

Cultural Pursuits

Políticas culturales en América Latina, (Cultural Policies in Latin America) by Néstor García Canclini, ed. Guillermo Bonfil and others. Editorial Grijalbo, México, 1987, 220 pgs.

The central purpose of the studies that form this volume is to analyse the relation between politics and culture in Latin America. Faced with the habitual reserve and lack of interest aroused by this question in politicians, artists and intellectuals, the authors stress the urgent need to uncover the cultural bases organizing and orientating society, its social and economic functions in the context of the phenomena occurring throughout the continent.

The book is also a sample of the systematic work that—for the last two decades—has surpassed mere bureaucratic description and offers a critical conceptualization that attempts to define the contradictions and controversies normally accompanying the development of cultural policies, as well as the theoretical and methodological problems deriving from the study.

Examples of this are the texts of Sergio Miceli on the relationship between "State, market and popular needs" and that of Guillermo Bonfil on the political crossroads reached by the indigenous community.

Other changes have occurred. Setting aside chronologies and apologetics, the specialists have engaged in a rigorous empirical investigation that evaluates the way in which public actions tie up with social needs. Equally, attention has moved from state politics to the consideration of the role of heterogeneous political and social forces. Thus, Jean Franco's study on Reagan's cultural policy illustrates how, from the neo-conservatism of the metropolis, his relation with Latin American

socio-cultural needs and political processes is structured.

Meanwhile José Joaquín Brunner's study is an original attempt at constructing a typology capable of articulating the various cultural circuits (public, private and voluntary association) and of re-thinking the task of the opposition movements.

On the other hand, and setting aside local points of view and the arrangement of theoretical parameters analyzing transnational policies or the problems common to various countries, the authors document the cultural policies not only according to institutional criteria. In order for this record to have certain objectivity and explanatory value it is necessary to investigate the policies in relation to their results, and to

and education; or a chronology of each government's actions. There should instead be cultural policies combining all those actions resulting from State intervention, and from civil institutions and the community groups organized to direct symbolic development, to satisfy the population's cultural needs and to obtain a consensus on a kind of order and social transformation.

Once this definition is established, this book can be seen as a reflection of an aspect of our societies that is fundamental but, until recently, disregarded.



their reception and refunctioning when they arrive at their destination. The critical study of Oscar Landi on the National Cultural Plan of the Argentinian Government (1984-1989) is an example of the *a priori* quest for coherence in State actions and in the potential of social scientists to lay the bases for cultural policies.

As Nestor García Canclini observes in his study, these changes stem in great part from the theoretical limitations of models of only the economic or political aspects of development. It is essential to examine the cultural bases of production and power since development is not merely a question of patterns and material level, but also of the significance of work and recreation, in the sense that societies build, alongside production, through their songs, and images, in their consumption, education and daily life.

Because of this, the conclusion of this volume is that it is not enough to have a cultural policy that is a rutinary administration of a historic patrimony; or a bureaucratic classification of the state apparatus dedicated to art

Sebastián Salazar Bondy

TODO ESTO ES MI PAÍS



Poeta del tiempo, de las cosas que se pierden en el tiempo, Salazar Bondy habla de la ciudad y sus trampas, del amor y sus máscaras, del pasado...

"La poesía es su triunfo secreto".
Emilio Adolfo Westphalen

"... para Salazar Bondy las cosas, los seres, los hechos están penetrados, a veces henchidos, de cierta delicada congoja..."

Javier Sologuren

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FONDO DE CULTURA ECONÓMICA