el desafío cultural", *Cuadernos del Centro Latinoamericano de Economía Humana*, No. 21, Montevideo, January-March 1982.

¹⁹ Birgitta Leander, "Cultural identity in Latin America", *Cultures*, special issue, Paris, UNESCO, 1986.

²⁰ See the work of Pedro Morandé, "Problemas y perspectivas ...", quoted above, in which the author asserts that "to recover oral tradition and harmonize it with book-centred culture seems to be one of the most significant contemporary challenges from the point of view of the cultural identity of the Latin American peoples. The task ahead is to attach greater value to the style and particular character of popular oral traditions and to make the population aware of the existence of regional cultures"; Ana Pizarro, "Introduction", in Ana Pizarro et al., *La literatura latinoamericana...* (op. cit.); see also, in the above-mentioned issue of *Cultures*, the articles by Ariel Dorfman and Paula Petrich.

²¹ Ana Pizarro, "Introduction", op. cit.

²² Beatriz Sarlo, quoted by Ana Pizarro, "Introduction", op. cit.

²³ The above quotations are from Rolena Adorno, "Nuevas perspectivas en los estudios literarios coloniales hispanoamericanos", *Revista de crítica literaria latinoamericana*, year XIV, No. 28, Lima, second half of 1988.

²⁴ Angel Rama, *La ciudad letrada*, Montevideo, Angel Rama International Foundation, 1984.

²⁵ Pedro Morandé, *Problemas y perspectivas...*, op. cit.

²⁶ Angel Rama, *La ciudad letrada*, op. cit.

²⁷ See Josefina Ludmer, "Las tretas del débil", *La sartén por el mango*, Patricia González and Eliana Ortega (eds.), Río Piedras, Puerto Rico, Ediciones Huracán, 1984.

²⁸ Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, "Respuesta de la poetisa a la muy ... Sor Filotea de la Cruz", *Obras Escogidas*, tenth edition, Mexico City, Espasa-Calpe, 1959. The letter dates from 1691 and the quotation is on p. 112. See also p. 160: "...I have never thought of myself as having the gift of letters and intelligence commensurate with my obligations (...) What understanding have I? What learning? What materials? (...) Leave that for those with such gifts. I want no trouble with the Holy Inquisition for I am ignorant and fear lest I utter some ill-sounding statement, or misguide my readers in their understanding of some point ...".

²⁹ Gabriela Mistral, *Tala*.

³⁰ See Adriana Valdés, "Escritura de mujeres, una pregunta desde Chile", *Revista Fem*, Mexico City, vol. VIII, No. 30, October-November 1983, pp. 49-53. Reproduced in *Signos, Revista de educación y cultura*, Santiago, Chile, May-June 1984.

³¹ Tamara Kamenszain, "Bordado y costura del texto", *El texto silencioso. Tradición y vanguardia en la poesía sudamericana*, Mexico City, UNAM, 1983.

³² Jean Franco, op. cit., p. xx.

³³ Carlos Fuentes, "A Latin American perspective", *Culture plus*, UNESCO, reproduced in *Culture for all peoples for all times*, 1984.

³⁴ See UNESCO/OREALC, *Materiales de apoyo para la formación docente en educación bilingüe intercultural*, Serie Cultura, No. 1, Santiago, Chile, September 1989, pp. 9-17.

³⁵ Statement by Gloria Ardaya at the ECLAC seminar on "Women in the 1990s: Cultural Aspects of their Participation", Santiago, Chile, 22-24 November 1989.

³⁶ See Pedro Morandé, *Cultura y modernización en América Latina*, Cuadernos del Instituto de Sociología, Santiago, Chile, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 1984, especially "La representación de la muerte: la definición social del límite".

³⁷ Ana Pizarro, at the ECLAC seminar referred to above.

³⁸ Jean Franco, *Plotting Women...*, op. cit.; one of the chapters of his book is entitled "On the impossibility of Antigone and the inevitability of La Malinche: Rewriting the national allegory".

³⁹ Octavio Paz, *El laberinto de la soledad*, Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, fifth edition, 1967, p. 74.

⁴⁰ Sonia Montecino, presentation at the ECLAC seminar mentioned above.

⁴¹ Gloria Ardaya, in the above-mentioned ECLAC seminar.

⁴² This is particularly noteworthy in the work of José Donoso. The world of the servant women in *El obsceno pájaro de la noche* is a world of superstitions of indigenous origin, of the "imbunche" (a kind of bogeyman), of the dark side of life, very much in keeping with the mapuche cosmovision. In other texts, the mother is rather a cultural mother, the one who socializes in the uses and customs of her class; the "mamita", on the other hand, is the natural mother; the one who feeds, cleans and looks after cultural needs.

⁴³ On the large number of "huachos" (children without fathers), and the peculiarities of the make-up of the working-class family in Chile, see Gabriel Salazar Vergara, *Labradores, peones y proletarios*, Santiago, Chile, Ediciones Sur, 1985 (especialmente pp. 256 and ff.)

⁴⁴ Sonia Montecino, op. cit.

⁴⁵ Pedro Morandé, "El varón en la cultura", *Carisma*, Santiago, Chile, May 1985. Quoted by Sonia Montecino et al., op. cit.

⁴⁶ Sonia Montecino et al., "Identidad femenina y modelo mariano en Chile", in *Mundo de mujer: continuidad y cambio*, Santiago, Chile, 1988, p. 510.

⁴⁷ "Procreating [...] on the lower bedsheet, managing the power that flows from the huddle near the fireplace, working the slender threads that entrap men with their whisperings and murmurings, with that good-night kiss that marks the dreams of their children, with the smile of goodbye that destroys or preserves reputations and traditions, discreet women, silent in their world of sewing and servants and visits and illnesses and novenas, with their eyes fixed on the multicolored silks of the window screens while the rough male voices rise in the discussion of matters which we do not nor must not understand since we understand only things that are of no importance..." José Donoso, *El obsceno pájaro de la noche*, Barcelona, Seix Barral, 1970, p. 50.

⁴⁸ Rolena Adorno, "El sujeto colonial y la construcción cultural de la alteridad", *Revista de crítica literaria latinoamericana*, year XIV, No. 28, Lima, second half of 1988, pp. 55-68.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

⁵⁰ A. Rama, *La ciudad...*, op. cit.

⁵¹ T.W. Adorno, "Crítica cultural y sociedad", *Prismas*, Barcelona, Ariel, 1962 (written in 1949).

⁵² Teresa de Lauretis, "La esencia del triángulo, o tomarse en serio el riesgo del esencialismo: teoría feminista en Italia, los Estados Unidos y Gran Bretaña", *Debate feminista*, year 1, vol. 2, Mexico City, September 1990, p. 97.

⁵³ Hernán Henao D., "Contexto sociocultural de la familia", *Cuadernos de familia*, No. 4, Bogotá, 1989.

⁵⁴ Ana M. Rosas, "Hacia una teoría de las transacciones desiguales", *Debate feminista*, year 1, vol. 2, Mexico City, September 1990, pp. 304-311.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, quoting Foucault, *Microfísica del poder*, Madrid, La Piqueta, 1978, pp. 112-113.

⁵⁶ This subject was dealt with by Ernesto Ottone at the ECLAC seminar referred to above.

⁵⁷ Ana M. Rosas, "*Hacia una teoría...*", op. cit., quoting Foucault.

⁵⁸ Amartya Sen, *Women, Technology and Sexual Divisions*, (UNCTAD/TT/79), Geneva, UNCTAD, 1985.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ ECLAC, *Changing Production Patterns* ..., op. cit., p. 75.

⁶¹ ECLAC, *Mujer y nuevas tecnologías*, (LC/L.597), *Mujer y Desarrollo* series, No. 6, Santiago, Chile, November 1990.

⁶² Ibid., "Flexibility of working hours, a discontinuous presence in the labour force and the permanent responsibility shared between work outside and inside the home, all of which characterize the work of women and are generally perceived of as their weakness and instability in comparison with men, may, in these new circumstances, be transformed into the key element for the incorporation of women into jobs created by the development of new technologies. The challenge lies in transforming this base of weakness into strength."

⁶³ Víctor Zapata, "Familia y poder", *Cuadernos de Familia*, No. 1, Bogotá, 1988.

⁶⁴ Maria Inés Santos, "O cotidiano da mulher na família face aos modelos culturais tradicionais: contradições", *Mulheres face a face: rasgando o veu e fazendo a história*, Brazil, CCDM, 1987.

⁶⁵ Myrto Célestin, "Etre femme dans notre société haïtienne", Chancy, A. and Castor, S. (eds), *Théories et pratiques de la lutte des femmes*, Haiti, CRESFED, 1988.

⁶⁶ Magdalena León, at the above-mentioned ECLAC seminar.

⁶⁷ Hernando Clavijo, "La familia en el sector informal: retos de la modernidad", *Cuadernos de Familia*, No. 5, Bogotá, 1985.

⁶⁸ The denomination of the strategies of "symbolic identification", "accompaniment", and "shift", were suggested by Ana Pizarro in her presentation at the above-mentioned ECLAC seminar. She adds, in relation to the writing of women, the strategy of "masking".

⁶⁹ Gloria Ardaya, at the above-mentioned ECLAC seminar.

⁷⁰ Richard R. Curtis, "Household and family in theory on equality", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 51, No. 2, April 1986, pp. 168-183.

⁷¹ Margarita Pisano, at the above-mentioned ECLAC seminar.

⁷² I owe the use of this term to the Chilean philosopher Pablo Oyarzún, who used it in his oral reflexions on the Latin American identity.

⁷³ Valerio Fuenzalida and María Elena Hermosilla, *Visiones y ambiciones del televidente. Estudios de recepción televisiva*, Santiago, Chile, CENECA, 1989.

⁷⁴ François Jullien, *Cruce de culturas y mestizaje cultural*, Tzvetan Todorov et al., Madrid, Ediciones Júcar, 1988, p. 119.

⁷⁵ Franz Fanon, *The wretched of the Earth*, quoted by Homi Bhabha, "The other question. The stereotype and colonial discourse", *Screen*, vol. 24, London.

⁷⁶ The quotation is from *El obsceno pájaro de la noche*. On the characters of Manuel Puig, Jorge Guzmán wrote: "they lived utterly condemned to not seeing the reality of where their bodies were inclined to go. It was not in their power to do otherwise. They were obliged to take the symbolic materials that existed in their habitat and those materials were the mass media. With that they developed a fantastic "sense of self", out of a regional variety of fantasies which crosses cultural frontiers without the need for physical movement". (*Diferencias latinoamericanas*, Santiago, Chile, 1984.)

⁷⁷ Guillermo Gómez Peña, "Wacha ese border, son", quoted by García Canclini, "Escenas sin territorio...", op. cit.