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FRANCES JAFFER
Poet
Age 57

Interviewed by ~~Gloria Frym~~
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GLORIA: When did you begin writing poetry?

FRANCES: About three or four years ago. I felt like a dam had broken and the poems started pouring out. You see, I first started to write about 25 years ago, in a workshop. It was recognized that I had a certain talent. I had written a poem about my son Louis who had nearly died when he was five...every woman who heard the poem would cry but the men told me it needed filling out...they wanted more images about the test tubes and instruments and needles. I just knew I wasn't interested in a poem about the cold paraphernalia of the hospital. What interested me was, how do you live long enough in five years, so that if you died it would have been a life... had I given my son enough love and whatever can you give a kid? And I thought, well if that's what you have to do to make a poem, with the kind of concrete visual imagery they wanted, then I'm not interested, I'm not a poet, I don't give a damn. Of course, by that time I was also falling in love with the teacher. We started going out together. So I stopped writing and got married and spent about ten years giving parties and mothering.

While you were mothering, you must have had a strong intellectual life. I read a critical piece of yours in Chrysalis magazine...

When Mark, my husband, was head of the poetry center, I lived in an atmosphere of poets. I went to lectures and Mark and I really liked to talk...he encouraged my left brain...my sense that I was intelligent...something I had never experienced before...he kept telling me I was brilliant until I finally began to become smarter. You know, we do respond to expectations!

How did you feel about the domestic part of your life?

I cannot deny that I loved nurturing, but I didn't want to be a housewife. I really wanted to be what I thought was a courtesan... an intellectual companion, a sex object, a hostess.

How did you become interested in feminism?

After years of entertaining and heavy socializing, we moved to the country. I found out I had cancer, lymphoma. I made a vow that since I wasn't going to live very long, I never again wanted to do anything I don't have to do. My son's girlfriend at the time was a feminist. I used to say to her, you don't have to be a fanatic, and she looked at me and said, oh Frances,

yes you do. And that's where I think it began. About 1970. She was one of the most important people in my life...she said, Frances, stop talking and write. I said, I can't write. She said, yes you can, I want you to. Which is when I went to my friend Kathleen Fraser who advised me to write all my ideas in the form of a letter. That was the article you read...

From your poetry and your criticism, I see that some of the issues you're working through have to do with your illness and your mother?

During the time I was writing Any Time Now, I had just had a flare-up and more cancer. My therapist said, you have to go in and find your own nurturing mother because you don't seem to be able to accept any kind of nurturing from your real mother. If you go inward to your unconscious, you will find a nurturing mother there, but on the way, don't be surprised if you find your bad mother first. So Any Time Now is really about that experience.

Why ^{did} you write of yourself as two persona, Fran and Serafina?

Fran is the good girl, ^{acceptable to} the world of the patriarchy. Serafina is the repressed naughty girl. It's sort of an artificial division. But Serafina is the one who came out when I started to write poems a few years ago...the naughty girl finally speaking up.

Our culture doesn't reinforce girls for being naughty...^{by with} naughty, I think we can include adventurous, noisy, brash...

Yes, which is why I have seen myself more as Fran. Phyllis Chesler said it first in Women and Madness, that women are unmothered in a patriarchy, because the role of the mother is to represent the culture to her children...the mothers are the restricting ones in the family, not the fathers. Our fathers are often nicer to us than our mothers. Our mothers tell us to be polite and not stick our necks out...it's their job to perpetuate the stereotypes, though they don't think of it that way, of course.

In one of your works you talk about the need to be more adventurous. What do you mean by this?

Exploring, traveling. You understand, my middle-aged needs for comfort are very strong and just the wish to get rid of them doesn't always get rid of them. I could say that feminism by itself is an adventure out of the middleclass Jewish community of Hartford, Connecticut where I was brought up. Look, I've learned to jog five minutes without stopping...that seems silly to some people but at 57, that's adventurous for me!

Well, mothers haven't much history of adventure in the world. You've raised three sons. Do you see gender stereotypes in your sons that you helped create?

Yes. I know to what extent I created machismo in my sons so I have to be more sympathetic to men than mothers of daughters are. I think at this moment it's still difficult for even the

most avid feminists to raise sons. It's easy to feel good about the effort to raise daughters without stereotyping them, because you try to give them the qualities that the culture essentially values...self-love, authority, strength, physical mobility. But if you try to encourage so-called female virtues in boys, you risk doing them great social damage because these virtues are in reality not valued by the culture. And possibly the social damages would undermine any psychological advantages that the "female" virtues are intended to provide.

So raising sons to be feminists or to fit the demands of a non-stereotypical ideal is a touchy problem for a feminist parent. I've seen too many unhappy children who are the products of the psychological experimenters of my generation of parents.

I see feminism as the future of the race, not as an experiment, even if men and women are fumbling with the challenge. While the past is beyond judgment, we can get a sense of direction from it. What would you have done differently with your sons?

INTRUSIVE

It's hard to say what I would have done then, but if I were raising sons now, I would, for instance, allow them to cry. I would not tell them they were cowards if they did cry or didn't want to fight. If they felt like playing with dolls, you know, I would neither encourage or discourage any of that kind of thing...I would, in fact, probably give them some dolls to nurture.

In a review you wrote of Ellen Moer's book, Literary Women, you said that the subject matter that most deeply interests women bores men or even offends them. Do you think that's still true?

I think it is still true but less true. Here's a good example: a few years ago I went with my husband and stepson--who is an artist--to the Judy Chicago exhibit at the museum. There were about five paintings that just knocked me out! I haven't talked to a single woman who didn't feel them very powerfully and positively. My husband, who is a feminist and who has fought hard for feminists in the college where he teaches and is a strong supporter of feminism in every way, and my stepson, who is also a feminist, didn't like Chicago. And a lot of men don't like her work. Whereas women are immediately drawn to her. Often, men don't like the books that women like.

Men haven't liked George Eliot or Virginia Woolf as much as women have...

They like Austen better, but they still criticize her for not having more about the Napoleonic Wars in her novels!

Men often criticize women for not having a broad scope in their writing...

Men are not generally interested in relationships between women, and I'm not talking about sexual or lesbian relationships. I'm

talking about the times between women. There are whole novels written, for instance, without a woman in them, like Moby Dick. Think of Jeanne Moreau's movie, "Lumiere." I was so excited about it and afterwards Mark said, "you know, I cannot understand what was so exciting to you." Now I have really educated him and he has struggled very hard with his innate patriarchal sense of what art is...he has struggled to hear me. If he can't get it, then we can really say it's hard to get. I mean, he has grown to teach feminist writing in his classes. So I said to him, "remember the scene by the swimming pool. There are things in that movie over and over again that I've never seen in movies before. They are what women are like when there are no men around! And you haven't seen them either and you didn't notice. Remember how giggly they were when they were getting into the pool... poking fun at themselves and imitating sexual behavior and wriggling around. Stuff like that," I said, "women do alot of when we're by ourselves. It's the way we are often with each other, when there are no men around."

By the way, Jeanne Moreau doesn't consider herself a feminist according to a profile of her in the New Yorker. Why do you suppose some women denounce or avoid feminism or refuse to ally?

Well, I get annoyed with them, but I'm also sympathetic. These women who are exceptional, in the sense that they have been able to be accepted by the patriarchal world, say they're not feminist when in fact, their success has depended on feminism. There are many women today who have audiences and support systems and followers and readers they wouldn't have had before feminism. Lessing's Golden Notebook, for example, was ecstatically welcomed by feminists, which provided her with a large readership. Then, reciprocally, her writing became a spur to feminism and to more authentic female writing. And it was largely the women who got the men to take her work seriously.

But what about women who achieve recognition and don't acknowledge other women...the political naif or the successful queen bee...

Well, with others it's sort of like the role of an "Uncle Tom." In order to get out of a ghetto, whatever kind of ghetto it is, a person often has to have a particular kind of aggressiveness, a strong inner drive--for whatever psychological reasons--and some good fortune. And I think you have to have a mixture of a certain kind of aggression and a certain kind of ruthlessness in order to leave the water and try to walk on land, so to speak. The particular problem women have is that we are conditioned from our earliest moments to scratch each other's eyes out for any available men. I think it's inevitable that the first women who make it onto land are largely unconscious of how they've done it, what it's cost them and other women.

Unconsciously not admitting who helped them?

Maybe. I don't think that O'Keefe, no matter how great she was, would have become so well known without Steiglitz's help. My

own poems were quite quickly experienced as interesting--because of the peculiar mixture of age and stuff that I am--but I am aware that I had an advantage in finding people to publish them. This had to do with the women I knew because of being Mark's wife. I was already in the world of poetry.

Which women in the world of poetry do you feel have influenced you?

Susan Griffin. I think it was when I read her poems that it first occurred to me that the kind of poetry I had originally wanted to write, one could write. And of course, Adrienne Rich. And Levertov, particularly her Relearning the Alphabet. Of the older poets, I think my all time forever obsessive excitement is with H.D.

Why H.D.?

No matter what of hers I read, I find myself. And the song of her work...it just makes me ecstatic. At first I thought her poetry was classic and boring. I couldn't get into it. Then after I'd been writing for a while I started reading Trilogy and have been reading her poems and prose ever since. She may be a "poet's poet," but that may be just because she's so seldom taught. Hardly anyone teaches her, and if they do they're likely to teach the early poems...which are perfect "imagiste" jewels. But her greatness doesn't become clear and exciting for me until the poems of WW II and after.

Hasn't H.D. been largely ignored by academics?

I want to tell you a story here that illustrates the kind of problems even the best women writers are up against in the man-dominated culture: ~~Mark couldn't read H.D., even after I'd told him how I felt about her. Her poems bored and irritated him. But he took what I said seriously, so he said, okay, when you find one where the song of it gets to you, read it to me, show me what it is you like so much. I read him a small poem from Helen in Egypt and he didn't like it. He criticized this word and that construction. Why didn't she use a simpler word, why this archaic one, etc., and I said I'd have to think about it, but one thing I was sure of was that it was not an accident. She knew exactly what she was doing, that I was sure of. So he took another look and this time paid serious and analytical attention to his own question and as soon as he did that he was able to see how skillfully the poem is constructed and the reasons for what he had thought was carelessness. He even began to enjoy a little the rhythms he had so disliked. But that's the kind of respectful attention men (and women too, until recently) don't think of giving to women poets they can't immediately understand.~~

Has it been difficult living with a poetry teacher?
You've obviously had aesthetic disagreements...

~~My husband, Mark, is a poetry teacher, a feminist educated by me.~~

You refer to your husband a great deal when speaking ~~xxf~~ about aesthetics. Are you measuring your literary values against his?

Well, he tries very hard to understand the possibility that there might be a separate female aesthetic, and when he fails to understand a work of art by a woman, such as Judy Chicago or Adrienne Rich, when he simply can't see or can't hear, it makes me feel, if he doesn't understand, look what we're up against!

In a sense, isn't that still looking to the patriarchy, as you put it, for validation?

Absolutely. What I'm saying by indicating the need to develop our own feminist aesthetic and then bringing Mark in, is that sometimes it's a waste to worry about what ~~xxxx~~ male judgment. Because even the best of them don't understand much of our work. I am voicing a reminder to myself, living with an articulate and feminist teacher and poet, that there is a constant temptation and seduction to look to men for approval. This is particular to the heterosexual woman, wanting the approval of daddy.

There is a ciphoning off, a co-option of female values by the greater male culture, not just in art, but in all fields. Where is the power? The power of immortality in art does not lie with females! Has not. Elizabeth Barrett (Browning) was the most popular writer of her time, but now popularity is a dirty word. Who controls the anthologies and journals of prestige in this country? Not women! If anything, ~~wmm~~ the art of women is localized, not nationalized, in terms of an audience.

How do you think ^{the art of} women can make a greater impact on the culture?

Women must be willing to be followers of women. Our primary task is to pay attention to what women are doing. I use Mark as an example of why we have to do this. Our most interesting, experimental works in terms of language are not going to be recognized ^{or appreciated} by even the most educated, feminist men. I think I'm more aware of this than other women, because I have to live with it.

Would you say that women need a lineage of women artists to whom they may look, as men have always had?

I think ~~wxxdxx~~ it imperative that we do. If we had feminist criticism of Gertrude Stein, we might find what in her work is useful to us. The reason I push for a female aesthetics is that ~~wxxxx inevitably~~ there is a realm of experience that women may write about that is not recognizable to men, and that the form such writing takes is also not recognizable to men. Some of our most original work is stunted because it's never looked at by men. If we don't explore what it is that ~~ma~~

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may be specifically female in both acclaimed and unacclaimed writers, then that information won't be passed on to the next generation. We need a tradition to stand on and to proceed from. ~~Then~~ Avant garde male artists fight a male tradition in art. It's not adequate for women to jump in and help them ~~destroy~~ destroy what came before them. How can a woman write de-constructivist poems when the men are attempting to de-construct a language that has never really been women's? In attacking the language, we attack their language, not ours.

I've educated him now just as much as he's educated me, although at first it was the other way around. Now he can read Rich, whom he couldn't read. Now he teaches H.D. to his students. He had to be receptive in the first place. I think the thing you have to realize in writers, artists, men teachers is that they can be feminists politically, but their identity is totally locked up in definitions of art that they themselves had to learn at some cost to other sides of themselves. It's the same thing with Uncle Tom women and men who've had to cut out some part of themselves. They are very reluctant to admit that they had to do it, and allow those parts back into their sensibility and judgment.

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What is your experience of sexism in the art world?

Many men do not see aesthetics as an appropriate place for feminism. I think all of us are quite willing to give up what we don't care about too much. You find, I think, in the art world, that it's easy for men to be political feminists and make a lot of noise about letting women in. You notice the word, 'letting'.

I want to talk about aesthetics and women, since I know you've thought a great deal about the subject, judging from your critical writings. Cynthia Ozick, in a recent Ms. article, says that it's dangerous to call yourself a woman writer, because writer is a universal term. When you attach the word 'woman', you make it less than it is, rather than more. What do you think? (continued p. 7)

Cynthia Ozick has also said that she writes from the neck up. I think that's absurd. Nobody writes from the neck up because if you cut somebody's head off, then they're dead. You write with your whole body. I believe that the thrust of my book Any Time Now is against mind/body split. I think the division is dangerous. It may have, at one time, been useful in order to develop civilization...maybe we needed the sky god and the earth goddess and certain kinds of focusing on the left brain, but I think that usefulness has seen its day.

So you're saying that writers write first from the experience of being a man or a woman?

I think it's a mistake to think that you have to write as a "woman" as a kind of metaphysical command, but I do think that there is a compulsion to write out our female experience in a kind of concentrated way because so little has been written by us. We still do not know who we are and all the arguments about nature/nurture and so on involve this first question: are we, at this time, really just the same as men? Or are we, in fact, different? And if so, in what ways? I think we should feel free to really go into the effort of discovering who we are, and therefore write as women. As to whether the question of attaching "woman" to artist is a put down, that is what I call female self-hatred. It's clear that female self-hatred is what

destroys us over and over again. I think that if you say German writer or Polish writer or Russian writer or Southern writer, it's not a putdown. Of course, overall, they're writers in the universal sense, but still they're writing from a certain locale and I think to be a woman is a certain locale.

Ozick might say that art has to transcend that locale... that we may not be free of it in reality but in our imaginations, we can be whoever we want to be...

I agree. We don't have to write about only women's experiences. But anything you write as a woman is going to be a woman writing! We should feel entitled to write about whatever we want. For example, there is a part of me which I experience as a male...he appears in my dreams...he's a boy, he's a man. Sometime I would like to feel free to write about him. I will write about him, However, it will still not be a man writing about a man. It will be a woman writing about a woman's image of what maleness is. And it's the same when we write about men we observe.

Literature is full of examples of that from a male perspective...men writing about women as men experience them...

It's difficult and I don't think we can think we are experiencing a man as a man experiences himself, but we can do vivid images of men as women experience them. What are we going to say about Portrait of a Lady or Anna Karenina? They seem at first glance what women are like and they can change your life, when in fact, later, you get very critical about those works. For example, a woman writing about Anna would probably include homier touches, and probably more interaction between the women...

Yes the relationship between Anna and her sister-in-law, for instance, is barely explored. But then Tolstoy's genius was not in portraying what women mean to one another. How do you see great literature changing in this respect?

While a man wouldn't have written the way Jane Austen did and a woman couldn't have written Moby Dick, in the future if women go out as sailors, they will write about the experiences they have on yessels. And if men take a larger part in the care of children, children will probably play a larger part in their writing. It is a question of experience. If you think of drama as a projection of the parts of one's self, I think we write about men in the ways in which we experience men, not in the ways they experience each other, as has been the case.

→ What is there in the female imagination that makes us think we have a different aesthetic?

Well, I can speak best about poetry and I think it has a great deal to do with the left brain and the right brain...even if

it's only a metaphor, it applies. If I understand it correctly, the right brain has, in most cases, very little or no language, and yet it wants to communicate. We can superimpose notions of the unconscious on the right brain because it doesn't speak. Much of the inspiration for poetry...the source of it...the field from which it comes is the right brain. The language used in poetry comes from the left brain, where language originates. But the language of poetry is a combination of impulses from both brains. And still it's a different kind of language...not rational, spatial, its concept of time is circular...

I think if we are really in touch with that source of inspiration, we may find out much more about who we are. We will have access to a more authentic picture of ourselves. In children, if there is an accident and the left brain is damaged, the child can learn language, but in adults if there is an accident, the amount of language the right brain can learn is very limited. This dominance of the right and left brain is apparently subject to early conditioning.

Yet, from an evolutionary perspective, maybe brain dominance is as necessary as say, division of labor...

Well, the development of civilization has until now required dominance of the left brain, but this has been much more reinforced in boys than in girls. If women are more intuitive, perhaps that has to do with greater connection with the right brain.

The left brain, which can focus, is called field independent. The right brain, which is diffuse, is called, as you might expect, field dependent. If you are interested in ecology or feminism, you could, as a friend of mine has done, say that right brain is field relevant and left brain is field irrelevant. The problem of field irrelevance is the greatest problem we have in the world...it allows us to have overpopulation, atom bombs, etc., because we just abstract one item alone and focus on that, with no interconnections. This is the opposite of ecology. I think that's why it's important, not just for ourselves, for women to write out of our own experience, in order to add to the culture. Our experience may be more field relevant! Up until now, the majority of women the culture has accepted into print have been those with more left brain orientation.

In other words, those women whose writing reflects male thinking?

It reminds me of when I was a girl and I went to an Episcopalian boarding school. They said, you know it's fine if you want your Jewish daughter to come to our school, but she has to go to church on Sunday. So I went and I went to church and learned to think like a Christian. That's the way women have been let into the wider culture, which has been patriarchal. You have to learn to think like a man. Like the line from Yeats, "did she put on his knowledge with his power?" Do we in fact put on their knowledge with their power when we marry men, when we

live with them, when we enter the world of male power? We take on their way of thinking. In order to further understand this issue of a female aesthetic, some study of the language of conventional criticism is useful. For example, these are words of praise: strong, sinewy, lean, tough, spare, firm. Now think about a man's body. And then think of these words: damp, padded, soft, gushing. Now think about a woman's body.

I see what you're getting at, *namely that physiology may dictate certain aesthetic judgments.*

You begin to realize that nobody writes from the neck up, and we have been forced to have as aesthetic criteria the definitions of the male body. The definitions of our own bodies, from which we write, are the very words which are unacceptable as aesthetic criteria in the patriarchy.

So you would say that men write from their bodies and write of their sexuality?

Yes, they write from their own landscape. Ellen Moers talks about the landscape that certain writers write about. Moers defines brilliantly how a girl child experiences her own body-- not as a boy child, not as a man experiences a woman's body-- but how, when you masturbate, you experience your own vulva and what it feels like to you. Much of male landscape, much of male literature is based on masturbatory experiences of their own bodies when they were children, their deepest unconscious attitudes toward their bodies. Phallic doesn't mean a penis anymore, it is a whole aesthetic concept and there is no aesthetic equivalent for the female body in the language.

Do you suppose that might be why we're having so much trouble figuring out this business of aesthetic criteria?

Yes, and I think that's why we have to be uncritical in many ways. Because not only are the standards culturally male, but physically male as well, and we really don't know where to go for our standards.

But if we are uncritical, how are we to assess literature written by women?

Look, when a woman first writes about menstruation, the whole world is excited or shocked. What a thing to write about! Anybody who wrote about menstruation was an artist for a while, you know? But now there are certain female subjects which have become cliché and boring. I think it's very important to say, okay, we've heard plenty about that, what have you got to say that's new, you really ought to read more of what women are writing in order to see what's cliché and go on to write something deeper, less "easy", more your own. We tell young art students to go to museums so that they don't paint Cezannes all over again!

Aren't we looking for new information from women and the fresh handling of it?

Yes, but our standards should not lie in the inherited standards that have been given to us by men as to what is and what isn't acceptable. The criteria have to grow from what has been written by women...though unfortunately, we can't exactly start from scratch as if there were no other literature!

What about the whole business of subject and object in art and the artist distancing herself?

It is possible that even the term "aesthetic distance" is male, if you remember that men and women both have mothers. For a long time, babies probably don't know the difference between themselves and their mothers. So the relationship between the female self and the "other" is not going to be the same as it is for men. That is to say, a man learns to distinguish between himself and his mother fully...there is a real relationship between him and the "other."

But most women never quite make the break?

A mature woman relates to the environment with a kind of identification that men don't experience. A man doesn't think of his mother as himself, he separates himself more violently from his mother. I imagine, therefore, that feelings of objectivity and subjectivity might be different in men and in women. So I think that feelings of subject/object relationships in art are likely to be different in the female aesthetic.

That contradicts the entire academic, formalist notion of aesthetics...

You see, what we are saying is really very radical and very dangerous because what we are doing is re-defining art. It may be that what we are going to call art is never going to be called art by the world...men may say it's not "Art." We might re-define art to include this different relationship between subject and object.

The way you're speaking of subject/object relationships reminds me of notions in modern physics, particularly the attempt to measure sub-atomic particles. The particles can't be separated from the measuring devices and still be measured accurately...

Yes, I think we will hear more about this from the sciences... from the chemistry of newborns, from anthropology. We'll find threads everywhere. But I think the first job of women artists is to be as authentic as we can to find out as accurately as we

can what each individual one of us experiences...in order to avoid stereotypes and in order to find out as much truth as we are able to.

You said in one of your articles that we've been so conditioned to be who we are that we don't even know what we feel...

Yes. When you look at a picture of maternity, the madonna and child, you think, isn't that touching, isn't that sweet. This is all you see. But maternity is not like that. There are so many unexplored areas. Most of the images of women we have are from the eye of a man. And women very seldom write about male bodies or paint them. Women's love poems are usually very narcissistic and have to do with how it feels to be loved... Erica Jong (and so much of her stuff has been scorned) writes a lot about men's bodies as men write about women's bodies. I really wish more women would write about how men's bodies look to them.

I mean, men are sex objects to heterosexual women. The thing that women detest about being sex objects is that we are seen only as sex objects. I think that to be a sex object is okay, but not only a sex object!

~~Yes, that's abstraction...~~

~~Right, focusing, that field irrelevancy again. But you know, I really get tired of women's poems which are only narcissistic, because we do, in fact, look at men's bodies lecherously! It's time to admit our feelings!~~

Earlier you talked about female landscape. What about questions of male and female space?

Whatever power women have generally exercised has been confined to a particular space...the home...not only child rearing and domestics but the grubby and dangerous stuff of social existence, like giving birth and mourning death and disposing of feces. Perhaps this enclosed female space creates compression. The compression in any enclosed space is potentially explosive. I think that when the enclosed space explodes, it does so in extremes, such as what they call melodrama. Melodrama, which is looked down on as an art form because of its extremes, may in fact, at this time in history, be a legitimate and authentic female art form. In the larger culture, perhaps, this kind of explosiveness isn't necessary, so it feels fake. For women, it may be true, that is to say, authentic.

You're positing that art may be different for men and women? Well, between subject/object, female body, and melodrama, we might imagine that the female aesthetic, if it were authentic, might be different from the male. These are only three ideas. It's the job of feminist artists and critics to investigate these things freely, without recourse to what the men are going to say. We don't, after all, want to be allowed into the existing culture, we want to enter from a position of strength.

According to what you've said, feminism is injecting something big into aesthetics that wasn't there before. The ideas behind a female aesthetics actually contribute, rather than separate...are you really talking about pluralism? Is this the time in history for various aesthetics to be operating?

Yes, I think so. Not to mention Third World artists, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians. Even, perhaps for an individual artist, one does not necessarily have to discover the "single strand" as men have required. A poet named Alice Mattison, in a poem called "Ordering the Priorities," says, "focused like the crotch of a boy," and "the day has no metropolis/no back country either." Certainly as feminists we have to be as pluralistic as we demand the world to be, aesthetically as well as politically. And paradoxically, that requires a tremendous unity in the women's movement, an agreement to be pluralistic. But without that, what can we hope for?

I'm not sure, then, that we can even consider this in light of what you said about subject/object, but what about the formal qualities of literature written by women?

I think it's an important issue to address ourselves to, since we are exploring female forms. There have been a lot of questions, for example, about rhythm. Some poetry written by women might be longer on the page. I am going to give a very extreme example... a man makes love and it's over, a woman makes love and it lasts nine months...okay, that's exaggerated. The issue of women using too many words. Too many for whom? Our softness, our padding, our roundness...this is our female shape! I am often told, pare it down, pare it down to where there is not one extra word. But who is defining the extra? What defines extra may just be different!

Do you suppose the male ear has been trained differently?

Perhaps. If you consider that the right brain experiences circular time and the left brain experiences linear time... well, that might make a lot of difference in terms of poetry and art in general. I think it is an area that we can be curious about, rather than critical. We have to understand questions of taste. Is this bad taste or in fact, legitimate female taste, and what, in fact, is the difference? The colors that Judy Chicago uses are offensive to men, I think, but pleasing to women. I deliberately made the cover of my book pink, as a feminist gesture. We must reconsider questions of vulgarity. In any case, my feeling is that we should not define ahead of time what we think female form is, but when we find something we like and that men don't like, we can be curious about it. What I'm recommending is curiosity: permission to ask ourselves questions that arise from the discrepancy between what we feel we should like and what we do like.



You've spoken a great deal about the general difficulties for women making art. What are your personal stumbling blocks?

Other people's opinions.

How can you counter them, what do you need to continue your art?

A greater ego, contrary to what people usually think of me. A greater sense of following my own direction, instead of doing what I think I ought to do because other people say so. I am extremely vulnerable. That's why I stopped writing ~~xxxx~~ twenty years ago, when the class told me that I had to write differently. ~~xxx~~ Instead of writing the way I wanted to, I just stopped writing.

Do you think women often internalize criticism and crumble psychologically, instead of defying it and pushing on ahead?

Yes, ~~nd~~ and I think it's part of conditioning. It's certainly part of my conditioning, this lacking of autonomy. I often experience it as a form of stupidity in myself.

But you're in a different position now, you've experienced some measure of success.

Well, when I started writing in 1974, I was in a very good position. I knew I was no good. I thought I had talent, I knew I was trying to write out of a feminist impulse, ~~xxxxxxx~~ so that any standards were irrelevant to my work. And I think I succeeded. I wrote some original poems of female experience. I could simply say pooh-pooh to what other people said, because I felt that nobody was doing what I was doing. That gave me the freedom to write. And I wrote a lot.

What put a damper on the original burst of prolificness?

Inevitably and gradually, the more I wrote, the better I got in terms of craft. I went to workshops, I listened to what people I trusted said. I think I developed a great deal ~~xxxx~~ over five years. Now I think I read more intelligently. I'm surrounded by people with great skill and integrity of ideals. I've been accepted and published in national magazines. But ~~is~~ has become very hard for me to just go ahead and write out of my own impulses. And I've ~~internalized~~ internalized more criticism since I began writing, as a form of self-editing.

Perhaps that's an indication of a maturing artist?

Inevitably when you become deeply involved in language, you get a different sense of it, You get bored with what your experiences were. You reach for something new. And I believe that poetry, in particular, deals with language and the unconscious. And that's where it has to come from. I must go deeper into my ~~unconscious~~ unconscious, to find the future language.

FRANCES JAFFER

Post

3rd interview, 17 May 79

You've spoken a great deal about ~~writing~~ ^{general} and ^{for a woman} the difficulty ~~of~~ ^{of} creating art. ~~in~~

What are your ^{personal} greatest stumbling blocks?

Other people's opinions.

What do you need to continue your art?

A greater ego, contrary to what people usually think about me. Greater sense of following my own direction, instead of what I think I ought to do because other people say so. I am extremely vulnerable. That's why I stopped writing 20 years ago, when the class told me that I had to write differently. Instead of writing the way I wanted to, I stopped writing.

→ ^{even wit}

But you're in a different position now.

I was in a very good position.

Well, when I started writing in 1974, I knew I was no good, ~~but~~ ~~no craft~~. I thought I had talent, I knew I was trying to write out of a feminist impulse, so that any received standards were irrelevant to what I was trying to do. And I think I succeeded. I wrote some original poems of female experience. I could simply say pooh pooh to what other people said because I felt that nobody was doing what I was doing/ That gave me the freedom to write. I wrote a lot. *What put a damper on that original burst of prolificness?*

Inevitably and gradually, the more I wrote, the better I got at it in terms of craft. I was in workshops, I listened to what people said. I think I developed a great deal over 5 years. Now I think I've arrived at a place where I read more intelligently what other people write, I'm surrounded by people with a great deal of intensity of ideas, people with a lot of skill. I've been accepted and published in national magazines. And now it's very hard for me to just go ahead and write out of my own impulses. Because the other things have become internalized for me. When I first began to write, for 2 years I refused to read anything written by a man. Then the feminists began to write more poetically less statement poetry, I began to find men writers I really admired, I began to write less prosey stuff. *And die internalized more wit since I began writing, as a form of self-censored editing.*
Inevitably when you get ^{deeper} involved in language, you get a different sense of it. You get bored with what your experiences were. When you first listen to music, all you can hear is Chopin and Tchaikovsky, it's hard to hear a late Beethoven quartet.

But I believe that poetry is an art that deals with language, and that I must go deeper into my unconscious somehow to find the future ^{language}.

...I had to feel a little apprehensive about it.

When you first began to write, you can feel the freedom and

freedom of it. You get bored with what you've experienced with.

Initially when you get involved in writing, you feel a different

quality. I began to write and I really enjoyed it.

Then I began to write and I began to find that writing I really

enjoyed. When the minutes began to write and I really

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enjoyed it. I think I've always enjoyed to write and I really

I've internalized more criticism since I began writing.

But you've put yourself out there more, become more public, how else could it be?

It's very easy for me to give up in the face of cultural, personal, societal criticism.

Given criticism, then, instead of defying it, do you think women often internalize and crumble?

I think it's part of the female conditioning. It's part of my conditioning, the lacking of autonomy. I'm smart when it comes to argument and ideology, but there's a kind of inner force that comes out in poetry that's very often stopped in me and I experience it as a form of stupidity.

(Jaffer is a married poet, a married feminist scholar, and a poet married to another poet)

~~What~~ Why do you include your husband so much in your references?

My husband is a poetry teacher; a feminist educated by me. He tries very hard to understand the possibility that there might be a separate female aesthetic and when he fails to understand a work of art by a woman, such as Judy Chicago or Adrienne Rich, when he simply can't see or can't hear, I'm saying, if he doesn't understand, look what we're up against.

Isn't that still looking to the patriarchy, as you put it, for validation?

Absolutely. What I'm saying by indicating our need to develop our own feminist aesthetic and then bringing Mark in, is saying that it's a waste of time to worry about what men are saying, because even the best of them don't understand ^{such of} our work. I am voicing the constant reminder, living with an articulate and feminist poet and teacher, that there is a constant temptation and seduction to look to men for approval, particularly for the heterosexual woman, to wanting the approval of daddy.

There is a ciphoning off, a cooption of female values by the greater male culture, not just in art, but in all ~~frimx~~ fields. Where is the power? The power of immortality in art does not lie with females! Has not. Elizabeth Barrett (Browning) was the most popular writer of her time, but popularity is a dirty word. Who controls the anthologies and journals of prestige in this country? Not women. Women are localized, not nationalized. ~~xx~~ in terms of an audience. And women won't be anything but local if they don't pay attention to the male establishment.

No Seriphina wants to be called Seriphiana

OH I SEE IF I DON'T CALL HER FRANCES COULD KILL ME(?) SHE WANTS TO BE KNOWN

No if I don't call her Frances she could kill me that means if I don't recognise her as me and let her into my total personality which I have not for many years she could kill me she would rather die than live unliving

DID YOU FIND SERIPHINA LATE? DID YOU KNOW SHE WAS THERE?

Well it's this way when I was a little girl my father used to tell me stories he had heart trouble which is in a lot of my poems and every night he'd come home and he'd have an hour's rest before dinner and I would go up and lie on the bed with him with all this Oedipal(?) intimations and he would read to me or talk to me or tell me stories he was a superb story teller and he would give me a choice he would make up stories and he would give me a choice of the good girl or the bad girl Esmerelda was the good girl...and Seriphina was the bad girl I usually always wanted to know about Seriphina but I wouldn't admit it...so when I grew up and I started to write poems and I wanted to write about that side of me I wanted to write the whole episode of the Spanish shawl...I just suddenly...felt like writing it in the third person and I didn't know why and I called her Seriphina and that was the bad girl and then later on when I wrote the poem her name is Frances I realised ...by that time I was beginning to realise that having repressed her for all those years was bad for me

AND WHEN DID SHE START COMING OUT? IN THE WORK

From the very beginning I think ~~some of~~ ^{the} first poems I wrote were written about her that is to say if you she if you can do that the place where I was at yesterday they said that they feel that the poems were written in a place beyond Seriphina or Fran beyond integration like you know or beyond ~~the~~ their combination beyond in a place where there is no division where the two are really one...and I think that's probably who writes the poems but if you can sort of artificially divide it up then the exhibitionist the one who wants to tell the truth the one who wants to make everything clear the one who had her head cut off at about the age 14 is the one that when I started to write poems a few years ago just started... I felt like a dam had broken and the poems started pouring out I experienced that as the repressed naughty girl finally speaking up and then I think the revisions are done ~~by~~ by my

FRANCES?

You write of yourself as Fran & Seraphina. Why these 2 persons?

Well no Frances is I hope my whole self... Fran I think you can call the world of the ~~patriarchy~~ culture the world of the patriarchy represented by my mother always to be polite and nice and not get into trouble and you know say nice things to people and be charming

OUR CULTURE DOESN'T REINFORCE GIRLS BEING NAUGHTY VERY MUCH OR BEING BAD

No boys are

IT'S OK FOR BOYS BUT GIRLS ARE

Yeah well I think I've been reading a lot lately and in a sense I think Phyllis Chestler said it first in Women and Madness when she said that women are unmothered in a patriarchy and I've read in several other places it's really in a patriarchy the role of women to represent the culture to her children and therefore to her daughter she is usually the restricting one not the father

RIGHT THE ONE WHO UPHOLDS THE RELIGION AND PASSES ON THE MORALS

naughty girl
p. 9
43
Adventurous

JAFFER/3

What you're saying is that women artists have a two-fold task...

Our primary task is to pay attention to what women are doing. We must be willing to be followers of women. I use Mark as an example of why we have to do this. Our most interesting, experimental, female experiences in ~~writing~~ ^{language} are not going to be recognizable by even the most educated feminist men. I think I'm more aware of that than other women. I have to live with it.

Do you think that women need a lineage of women artists to whom they look, as men have always had? Is what we're doing now trying to construct one out of history?

I think if we do not, we have no hope. If we had feminist criticism of Stein, instead of male, we could find out what in her is usable for us.

I am talking about writing out of experience that is not recognizable to men in a form that is also not recognizable to men. Some of our most original female ~~artistic~~ aesthetic development is stunted because it's never looked at by men. If we don't spend time finding out what it is that may be specifically unreconicably female in both the acclaimed and unacclaimed writers, then that ~~xxx~~ information won't be passed on from generation to generation. We need a tradition to stand on. The avant garde man are trying to fight a male tradition. It's not adequate for us to jump in and help them destroy it. How can women right de-constructive poems when they are deconstructing a language that has NEVER Been women's? In attacking the language, we attack their language, not ours.

~~Do you see yourself writing~~

Poetry is an art that deals with language and the unconscious. Fiction is such a linear art and so vulnerable to conscious distortion. That is why I am convinced that poetry can help us discover who we really are as women.

FRANCES JAFFER

3

Right and be quiet and don't stick your neck out

ACTUALLY KIND OF THE BAD GUY

Yeah, ^{own} mothers ~~are~~ in our culture the bad guys to most of us and I'm trying right now what I'm working on right now is a series of poems about what I call really the "Athena syndrome" which is the woman borne full blown from the head of Zeus or the head of god without a mother.

WITHOUT A MOTHER AND

I think if our fathers are nice to us when we're little in varying degrees, and our mothers have to be mean to us and ^{we feel} constricted themselves and don't know how to be anything else and don't give daughters the kind of loving they give sons, well then frequently ~~we~~ I think we our fathers we experience as our mothers and then I think ^{met} when we grow up if we are heterosexual, I think maybe this is the pattern of heterosexual women that our fathers are nicer to us than our mothers... then I think when we grow up our first passionate love affair which may frequently not be our marriage, is, we experience as a rebirth as having been giving birth. I find this ~~is~~ in a lot of stuff I'm doing trying to get out this and relate this to the whole Athena syndrome the woman intellectual who is wise and warlike...and neither of those are adequate

~~IT'S SORT OF UNSEXY I MEAN SHE'S A PRODUCT OF ASEXUAL REPRODUCTION SO SHE JUST APPEARS FROM THE HEAD~~

Exactly

~~RATHER EVEN FROM THE GROIN SHE COMES FROM THE HEAD~~

Yeah she's really the head trip... not entirely of course but I sense myself ~~in~~ even in my disagreeable ness the Seriphina disagreeableness which I have to watch over all of the time as kind of the warlike side of Athena

~~THE BITCHY SIDE OF NAUGHTINESS~~

~~Not that I experience myself as a goddess but you know in the sense that that's a paradigm~~

~~YEAH I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU SAID JUST BEFORE ABOUT OH I LOST IT IT WAS WONDERFUL AND I THOUGHT IT WAS UNCLEAR ABOUT FATHERS MOTHERING US OH I'LL COME BACK TO IT... I WANTED TO START BACK ON THAT FIRST ARTICLE THAT YOU WROTE ABOUT LITERARY WOMEN ... WHICH I THOUGHT WAS VERY INTRIGUING AND IN LIGHT OF THE PIECE THE OTHER ARTICLE THAT YOU GAVE ME WHICH YOU SAID WAS LIKE FOUR YEARS AGO~~

~~Do you know when that meeting was with Susan Griffin? that Adrienne Rich was at? ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ and it was like new voices or something like that and a whole lot of feminists and women writers were~~

~~I THINK IT WAS BEFORE MY TIME HERE I HAD ONLY BEEN HERE A YEAR~~

~~I know it was ^{three} or four years ago that's when I began writing and I don't know who the take is(?) I can't remember it was three or four years ago~~

~~THAT'S WHEN YOU BEGAN ^{Did} writing poetry?~~

~~Yeah writing poetry~~

ONLY THREE OR FOUR YEARS AGO? ↙

FRANCES JAFFER

4 4

Yeah

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

57 yesterday no the day before yesterday

WELL HAPPY ^{BARSON'S} BIRTHDAY!... I DON'T KNOW IF I REALLY BELIEVE IN THAT BUT

I know a lot of people born in this month who do
Oh well it's sort of a thing you have in common it's sort of a metaphor It's a new metaphor that's kinder than the ~~XXXX~~ Freudian metaphors that talk about our personalities

SO THAT MEETING?

2 or 3 weeks
That was the meeting where well I had been writing a little bit ^{some} still trying to write a few poems in answer to my article where I said women should write poems in fact I tried a few... so I went to this meeting and I got very very excited about different kinds of energy that was there and I can talk about that later on if you want

NO LET'S CONTINUE ALONG THAT LINE

I don't know how long you want to talk... well

*that was published in Chrysalis **

Jodie
THE WHOLE TIME THAT YOU WERE, I ASSUME RAISING CHILDREN AND OBVIOUSLY HAVING AN INTELLECTUAL LIFE BECAUSE IT SHOWED IN THAT ARTICLE WHICH WAS NOT WRITTEN OUT OF THE CLEAR BLUE SKY YOU HAD NOT WRITTEN ANY POEMS?

~~Well~~ I first started to write about 24 5 years ago ~~or less~~ just very very little ~~I think~~ ~~no poems~~... and then I went to a class for mothers with children who were going to be studying poetry ~~with a bunch of other women~~ and for the first time I was introduced to modern poetry... and in about three weeks we all started writing and I started to try and write something and I discovered that I got serious enough so that I realized that I had better have some teaching and that this was an art and you couldn't just do it on your own and then I went looking around and I met Jack Gilbert at a party and he told me that I should go and see ~~Mark~~... so I went to ~~Mark~~ Sir Frances Drake... at a workshop

*Mark
1957 or 8*

~~OH I SEE WHICH WAS A LONG TIME BEFORE YOU KNEW HIM~~

~~Which was in 1957... or 8 and it was recognised in the workshop that I had a certain talent//... Mark told a mutual friend that I would someday probably write some neat poems but then I was writing a poem about my son Louie who had nearly died when he was 5 years old at that time he wasn't much older he was 6 or 7 and the poem was very moving and every woman who read it would cry but in the workshop Mark and others told me that it needed filling out I needed much more about the test tubes and instruments and needles and all the agony of this hospitalization in order to have more images and to have the poem fuller and I really wanted this image because it was essential to my wish to teach to say something to other women and I just knew that I wasn't interested in that what interested me was how you live long enough in 5 years so that if you died it would have been a life... have I given him enough love and whatever you can give a kid? so that they told him that he was in fact going to die that there was no hope that no kid that sick had ever lived he was getting all the medicine he could get in both veins but that it would take 18 hours to work and he would suffocate before it worked and just to sit there with nothing you could do and watch him die, so I was all alone his father was useless and far away and my parents~~

I had no husband attitude towards my

would have been worse than useless because their health is pretty awful(?) so I just sat there alone and tried to think about if he died ... since he was going to die would I be able to accept that he had had a life? and I start crying now even thinking

about it and the women were just in tears about it I knew I wasn't interested in a poem about test tubes and needles and the paraphenalia the cruel Paraphenelia the hospital was not what it was about it was unconscious and I knew he was suffering cruel nightmares you could tell, and I thought well if that's what you have to do in order to make a poem ~~XXXXX~~ that kind of concrete visual imagery, then I'm not interested I'M not a poet I don't give a damn, and by that time I was also falling in love with a teacher we started going out together and you know that ~~side of my nature the Fran side came out in full~~ I really wanted a chance to be a housewife like my mother and so I stopped writing and got married and spent about ten years giving parties and mothering,

Turning point

ALL THE COOKIES AND THE WINE RIGHT?

Yeah right and nurturing everybody and I cannot deny that I loved it...this was a stage in my life I had to go through because I had always experienced my mother's I think masochist(?) or you know feminism would wish for me not to be as helpless as she was I had experienced it simply as her wish for me not to compete and her feeling that I wasn't able to do what she could do which was in fact true because she would say when I was 35 "to think that you had never been able to bake a pie" you know? that kind of thing... and "you better not iron your own blouses because you have such terrible acne I'll pay for it" you know?" so you go out and you study and be a scholar so as soon as I

not wanting me to do domestics

THAT'S A TWISTED WAY OF TRYING TO SHOW

~~To show that patriotism was operating~~
 It was her self hatred that was operating to try and give me something better but I experienced it as a feeling of my incompetence which it also was so whatever it was I really had to do that but in the meanwhile when Mark was head of the poetry center I lived in an atmosphere of poets... I went to lectures I listened to conversations and Mark and I really liked to talk and he really encouraged my left brain or my mind or my sense that I was intelligent which I never had before and he kept telling me that was brilliant you know things like that till I finally became smarter and respond to expectations... you know you do respond to expectations...and I would be so useful to him... flashes right and left intuitive flashes and I wouldn't know where they would come from and then he would use them and organise them in the left brain wave and my conversations were very cooperative in that way and very exciting and also very good. I find the experience I wanted to do sequat(?) on... I said I don't want to be a wife I don't want to do housework

super to

YOU WANTED TO ESCAPE THE LOVER LEVEL?

I really wanted to be what I thought a cortesan, was that is, an intellectual companion a sex object a ~~XXXX~~ hostess, you know all those things.

~~WITHOUT ALL THE GRAP WORK THAT GOES WITH IT~~ Yes, much better than a "wife" !

Yeah without all the other stuff

~~CAUSE THE MYSTICS BRING US DOWN TO A WRETCHED LEVEL OF HUSBAND AND WIFE~~

Right I didn't want to do that and I knew that but I experinced myself as having an excellent passive brain that is to say I would respond to the stimulus very female you know I was full of Margaret Mead who was just the ~~XXXX~~ ruin of the lives of the women of my generation...stuff about ~~men~~ and ~~women~~ and how creative it is to be a housewife she really was I think a downer... I hated Simone de Beauvoir I thought she was shit and I was really into Margaret Mead... and I suppose we need to do it and after about ten years we both had enough of parties we had this huge party for everyone we knew and it was like a

DOMESTICS

male and female and had alot to do with

GOING AWAY PARTY

↓

Yeah

WAS THIS THE END OF THE CAREER? AT THE POETRY CENTER OR WHAT?

No this was actually a couple of more years but this was ^{we} felt that the poetry world as ^{we} saw it well the first year ^{we} felt that people needed to get together we needed a lot of parties needed various groups to get to know each other cause we hated each other

CAUSE THERE WASN'T ANY COMMUNITY?

~~NO and they were all hating each other and we didn't talk to each other people would come to our parties and people would say oou look whose talking to so and so...and the younger and the older poets and stuff like that but then we felt that that was no longer necessary and we were fed up cause it cost us a fortune to do it so we quit that and we moved out to the country for a year and then I got cancer and ~~then~~ I guess i decided ok if I'm not going to live very long maybe I don't want to do anything that I don't have I made a vow that I never again want to do anything that I don't have to do that I don't want to do... and I think at that point I began to think about feminism and my son's girlfriend was a feminist and I used to say to her well Judy you don't have to be a fanatic and she looked at me oh Frances yes you do and that's where I think it began.~~

About 1970.

NOW YOU SAY YOU GOT INTERESTED IN FEMINISM WHEN YOU WERE RECOVERING OR

~~Yeah well I read so much at that time and I read a great deal of mythology including inevitably ^{Emily Ellen} you know some of the ^{Jungian} women...some of the women Jungians who were writing about women from a different point of view and I was reading Joesph Camp(?)... I was trying to find I suppose something mystical for myself a mystical place for a woman who ^{that} was a conscious search and along there I came into the whole notion of the mothe r goddess and some of that stuff I just told you~~

HOW LONG AGO WAS THIS?

~~That must have been well I got sick in 1970 I don't think I began reading anything about feminism until about two year s ago... and that girl was so wonderful she was like one of the most important people in my life... she was like a daughter to me~~

THIS IS THE ONE THAT MY FRIEND HELENE ALIN IS SO CRAZY ABOUT I THINK

Really?

IN FACT SHE WAS THERE WHEN YOU WERE READING MY FRIEND HELENE AVON SHE TAUGHT AT SAN FRANCISCO STATE SHE'S A PAINTER AND SHE SOMEHOW KNEW YOUR DAUGHTER IN LAW TO BE? IS THAT THE SAME

~~No that's not the same that's Barbara she's antoher one but Lincoln and Barbara have been going together two years but Lincoln and Judith went together for 5 years and she was the person who said to me Frances stop talking and write... and that's when she said I don't want to hear anymore your ideas are so interesting we talked about these ideas about feminism and writing and she said it's time for you to stop ~~writing~~ talking and I said I can't write... and she said yes you can I want you to so then Kathleen Fraser I talked to he r about it and told her what Judith said you can't write sit down ad write Judith a letter and tell her all these ideas and see what happens and that was that article you turned in to me(?)~~

*Did you get interested in feminism?
lymphoma,*

*couraged by his girlfriend
write*

7

ok now back to what do you want to do?

NO I'M CURIOUS I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS

Sure

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO GO INTO THE INTERVIEW IN FACT I WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT ONCE I DO TRANSCRIBE THE INTERVIEW THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO CENSOR OUT ANYTHING YOU WISH

ok that makes it easier to talk

YEAH YOU CAN SAY ANYTHING YOU WANT BESIDES WHICH IT'S GOING TO GO THROUGH A WHERE I'M GOING TO THROW OUT ALL THIS FRIVOLUS CHATTER BUT I'M GOING TO START CHOPPING IT

yeah i understand that

SO IF THERE ARE THINGS THAT APPEAR THAT YOU DON'T WANT

so far I haven't said anything that's not ok

OH GLAD TO HEAR THAT

cause I have been conscious that I have been on tape

YEAH YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT OK BECAUSE I WANT PEOPLE THAT I'M INTERVIEWING TO HAVE CONTROL

I'll probably know at the time I'm saying it to tell you that this I would rather not...mostly I feel ~~XXXX~~ I have a mission I'm really glad for this interview because this is a chance to talk to younger women and I really want to do that

IT'S INSPIRING FOR ME THAT'S WHY I'M DOING IT SO WE'RE HOOKED UP ON YOUR MISSION AND MY INSPIRATION

Yeah well I'm really delighted so in addition to Seriphina's exhibition... I also feel I have the obligation to say as much ^{sk} about ^{about} the truth ^{sk} of my life as I can

I HAVE COMMENTS TO MAKE ABOUT THAT ONE I WRITE ABOUT THAT INCESSANTLY IN MY REVIEWS IN THE SF REVIEW OF BOOKS ABOUT HOW I THINK THAT WOMEN HAVE FELT ENORMOUSLY LIED TO FOR CENTURIES AND THAT'S THEIR QUEST FOR ^{sk} TRUTH IS INVOLVED IN THAT

Can you send me some old copies I haven't seen ^{sk} any of that magazine except one and I'd like to see some of the stuff you write turn about as fair play ~~sk~~ (?)

YEAH OK I HAVE SOME THAT I THINK YOU WOULD FIND INTERESTING(?)

Ok so what's the question?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT CANCER YOU HAD AND I WAS TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT BY READING YOUR BOOK AND I THOUGHT NO YOU COULDN'T HAVE IT'S BONE MARROW?... NO IT COULDN'T BE

Bone marrow is the place that I had simply imagined is the source cause it's where the blood is ~~sk~~ and the lymph is all made and it's the source of the cells that are the immune system and it's sort of like the metaphor for the immune system which fights cancer...although cancer itself is a disease of the immune system so it's a simplistic metaphor but anyway it worked ^{sk} for me I have lymph phoma...which is and it's a fairly low grade lymphoma it's malignant but it's not rapidly malignant and the first time... It was operated and supposedly removed and it didn't come back for six years and then it came back in several places so I had kemo therapy(?)...

And that's only palated(?) it it~~XX~~ isn't curable and so it is assumed that it will return into it's... again in the course of treatment and I would like to make that ...the part is possible(?) the danger to me ~~XX~~ is that part of me does not want to be away from doctors and I'm sort of scared of it(?)

BUT IT'S SORT OF LIKE LIVING WITH SOMETHING THAT'S CHRONIC AND YET IT'S BEEN KEPT IN A HANCE

Yes they tell me my life expectancy is 16 years and those are just statistics it could be less or more...

THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SAID IN ANY TIME NOW ABOUT NO IT WAS IN THE JOURNAL ENTREES ABOUT WH AT IF I WERE WELL WOULD PEOPLE LOVE ME?

Yeah I mean yeah my mother only loved me when I was sick I think that's a part in Any Time Now... she simply doesn't love anybody ^{she} experiences as strong... with my children for instance when she gets angry at one of them I used to use the manipulative device of immediately ^{when I} would talk to her I would tell the problems they were having unhappiness and immediately nothing is too much for them the poor kid is in her ^{eyes} the symbol of love

IT'S HORRIBLE BUT WHEN I WAS READING YOUR WORK AND I FIRST STARTED READING THE JOURNALS THAT'S WHEN I WAS RELATING IT TO MY OWN LIFE BECAUSE MY MOTHER IS THE SAME WAY I MEAN I HAVE A JEWISH MOTHER WHO IS LIKE THAT AND SHE LOVES TO HEAR BAD STORIES... EVEN THOUGH SHE LIKES ME TO BE WELL SHE CAN ONLY RELATE TO ME WHEN I TELL HER I HAVE THE FLU BECAUSE THEN SHE HAS A WHOLE REPERTOIRE TO GO THROUGH OTHERWISE SHE FEELS HELPLESS BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T REALLY KNOW ME ANYMORE

It's like that even now my mother is 84 and she is more helpless than ever and so she leads into (?) that

I WAS WONDERING IF YOU KNEW HOW COMMON THIS THING WAS

Oh I do but I think that my mother's destructive physical actions upon me may have been excessive compared to others

DON'T YOU SEE HER AS A VICTIM?

Oh of course I do...I have tried and tried and tried to write poems about from her point of view I have one poem which about her which simply didn't work it's a thematic (?) poem in which I write it's a poem about an older sister and what life was like cause she was the oldest of six kids or 5 kids and I think that is a really bad trip for a girl she's turned into a mother at an early age and E E Nesbud I think did the best job on that in a book called The Bastibal(?) children Dora the ~~XXXXX~~ oldest of the five Bastibal children is a total pain in the ass and yet women can see a little bit of what that's like I mean they don't have a choice those girls

THERE'S NOBODY MOTHERING THEM

Right they're by themselves

THAT GETS BACK TO WHAT YOU WERE SAYING

And of course my mother you know what we all do that's so awful is that we think if ~~xx~~ we just do the opposite of our own mothers we will be ok... so my mother who wasn't mothered tried to overmother me and I ~~try~~ tried in some funny kinds of ways to undermother my kids and you know so forth...but I do feel that it is a real inadequacy of my poetry that my compassion for my mother is not in it One poem the one that was published in Best Friends in fact is maybe the only really

FRANCES JAFFER
3/15/78

Anytime Now
Effie's Press

She Talks To Herself on the Language
of an Educated Woman -
Kelsey St Press

SHE WAS EVEN WILLING TO GIVE ME AN INSCRIBED COPY

Becky was? oh that's right I sent it to Becky yeah

I came to the house and Becky had the flu and i said well did I leave anything?
and she said no and I said It's ok Becky it's my copy you can throw it(?) I said
no I don't want to take an inscribed copy well the machine you won't even know it's
on after awhile

THAT'S OK I WENT TO A CLASS YESTERDAY FOR ABOUT THREE HOURS OR TWO HOURS READING
AND TALKING AND THEY HAD A TAPE RECORDER

AT STATE?

No City College and they didn't have a microphone

OH TAPED IT VERY WELL (?)

No it was near me but I forgot the tape is all

BY THE WAY THIS IS THE ISSUE

I found it ok

OK WELL IX BROUGHT IT JUSTIN CASE

I didn't really read it carefully again cause I have infact read it

AND I ALSO I DON'T KNOW IF YOU WANT THIS BACK BUT I FOUND IT VERY INTERESTING I'M
GOING TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT IT

Ok no I think I have another one

OH AS A MATTER OF FACT I THINK I'D LIKE TO START OFF TALKING ABOUT THAT

ok

YOU SAID THE ONLY REASON I'M GOING TO USE MY PAPER IF IT MAKES YOU NERVOUS IS BECAUSE
SO THAT I CAN QUOTE YOU DIRECTLY

Nothing I you know I'm not nervous because of the situation I mean I am an exhibi-
tionist...I like to talk about myself

IS THAT RIGHT?

Wellyou can see that in Seriphina

IS THAT THE PART OF YOU I MEAN IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS IN ANY TIME NOW THAT IT'S YOUR
OTHER PERSONA AND

Well yeah it's one of the dominant persona probably the one that mostly writes
the poems although that which to dance in the street what is it you know she wants
to dance into the street and twirl till her panties show? Seriphina is the naughty
girl that's the exhibitionist

WHY DOES FRANCES WANT TO BE CALLED BY HER NAME?

Seriphina wants me to recognise me as me the girl at the prom is named Seriphina

BUT FRANCES WANTS TO BE CALLED FRANCES OR ELSE SHE'S GOING TO

ever to have compassion for her and I think it's ^{fairly} really successful
How did Anytime Now come about
 THAT ONE IS AND IN FACT I NOTICED THAT THAT ONE IS QUITE DIFFERENT THE ATTITUDE IN THAT POEM IS DIFFERENT FROM THE ATTITUDE THAT APPEARS IN ANY TIME NOW

Mother in Self

Ok I'll tell you what happened in Any Time Now I had just had a flair up and more cancer...and I talked to my therapist in Iowa(?) she said you have to go in Frances and find your own nurturing mother cause you don't seem to be able to accept any nutturing from your real mother so what you really have to do is go inward to your Own unconscious and you will find a nurturing mother who is there but on the way don't be surprized if you find your bad mother first so Any Time Now is really my bad mother that experience of encountering my bad mother on the way to search for a nurturing mother for myself...well I haven't set the limits on my effort to define the nurturing mother and myself in me you know the value of her to me but you know they're nice but they're funny you know they're not...

DO YOU THINK WE HAVE TO WRITE OUR MOTHERS OUT? FOR OURSELVES WE HAVE TO ^{Almost} ALMOST GO THROUGH THAT LIKE A PHASE IN OUR WRITING?

I don't know do you think so?

I'M JUST FROM MY OWN PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE I THINK THE EARLIEST POEMS THAT I EVER WROTE WERE DISGUISED LOVE POEMS TO MY MOTHER WHO I RETAINED AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF ANIMOSITY FOR FOR YEARS AND YEARS AND STILL DO BUT I THINK I'VE WRITTEN AROUND FINALLY WRITTEN HER OUT AND IT'S ONLY WHEN I FEEL REALLY DEPRESSED THAT SHE COMES BACK THAT I WANT TO WRITE HER MORE OF THOSE HATE POEMS AND THEY'RE NOT REALLY HATE POEMS THEY'RE MORE LIKE PITY POEMS... AND I HOPE THAT AT SOME POINT IN MY LIFE THEY'LL THAT I'LL STOP BEING OBSESSED WITH HER

I think I'm much less obsessed with my mother than I was a few years ago but I don't think I have suffieiently come to terms with... well what I experience as my need to take sides with my mother and my father which is ^{really} the destructive element in me

AND YOU TAKE SIDES WITH YOUR FATHER?

Well I alternate

WHAYDO YOU SAY IT'S THE DESTRUCTIVE POINT IN YOU? I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT

Well I don't think that Seriphina is killing me or that it's Fran that is killing me both of which I at one time thought and I think once again that that's simplistic I think that the incessant struggle between these various aspects of myself i sort of again simplistically you know I don't want any of this to be understood as anything but sche matic...and partial but I mean ok but i mean they're ^{useful} kind of metaphor for... ad I experienced Seriphina as being much my father in me and Fran as being much my mother in me

SERIPHINA BECAUSE SHE HAD FREEDOM AND MOBILITY AND REALLY COULD MOVE AROUND IN THE WORLD LIKE MEN CAN

Right and was agresive and what they call phallic...and noisy brash my father was always... joyful ~~xxx~~ funny occasionally witty... extremely physical dancing and running and the loud voice and all that kind of thing and then I have seen my mother as whatever you know the positive side at times I have acertain amount(?) of charm and I have.. you know I am a nurturer and I'm not only a bad mother and I am a good wife and this time and so...I am aware I am almost paranoid but still aware of what is happening in the world around me when I'm on top of things otherwise I

*Mobility
Paranoia
abstracting
movement
see p 2*

FRANCES JAFFER

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just get paranoid and don't know what's happening you know?...so that's my mother in me I think and my mother sings and my father danced so I mean it's a real..but the two fight they're endlessly fighting and I experience it metaphorically now as torn up soil you know like the rubble after a bombing...in which what grows is likely to be poisonous and destructive...

SO TO JUST SORT OF WRAP THAT UP IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET PAST THE PARENTS

Oh yes I want to integrate and sort of allow myself to not be in constant alertation internally but it's very difficult you know/?...I'm not always optimistic that I'm not going to be able to do it

INSTEAD YOU GET PARANOID ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD HOW DOES THAT MANIFEST ITSELF?

Don't stick your neck out that's in Any Time Now that line

ISN'T IT WHAT OUR MOTHERS ALWAYS TELL US

Yeah but I mean

DON'T TALK TO STRANGERS AND DON'T STICK YOUR NECK OUT

Yeah but if you carry that to an extreme and you always think that the outside world is going to do you in or your children in or the people that you identify with

FEAR?

I mean there's reasonable fear...as they say paranoids do have enemies but then there is the total fear which is also a projection of your own hostility... you know all that kind of *thing confused thing*

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO SEPARATE THE PARANOIA THAT I'VE FELT FOR SO MANY YEARS NOW AS A RESULT COMMITMENT TO FEMINISM THE PARANOIA THAT I FEEL ABOUT THE PATRIARCHY TRYING TO GET ME I MEAN NOT THAT I FEEEL THAT THEY'RE TRYING TO GET ME ACTIVELY BUT THEY'RE ALREADY GOTTEN ME...AND I DO FEEL PARANOID NOW I EXPERIENCE IT AS PARANOIA BEFORE I WAS JUST PLAIN HOSTILE

Do you feel paranoid about the patriarchy
You've raised 3 sons. How does yr feminism affect them?
It doesn't do us any good to sit with all that hate... it may even be reasonable it may be true but it's just unhealthy to live that way... for us and of course as a mother of sons I have a strong sympathy/empathy with men because I know to what extent I created them ~~which is moe~~ machismo in my own sons

I BET THAT'S SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

I mean I have to be more sympathetic to men than a mother who is either childless or with daughters

ISN'T THAT WHAT ADRIENNE RICH SAYS OF MOTHERHOOD? I MEAN CAUSE SHE HAS ABOUT FIVE SONS

Yeah I don't know cause I don't know how shee feels about

I HAVEN'T READ THE BOOK EITHER BUT I SUDDENLY THOUGHT THAT THERE MIGHT BE A CONNECT*ION THERE

I don't know

WHAT KINDS OF JUST BRIEFLY WHAT KINDS OF DO YOU SEE IN YOUR SONS THAT YOU HELPED CREATE THAT DISTURBS YOU? AND IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANY DIFFERENT

Yes it could have been different.

HAD YOU BEEN MORE CONSCIOUS

~~It could have been different I think at this moment it's still difficult for even the most avid feminists to raise sons like I mean it's very easy to raise or it's not easy but it's easy to feel good about the effort to raise girls without stereotyping them because what you are giving them is all the advantages in the culture strength aggression~~

NOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT THEY ARE

self love authority and so on you know all those things that are so useful to men that women haven't had a physical mobility all that kind of stuff If you give daughters a very so called heavy male opportunity...in their psyches you are simply giving them what the culture values but if you give boys female qualities

YOU ARE GIVING THEM SOMETHING THAT IS NOT VALUED

You are giving them something that will at this point be very damaging to them and at the same time you want to there are some things that I think I could have with knowledge done differently I could allow boys to cry I couldn't force them to fight when they didn't feel like fighting I wouldn't say you know well don't be a coward that sort of thing which I felt I had to do in order to prepare them for the cruel jungle

WHICH YOU DID RIGHTFULLY BUT I WAS THINKING MORE IN TERMS OF MORE IN THE LINE OF IF YOU WERE TO RAISE A BOY CHILD NOW WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Well I would allow them to cry I would not tell them to be cowards I would not tell them that they were cowards if they did cry or didn't want to fight I would encourage them in whatever like if they felt like playing with dolls as well as with boy toys you know I would neither encourage or discourage any of that kind of thing... I would probably give them some kind of a doll to nurture

THAT'S AN INTERESTING POINT IT'S ALMOST AS IF A CHALLENGE EXISTS IN RAISING BOY CHILDREN BECAUSE IT'S MORE DIFFICULT

Oh I think for feminists there was an article in Ms. about this I'm not just I don't take credit for what I'm talking about they did questionnaires and everything and the feminist's mothers of boys found themselves an extremely difficult situation because they didn't want to cripple their sons in a world in which certain male qualities are essential. ^{you don't} a boy to grow up and be accused of being a sissy if he's living out in that concrete jungle or whatever it is you're ~~wasting your chicken on the other men(?)~~ ^{you don't want} them to be a patriarch ...other qualities for example there's a sense of responsibility to women that are very strong in my sons well in a patriarchy that's maybe the best thing you can do in a certain way for in order to help ^{have} good families but women don't like that ~~don't want it~~

OH BUT THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY CAN TRANSFER TO PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Well I mean there is a sense however that you're better than the women you're responsible for

NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR BUT RESPONSIBLE TO

Yeah but I'm talking about for that the thing I trained them to feel you know ... so I mean there are all these and they're subtle and I wasn't aware that I was doing it

FRANCES JAFFER

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THERE'S ALWAYS A COMPLICATED WAY OF MANNERS THAT MEN IN PREVIOUS GENERATIONS HAVE HAD THAT ARE TAKEN TO BE POLITE AND RESPONSIBLE AS OPPOSED TO RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Right it's very different I mean you you can.... responsibility... mutual responsibility

YES

I kind of abress ²⁾ macho stance I see in my sons some of which comes from their father who is not my present husband... some of which I think I encouraged it

ALL OF YOUR SONS ARE FROM THE SAME..

yeah I think I expect some(?) from this husband we have not had children

AND HOW MANY SONS?

I have threesons and one step son

IN THE REVIEW THAT YOU ^{of Ellen Moers book Literary Women,} WROTE ~~IN LOURIE~~ YOU SAID THE SUBJECT MATTER THAT MOST DEEPLY INTERESTS WOMEN BORES MEN OR EVEN OFFENDS THEM OR THAT WAS WHAT EL MOIER SAID AND YOU QUOTED IT AND TALKED ABOUT IT DO YOU THINK THAT'S STILL TRUE? OR DO YOU WANT TO COMMENT ON THAT IN SOME WAY? SUBJECT MATTER IN LITERATURE

Yeah I hear you and I'm trying to be extremely careful with my answer

THAT'S A LOADED QUESTION

Because I think it is still true but less true

HOW? ^{Flash} THAT'S AMASING EVERY TIME I LOOK OVER THERE I SEE IT TWIRLING IS THIS A JUDY CHICAGO?

UH HUH

WHEW!

It's powerful isn't it?

IT'S PART PSYCHADELIC AND IT'S PARTIALLY IT'S BECAUSE OF THE COLOR OF YOUR SHIRT PICKING UP THE PAINT

^{Her's} Oh yeah! right well that's a good example I went with my husband and step son who is an artist to the Chicago exhibitat the museum a few years ago...and I walked through the door and there were five of her paintings just as you came out of the elevator to the left and they just wiped me out! I mean they just knocked me out and I talked to a lot of women and I haven't talked to a single woman I think I haven't I may be exaggerating but certainly almost everyone I've talked to felt them very very powerfully and positively...some women were so ~~knocked~~ knocked out by them that they wanted to cry they had to sit down...I didn't feel that strongly I just ~~wanted to~~ was drawn to them...my husband who was a feminist and faught hard for the feminist's position in the college and is a strong supporter of feminism in every way that he can be and my step son also a feminist didn't like her...and a lot of men don't like her whereas women are ^{immediately} drawn to her ok that's a nice abstract example in literature I think I'm trying to think of some works that men have not liked...I find just over and over andover again the books that women like

MEN HAVEN'T LIKED ~~JANE AUSTIN~~ GEORGE ELIOT OR VIRGINIA WOOLF AS MUCH AS WOMEN HAVE OBVIOUSLY

Yeah but you know Austin and Eliot well Austin men like in general I think maybe not as much as women but you know

THEY LIKE AUSTIN BETTER THAN ELIOT

Yeah that's what I was saying Austin they like Eliot less and Woolf less even

CAUSE AUSTIN IS COOLER SHE'S MORE REMOVED

Yeah and she has an extraordinarily successful patriarchal formal structure I think...but they still criticize her for not having anything more than the Napoleonic War

OH RIGHT HER DEFICIT SHE DIDN'T LOOK INTO THE BROADER SCOPE

Right that whole sense and men are not interested in relationships between women and I'm not talking about sexual or lesbian relationships but I'm talking about the times between women that there are interested in men whole novels written for instance without a woman in them like Moby Dick...a whole novel like that written with a lot of men in it men simply dismiss

OR DISMISS IT AS LESBIAN IF THERE'S NO MALE IN IT

Well not even that ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ I mean I'm trying to think of some maybe only lesbians have written it but I think I don't know ~~XXXX~~ stories or something where there's not going to be that chasing away... ~~XXXX~~ relationships that women have...even without

IT'S FUNNY BECAUSE WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT ANNA KARININA THERE'S A RELATIONSHIP IN ANNA KARININA BETWEEN ANNA AND HER SISTER IN LAW AND IT'S REAL POIGNANT AND REAL TENDER AND IT'S A VERY SMALL PART OF THE NOVEL BUT HE DOESN'T DWELL ON IT UPON RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WOMEN

Well no because there not well did you ever see Jeanne Moreau's movie not long ago

LUMIERE?

Yes Lumiere well that was an interesting experience for me because I sat there saying OH my why? you know

I DID TOO

I was so excited and Mark afterwards you know what I cannot understand what was so exciting to you so and he really reads a lot of my stuff he is I cite him not to criticize him because of all the men I know certainly of my generation he is the most feminist aesthetically...because most of the men will be feminists politically and will be very angry if you say they are not feminists because they are aesthetically so patriarchal...but I have really educated Mark and he has been very he has struggled very hard with his innate patriarchal sense of what art is...to hear me and so I really and so I want it to be very clear that when I say even Mark that I'm not being critical of him because

I CAN SEE THAT RESPECT

But I mean I think he's a very good example because if he can't get it then we can really say it's hard to get and so afterwards he said why why why and I said well for example remember the scene by the swimming pool I said there's things in that movie over and over again that I've never seen in movies before they are what women are like when there are no men around...and you haven't seen them either and you

didn't even notice it for example ~~XXXXX~~ remember how giggly they were when they were getting into the pool... and poking fun at themselves and imitating sexual behavior and wriggling?...and stuff like that i said now that women do alot when we're by ourselves you never in your life have seen any woman do that... (side one ends here) ...vicious

OH YEAH AND THEY WERE ABSURD...

Yeah and the whole relationship with the servant...absolutely something that men never see it's the way we automatically are with each other... when there are no men around...this not only do they not did he not be excited about it he didn't recognize it and I think this is often true whereas my mind has gone blank I'm trying to think of some examples of

BY THE WAY JEANNE MOREAU DOES NOT CONSIDER HERSELF TO BE A FEMINIST ~~XXX~~ I DON'T KNOW IF YOU KNOW THAT OR NOT THERE WAS AN ARTICLE IN LAST WEEK'S

They allsay that

I KNOW BUT SHE DOES EVEN MORE ADAMANTLY BECAUSE OF HER FRENCH SNOPTYNNESS IN LAST WEEK'S OR THE WEEK'S BEFORE NEW YORKER AND ALBE JENI HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH HER IT'S A VERY BAD ARTICLE BUT SHE MAKES THIS POINT OF SAYING I AM NOT A FEMINIST

Lots of luck

Why do you suppose women denounce feminism? Or refuse to ally?

~~I KNOW I THOUGHT IT WAS VERY STRANGE THAT SHE WOULD DO THAT~~

As a matter of fact nobody would have even gone to that movie if there had not been any feminism I ~~get~~ annoyed but also sympathetic at these women whoare exceptional in the sense that they have been able to be accepted by the patriarchal world in one way or another ~~who~~ ^{are} saying they're not feminist when in fact ~~success~~ ^{their} success depended on feminism, the women before them O'Keefe and women like that ~~know~~ no their success didn't depend on feminism, but there are an awful lot of women today who have audiences and support systems and followers and readers and publishers that they wouldn't have had before feminism so I don't think ~~lessing~~ ^{lessing} I think caused a lot of feminism but it was also relieved because of feminism and taken seriously ...men were not reading her books

WHYDO YOU SUPPOSE JUST TO BACKTRACK OR YOU KNOW IT'S A LITTLE OFF THE SUBJECT BUT WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE WOMEN DENOUNCE IT'S NOT LIKE THEY'RE ~~DEMOUNCING~~ ^{DEMOUNCING} FEMINISM BUT THEY REFUSE TO ALLY

Just a minute I'll go downstairs I was just reading an article a review by Diane Johnson who I think is ~~XXXXX~~ spectacular of a biography of Charlotte Bronte and this version(?) of her work in which she talks about the way women put down other women I have a whole lot of theories about that turn it off for a minute while I think

OK

~~I think it's very similar to all oppressed groups blacks Jews the whole ~~to~~ role of the Uncle Tom, it's very sad, In order to get out of the ghetto whatever kind of ghetto it is that we are constricted into it takes a person with a particular kind of aggressiveness to do that, a certain inner drive for whatever psychic reasons, is stronger than usual person in that kind of constricted space and then has to have some kind of good fortune and then you have to have something that is recognizable and valued in a certain way by men for example I think that we have to admit no Matter how O'Keefe was without ~~Stibutz~~ ^{Stibutz} (?) she might never have been known...I think for example that I have to be very aware that ~~granted~~ ^{granted} I think my poems were immediate~~

interesting, but there's a peculiar mixture of age and stuff that I am I think that my advantage in immediately finding people who would recognise them and immediately publish them has a lot to do with the people I knew because I was Mark's wife the whole world of poetry I was already in so that people like Susan Griffin Katherine Fraser and so on were already friends of mine... and there wasn't anything for me like grubby struggling as a woman it was because I was married to a man who had influence in this world and so I think that you have to have... a mixture of a certain kind of aggression and a certain kind of ruthlessness in order to leave the water and walk on the land so to speak and I think that those people who do that are particularly not going to be ones who it's like any self-made man... those are the men who do not want to help the next fellow up who do not want to recognise the network which had supported him them who do not want to recognise the things that they have been willing and had to do... and I don't want to criticise those women... particularly women because that's because I think they have more reason than self-made men in that they get the patriarchal culture but I'm very sympathetic to black Uncle Toms also because they sort of made it out of the ghetto and said to the world look we are not animals! we are in fact intelligent beings and can do these things the same as you people can and with women yes we are ~~XXX~~ really not soft ^{like} cuddly things to be kept at home

YEAH THE ATTITUDE THAT THEY MOUTH IS DISSA POINTED... TO HEAR SOMEONE TO SAY I'M NOT FEMINIST AND I DON'T BELIEVE IN THAT IS A BAD REP

Yeah but I don't think we can avoid it because I think that in addition to all these other things that I'm transpiring (?) to the particular problem that women have is that we are conditioned from the earliest moment to fight each other, instead somebody said that women are the only oppressed group who do not live together they live in the houses of the enemy... separated from each other and we are ~~XXXX~~ taught to compete for men with each other, scratch out the eyes pull the hair I mean I think Rich said it wonderfully in that poem that ends with It's political and it's unnecessary... I think that's a great poem! and a man reads that and can't see what it's about and I think that's one of the most important poems

IS THAT IN THE NEW(?) POEMS?

No it's in either World of Change or Island of the Rif(?) you know a woman's in a telephone booth and she's calling up a man and there's another woman in bed with him... and they're enemies and at the end of the poem she says she does not know that it is political and unnecessary and something and political

I'LL HAVE TO LOOK AT IT

You can look it up later if you want it's great but I do think that it's it's unnecessary but the conditioning is so strong that it is inevitable for a little while but the women who make it onto the land are going to be absolutely unconscious of how they're done it,

IT WOULD BE HARD OTHERWISE I SUPPOSE TO MAINTAIN A FOOT ON LAND AND A FOOT IN THE SEA ALTHOUGH ONE WOULD HOPE FOR THAT

Well that's what the next wave of feminists are trying to do but the pioneers the ones who went ahead of us who really are the token women... i know a lot of people who like to put them down

YET THEY TAKE IT FOR GRANTED I MEAN THE NEXT GENERATION TAKES IT FOR GRANTED THAT THE WORLD WAS ALWAYS THIS WAY

I know and that's ~~XXXX~~ a nuisance

SO YOU'RE CAUGHT ON EITHER SIDE OF IT... YOU GET THE WOMEN WHO HAVE MADE IT AND REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE WHY OR HOW AND THE UP AND COMING GENERATION THAT

Frances JAFFER

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begins to make IT AND ALSO REFUSES

I know I agree with you and I think this is too bad I don't think ^{the} this is a solution to it is to be surprized or bewildered or too critical of the women who have that kind of a nature in the first place that makes it possible for them to do it cause if they didn't have that kind of a ruthless self serving nature in the first place plus a certain amount of good fortune... they wouldn't have done it so I mean you look at them and those are the people I mean I know in ~~the~~ ^{the} days of the black days of the black movement friends of my Uncle Toms ^{bitch} had made it as professionals and so on and became political conservatives and it would make me furious but then I would think who am I to be so angry... what kinds of self castrations men and women give each other... in order to ... the mutilations that you do to yourself as a woman to do that... it's very painful... and you can't rule yourself out then(?)

IT'S TRUE IT'S THE DEFENSE

I feel very... I don't like to talk to those women and I'm sorry about what they're saying but I don't anchor them(?)

WHO DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE IN THE LITERARY WORLD WHAT WOMEN WRITERS DO YOU CONSIDER TO HAVE INFLUENCED YOU? WE COULD EITHER TALK ABOUT CONTEMPORARY WRITERS OR ONES NOT SO CONTEMPORARY

Susan Griffin I think it was when I read her poems that it first occurred to me that I the kind of poetry that I originally had wanted to write one could write... in other words Mark and the class had been wrong and I could actually go back and rewrite that poem totally and of course ~~Bitch-Ritch~~... I think maybe Levertov's rumored in the alphabet as much as anything(?) that ever was written influenced me to write I still love that poem... I find now that I go back and back to Levertov early and late for a long time it was sort of fashionable she wasn't a feminist to put her down but as just a woman poet I just love her stuff... and I really respect her even though she was a token woman

WELL WHO CARES ABOUT THAT?

Yeah right I don't care I love her work

I WAS JUST PRESSING YOU AS FAR AS I COULD WITH THAT TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Yeah and then of the older poets I think my favorite all time forever obsessive excitement is with H.D....

BECAUSE OF THE GREEK? WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THAT A LITTLE BIT TOO

Oh no I try over and over again strange as it may seem to me no matter what I read of hers I read I find myself... and the song of her work you know it just makes me ecstatic I don't know what... I mean when I discovered her which was late I mean so she's not in other words I was writing long before I would read H.D. I couldn't read her when I first started reading like NO More Masks and things like that I just had no use for her I thought she was a man's woman in terms of her poetry and it was classic and boring and I couldn't get into it and after I began writing I started reading The Trilogy and I just couldn't stop and it's been that way ever since

I THINK SHE'S ONE OF THOSE POETS WHO THE ONLY WAY I CAN THINK OF IF YOU DON'T DANCE OR YOU DON'T SING AND YOU GO TO AN OPERA AND YOU DON'T LIKE OPERA YOU MIGHT BE UNCOMFORTABLE BUT IF YOU SOME HOW OR ANOTHER LEARN TO SING OR YOU HAVE A TALENT AND GO TO AN OPERA YOU HAVE AN AFFINITY FOR WHAT'S GOING ON? IN THE PROCESS

Yeah I really think so

SOMETHING LIKE THAT YEAH I DON'T THINK I WAS VERY INTERESTED IN H.D. ~~WHEN~~ WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE AT ALL

Well for one thing ^{of course} we do have to say she has not talked is not taught

WELL SHE WAS A LITTLE BIT BUT THAT WAS BECAUSE CREELEY

Creeley oh yeah but they would teach the wrong ones college girls...I mean they would probably ~~keep~~ did he teach there early? H.D. or late?

HE DIDN'T BUT I MEAN THERE WAS A LITTLE BIT OF AN AVANTE GARDE INFLUENCE WHERE I WENT TO SCHOOL BECAUSE OF HIM AND ~~THERE~~ THERE WERE POETRY TEACHERS WHO WERE A LITTLE HIP

Into L H.D.(?) right?

YEAH

even though he didn't get it so

AS A MATTER OF FACT I THINK THE PERSON WHO DID IT WAS STEVE ROGEFORD WHO IS HERE NOW AND WORKING

So I think H.D. should be taught from a feminist position... because the food for feminism in these poems is so... well I'd like to tell you a story about that and the patriarchy and what interests them I was reading H.D. and I was so excited ~~XXXXXX~~ I was just obsessed with H.D. and Mark can't read her and he said ok when you find one where the song of it gets to you cause he didn't like to read it(?) read it to me show it to me see if you can show me what it is that you like so much about it so I was in ~~the~~ the middle of Hell In Egypt and there was a poem about Achilles coming up the beach and I said ok here's one I like and I read it to him and he looked at it and the poetry teacher took a word and he said Yeah but I wish I could remember what he said he said this is inadequate and why did she do this? this is a complicated archaic word why couldn't she have used something simpler this is a strange construction why couldn't she have used something simpler and stuff like that so I said well I don't really know it's not my skill to know at this point but I'm going to study it because I can guarantee one thing it wasn't done out of ignorance or accident whatever she does she does on purpose... so I had to read it till I found it out so he said well let me take another look the minute he looked at it with that in his mind the skillful poetry teacher came to the part he said oh I see why she did it it illuminates the whole meaning of the poem and so forth and this antique(?) construction shows something and so forth but what it took was enough respect to assume that it wasn't an inferior student writing a poem but a great poet

A RATIONALE A POEM WRITTEN WITH

Why H.D.?
with conscious craft(?) you know she really knew what she was doing and if you studied her the same way you studied Eliot or Pound or something you know these things would be admired enormously he said you know

HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL? DID YOU CALL HIM ON IT?

Oh he saw it! He was calling himself. By doing that he was saying to me look I see when I look at it with respect I see more...oh yeah I mean this was an effort of his to take what I said seriously and have another look at the poem from what I had said and then he could see it

IT MUST HAVE TAKEN AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF STRENGTH TO ACTUALLY HAVE THIS ONGOING

disaGReEMENT ABOUT AESTHETIC CONCERNS

Yeah it's been very difficult

WITH SOMEONE YOU LIVE WITH I CAN IMAGINE IT ~~WEXE~~ WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR ME ALL THE TIME TO BE WITH S~~OMEONE~~ WHO COULD NOT SEE A JUDY CHICAGO AND COULD NOT SEE AN H.D. AND REPEATEDLY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE THE CONTENT

But he does learn and now he can read Rich who he couldn't read... and now he teaches these poets to his female students

SO YOU'VE BEEN AN EDUCATION ^{FOR} HIM

I have in fact been an educator and he has educated me it's been an ongoing process which is often painful...the fact that I could write taht article even in the sort of crude letter form that I wrote it in in Priscellis is a direct result of the years of argument that I've had with Mark in which I had to sharpen my lepra(?) perceptions in order to answer his arguments...It's like that poem in reverse my youth said his father I took to the law?...and I argued each case with my wife...much is ~~this district(?)~~ ^{strength} and gave to my child and it lasted the rest of my life... you laugh about that because it happens to both of them(?) ...cause I've educated him now just as much as he's educated me although at first it was the other way around

IT IS THE CASE OF THE STUDENT COMING AROUND AND ^{TEACHING} EDUCATING THE TEACHER

Yeah he had to be receptive in the first place although this male identity I mean which is I think the thing you have to realise in writers artists men teachers ^{particularly} their identity ~~particularly~~ is they can be very political feminists but their identity is totally locke d up in definitions of art that they themselves have had to learn at some cost to other sides of themselves and therefore it's the same thing with Uncle Tom women and men when you have had to cut out some part of yourself you are very reluctant to admit that you'd never had to do it

~~I WANTED TO ASK YOU WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT I'LL JUST PLUNGE INTO IN IS WHETHER YOU I HAVE EXPERIENCED WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE THE LAST BASTION I KNOW IT'S NOT THE LAST BUT IT'S CERTAINLY A VERY STRONGHOLD OF SEXISM AND THAT IS IN THE ART WORLD ART BROADLY SPEAKING BY MEN AND WOMEN BOTH WHO ACTUALLY DON'T CONSIDER FEMINISM AS AN ISSUE AND I DON'T KNOW HOW EXACTLY TO PUT THIS BUT THEY SORT OF TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT ONE WHO MAKES ART IS ANDROGENOUS FROM THE BEGONNING THEREFORE THERE NEVER WAS A PROBLEM AND THEREFORE THERE ISN'T A PROBLEM NOW AND WE OF COURSE WE RESPECT WOMEN'S WORK AND WOMEN WRITERS AND PAINTERS OF COURSE WE DO BECAUSE WE NEVER DISRESPECTED THEM WHEN I FIND THE CONTRARY TO BE SRUE AND I'M SHOCKED AND I NEVER EXPERIENCED THIS IN NEW MEXICO WHEN I EXPERIENCED SEXISM IT WAS OUT AND OUT AND IT WAS EASY TO DEAL WITH AND NOW I SEE IN THE ART WORLD IT'S KIND OF LIP SERVICE AND IT'S~~

It's political but it won't go as far as art which is somehow but I think this happens in every field I think that men you have to skip women for a minute because that's sort of like a step further but men will really be strong political feminists they will really vote for women to be in politics and equal pay for equal rights and the ERA

ON THE SURFACE ISSUES

They do not see aesthetics as an appropriate place for feminism and I think we are all of us quite willing to give up what we don't care about too much and if you find I think in the art world it's easy for those men to be political feminists and make a lot of noise about letting women in you notice the word letting

I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT I THINK IT'S A GOOD CHOICE OF WORDS

INTo all these areas but where there's where they themselves have had to be self-destructive see that's where I think it's at

IN THEIR AESTHETIC IN THE FORMULATION OF THEIR AESTHETIC CRITERIA

In order to become quote artists in teh world of art as it is seen in the patriarchy and it is of course all patriarchy because ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ everything that wasn't patriarchal or very little that wasn't patriarchal there were exceptions but very little that wasn't...it never lasted for more than one generation because it was passed on whatever they had to cut out of their own natures in order to make it in that world they ca nnot even know about because to admit to themselves as I said before that maybe it wasn't necessary and this is even mote true you see of women than of men... that maybe I didn't have to do it you know would be too painful because in fact in order to do it they had to not know they were doing it

YEAH IT WAS AN UNCONSCIOUS

Yeah and therefore it has to stay unconscious or they would go to pïeces...this is simplistic I really fear the things I think about all the time and tomorrow I'll give you a different set of things but they would be similar

BUT YOU'RE TOUCHING ON IT VERY STRONGLY AND WHAT COMES TO MIND IS I THINK THAT MEN IN THE POETRY WORLD ARE STILL CALLING THE SHOTS AND I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT IT BUT I FEEL IT VERY STRONGLY

I really do! 100%

Is there a problem? What other problems do you exp. as a hetero feminist?

AND I'M IRRITATED BECAUSE HERRE ^{we she} IT IS 1978 ^{literary} AND THE ONLY PRESSES THE ONLY WOMEN'S PRESSES THERE ARE ARE LESBIAN PRESSES

Yeah well this is a problem I'm very aware of because and I don't know what the solution is because I think that inevitably the strongest energy for feminism is going to come from lesbians because they are the only women who can devote their whole lives to feminism... Women who live with men for example a man and a wife or a man and woman lovers...can really devote their whole lives to civil liberties the democrats anything because that's not the visit(?) but to devote your whole life to feminism a man and woman together there's going to be ways in which you know that's not going to be a man's major interest in life...my major interest in life right now is feminism it's not Mark although he's very He's come to believe that the only hope for the world is feminism and so it is beginning to be a major thing still I cannot expect him as a poet to spend all his time reading feminist literature and feminist criticism because it would be bad for his own work he's got to do his own work out of his own inner experience... so I think just in terms of business people and so on you can't expect heterosexual women who are living ~~with~~ men to have the kind of simply energy and time and emotional drive because there's nothing ~~but~~ except gain for lesbians in feminism and there's certainly very scary dangerous things for heterosexual women in feminism from the way men are reacting rape for example the most overt reaction of the patriarchy to feminism and that happens in subtle psychological ways the young women that I know that are trying to have relationships with men in a new way are ^{up a tree} it's really rough you know they are pioneers and they are having a hard time so I think that the and besides the money.. we have gottento the point now that just about all of our charity money that we have which goes to feminist causes some goes to ecology and almost nothing goes to anything else simply because I think other people will support some of that and nobody is giving enough money to feminism and since we're in a position where you give a certain amount to charities that's where it goes and even most specifically to feminist presses but the problem then is if most of the feminist presses are lesbian for these reasons...you know that the women can do it particularly lesbian couples will get together and do a press together

and then we have problems when they split up because they are women and love comes before art or work...then what about us heterosexual women whole aspects of our lives are with men and I think ~~at~~ most women in the world are at least living heterosexual lives I don't want to get into what ~~XXX~~ women's real nature is I don't think anybody knows but it simply turns out the pragmatic surface surface most women in the world are leading heterosexual lives and therefore our experiences as to the menus(?) of our poetry when I sent some of my poems out of my ignorance to Second Lady(?) and they sent it back saying there's too many men in these well I didn't know it was a lesbian magazine...where were those poems gonna go? they were part of my life some love poems to Mark I am living in what I call a female aesthetic I am not trying to write poems like men write them I am not trying to worry about crudeness I'm ^{we} really ^{tried} trying to worry more about authenticity...and song and sort of a female song than I ~~am~~ have about certain kinds of polish that are expected of the man writers

NOW WHEN YOU SAY THAT DO YOU MEAN TO IMPLY THAT YOU COULDN'T SEND THEM OFF TO AMERICAN POETRY REVIEW OR CHICAGO REVIEW OR PARIS REVIEW OR ANY OF THOSE MALE

Well I ~~XXX~~ sent Any Time Now to UPR and they just sent it back and said we're not interested in this kind of material... and yes in general I think very few of my poems would be accepted in ^{the} male establishment and I haven't worried because I have such a committed feminist I began writing ^{when} I first started ^{to} writing after that weekend with Susan Griffin and Rich and all those I was only able to write by telling myself that I would never show my poems to any men and I only showed them to women for a long time except to Mark and I was very very restricting in what I would let him see... and then I gradually got more courage and as I got more and more praise from women then I began showing ^{to} them ^{to} men and I began to find out which men would like me and which wouldn't... it was a very clear thing when I read Any Time Now to a group at Foothill College the men fell asleep and the women sat on the edges of their chairs so you know if my poems have immediate... I would be nowhere without lesbians without Susan for example who immediately liked my work and told ~~XXX~~ her friends about it so that I've been published by you know my two major publications have been lesbian presses Priscellus and Bonny Carpenter those women immediately respond to my poems but those are not my poems having to do with the men in my life...

RIGHT WELL HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT? I MEAN AREN'T WE BACK WHERE WE STARTED THEN IF ONLY A PART OF US WILL SPEAK TO WOMEN AND A PART OF US ARE SHUT OFF FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD

I don't know... there's not nearly enough talk about this because people always interpret it as hostility to lesbians...you talk this way and I think that it is simply not that and I really...I search my soul and I do not find any hostility to lesbians I think much less than there is to me as a straight woman ^{we talk about it} Susan and I are such close friends we talk about all these things and the problem in the movement of the hostility of lesbian women to straight women which is too busy(?) and now is getting old fashioned I think to a large degree lesbians are beginning to realise that straight women are more their friends than gay men much of the time and so we really have to be together the men are against us all but still I think this question of what are the heterosexual poets and artists going to do if the men won't take our feminist work and the lesbians who have the power of the press you can say why don't the heterosexual women do their own presses?

WELL THEY HAVE BUT THEY'RE TRICKLING

Kelsy Street is one and it's a mixture of straight and gay which is nice but there aren't very many and they don't have the kind of energy and power and commitment

I THINK IT'S BECAUSE HETEROSEXUAL WOMEN HAVE SO MANY OTHER CONCERNS THAT THEY ALLOW THE POWER THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE TO LAPSE THAT'S SORT OF WHAT HAPPENED WITH

BEST FRIENDS...BECAUSE THERE WERE TOO MANY PEOPLE INVOLVED IN IT WHO HAD TOO MANY OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

I think it's certainly a large part of it I agree with you I think it's a multiple thing...but I think it's a sad thing if the...as heterosexual women try to get out from under the tyranny of men only to submit ourselves to a new form of tyranny... from women and I think that but you know I'm talking to you about this because you raised it as sort of an issue but I'm more of an optimist than that...for example ~~BUY YOU KNOW~~ as the hostility between gay and straight women is being modified somebody a feminist was here the other day a lesbian she was telling me that a lot of the movement now in feminism is anarchism towards anarchism that's a very interesting idea like if you want to have any kind of a tradition at all that's about the only one that women can find usable...

AND THAT'S AN ANTI TRADITION

Exactly so you have a tradition but it's perhaps the most usable in terms of being outside the patriarchal

IN WHAT WAY DID SHE MEAN ANARCHISM IN TERMS OF WHAT?

I think against male ideologies or not against but

AGAINST IDEALOGY IN GENERAL

~~XXXXXX~~ against all ideology or not accepting...because what we have are Marxists ...feminists who are fighting

WORLD WIDE OPPRESSION

Who are fighting the capitalist feminists and these to me are aspects of patriarchy that I don't think we should get behind them in in their fight...I don't want to mess with their ideas Marxist or not because finally it doesn't seem to me from what I can hear that women in Communist countries or Socialist countries are as well off as ~~they~~ they start off well off cause it's part of the big promise and it hooks the women and gradually they get pushed back and pushed back and pushed back until... so that women and I think the whole puritanical tradition in China is complicated and so on it's difficult to deal with and I think they're getting more and more capitalist in China now and more and more trying to be like the United States

AND IT ALL GOES TOWARDS THE MEN

~~X~~ They're going to have problems with prostitution and stuff like that because really I don't think they've gotten to the roots of feminism yet because women have been in support of a male ideology

SEPARATIST MOVEMENT TO BE ABLE TO DEFEECT OFF OF

Yeah and ~~XX~~ what you're saying yes but like I'll give money which I just about don't any more but you might say alright I'll support a Democratic candidate I just won't anymore I ~~won't~~ ^{no} give anything unless it's to a woman if she's a woman Democrat I'm more likely to give it to her because I happen to be a Democrat ...than to a woman Republican...on the other hand I know a woman she has a high office right now she's a Republican and she's someone I talked to you earlier about in connection with women who are not feminists and she wanted to run her office and she had gotten aware(?) she discovered the women had not voted for her so she joined NOW and she took a high position in the local chapter and got a feminist following ok but in the meanwhile she learned about feminism and became a feminist and now the position that she is holding she is really a high useful feminist

and she has a lot of power and she's really good at it

HARD TO BELIEVE THAT SHE'S STILL A REPUBLICAN

Ok I will tell you who she is but that is not for the records...it's Ali Marie Batore(?) the judge... not only that but she a way of getting a lot of this part you can put in she ~~was~~ would always dress ladylike and high heels and stuff like that ...and I would bring my middle class heterosexual middle aged friend they would say oh I didn't know there was a ^{member of the} man who looked like that I'll join...you see I mean the scary image of the blue jeans ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ or the overalls and the boots and signs

BUT DID THEY KNOW THAT NOW IS A VERY STRAIGHT IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN

I know but no as a matter of fact the chapter I was in there were just lots of young women and a bunch of lesbians

BUT THAT WAS WAS THAT A WHILE BACK?

3 or 4 years ago

YEAH NEW MEXICO WAS LIKE THAT TOO FOR A WHILE I MEAN THERE ARE OTHER WOMEN'S GROUPS THAT ARE FEMINIST BUT I WANTED TO GET BACK IT'S FUNNY BECAUSE THE DIRECTION THE CONVERSATION WAS STEERING IN WAS A VERY INTERESTING ONE ABOUT THE LESBIAN PRESSES BUT THEN OK THAT BRINGS US BACK TO IF OK THE LESBIAN PRESSES HAVE THEIR POWER AND WE HAVE THEM AND THAT'S OK WITHOUT THEM NONE OF US WOULD BE ANYWHERE BECAUSE THEY'VE BEEN VERY AGGRESSIVE BECAUSE THEY HAVE VESTED INTERESTS AND WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT THEM BEING ABLE TO DEVOTE THEMSELVES OK SO WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE WOMEN WHO ARE SO CALLED I DON'T THE TERM HETEROSEXUAL BUT LET'S KEEP USING IT CAUSE TO BE CONSISTENT SOMEWHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US BECAUSE WE'RE IN THE SAME POSITION

Ok I started to say... I got sidetracked

a GOOD SIDE TRACKER BUT ALL I'M SAYING IS NOW I STILL PERSONALLY FEEL LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE DIFFICULT UNLESS I START MANICURING MY WORK AND

Are you heterosexual?

YEAH FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES I ^{DO} IDENTIFY AS A HETEROSEXUAL WOMAN

Yeah

IT'S DIFFICULT FOR ME AND THIS HAPPENS WITH ME REPEATEDLY AT MY READINGS THE WOMEN DO IN FACT LOVE MY WORK MORE THAN THE MEN ALTHOUGH NOT ALL TOGETHER AND CERTAINLY THAT'S I'M MOVING IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION IN MY WORK ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ IT'S BECAUSE I'M MORE ABSTRACT BUT WHEN I WAS STILL CONNECTED WITH BEST FRIENDS IT WAS VERY OBVIOUS THAT WHERE I WAS WELL MY MAIN CONCERNS THE CONTENT OF MY WORK WAS VERY BENIAL(?) VERY HUMAN(?) AND MY AUDIENCES WERE WOMEN AND THEN I STARTED GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT WRITING I KNEW THAT I WOULD HAVE A HARD TIME GETTING MY WORK INTO #1 ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS AND #2 VERY MALE IDENTIFIED PUBLICATIONS ALL THE PRESTIGE OF SMALL PRESS

Ok how do you feel about that?

I FEEL LIKE IT'S JUST LIKE IT WAS BEFORE BEST FRIENDS BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE BEST FRIENDS TO BACK ME ANYMORE I DON'T HAVE THAT PAMPERING ALL I'M SAYING IS THAT COMING OUT HERE OPENED MY EYES TO THAT AND THE CHOICES WERE AGAIN LIMITED... YOU KNOW?

Uh huh I think so

I'M JUST WONDERING HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT WHERE IT AFFECTS YOU IN ANY WAY

It affects me a great deal I'm in a workshop let me off the record unless you get my permission I don't want ~~XX~~ you to quote ~~XX~~ that it's possible that it's ok

OK

I'm in a workshop with three other heterosexual women ~~XXXXXX~~ poets...

I KNOW THAT WORKSHOP I TALKED TO BEVERLY

Yes Beverly and Kathleen and Timura and I Timura has had to leave because she's got to get a parttime job... and it's just a haven... where we can write about men or not about men you know... like Kathleen's whole 1st couple of years of poems her whole new book about poems is about relationships with men... and she is very late(?) she has a hardcover publisher because of the past book...(?)

YES I KNOW

But she doesn't know I mean Ms. wouldn't publish them... and she said it's going to be a problem Adrienne won't like them

NOW SEE THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT I MEAN AND I KNOW KATHEEN FEELS THIS WAY ABOUT IT

Yeah and the lesbians won't like them but also the men won't like them because her form is so female... she's such an experimenter formally... and I think so exciting from my opinion I think she's one of the most important poets writing in America today for the reason that she has heterosexuals traditional female subject matter... treated differently in really experimental form aesthetically her form is really female... and the men don't like the form and the ^{lesbians} women don't like the content... and I think she's gonna... but I said to her Kathleen if you're really a pioneer any real pioneer

THEY NEVER LIKE YOU ANYWAY

Any real pioneer... is ever immediately liked... what we're going to do about it I don't know I feel that at the moment I'm very lucky because of Priscilla and Barnaby(?) and the editors of Big Moon were the first people to publish... are women but it's a mixed magazine... so I got a good start but like you I don't know what happens if I get I don't know if my form becomes a greater consideration and my subject matter becomes less feminist at times it's obviously feminist see I think Kathleen's poems are passionately feminist because of their formal inventiveness but you know the feminists don't realize that I don't know what the answer is I have a certain amount of optimism based on the fact that I see more comings together and less hostility between groups of feminists but on the other hand this incredible foolish argument about between the East Bay and the West Bay Feminist Writer's Guild over Marxist and Anti-Marxist language or something I mean why should women fight over each other over this?

WELL YEAH I DON'T EVEN SEE THE FIGHT SO MUCH BUT THAT'S A WHOLE OTHER ARGUMENT THE FIGHT BETWEEN THE WOMEN BUT

You could give out the power that the men still have

THE POWER THAT THE MEN STILL HAVE ABOUT

Well I think that anybody who thinks that in one or two decades we're going to end patriarchy is much too

IT'S MUCH TOO IDEALISTIC

Yes it's ridiculous

WHAT'S INTERESTING ABOUT THE CENTER THAT KATHLEEN KNOWS THAT THE FEMINISTS WON'T LIKE... IN HER WORK BUT SOMETHING AND THIS CAME FROM IRANIAN WOMEN(?) AND ACTUALLY WOMEN WHO I MET AT THE GUILD AND AFTERWARDS SHE SAID YOU DON'T TALK ABOUT WOMEN IN YOUR POEMS AT ALL YOUR POEMS CAN BE MORE FEMINIST AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT SHE MEANT IN A WAY I HAD TO STOP AND THINK BECAUSE YES THERE WERE LOTS OF THINGS THAT I WAS READING NOW THAT WERE MUCH MORE UNIVERSAL THEY WEREN'T JUST CONCERNED WITH A FEMALE EXPERIENCE CHUSE I'M TRYING TO MOVE AWAY FROM THAT BECAUSE I THINK I'VE EXPLORED IT TO THE POINT WHERE I

You don't want to keep writing the same poem

I DON'T WANT TO KEEP WRITING THE SAME POEM EXACTLY SO I WONDERED IT MADE ME THINK FOR A LONG TIME AND I THOUGHT ABOUT KATHLEEN ACTUALLY WHEN I WAS THINKING ABOUT IT WHERE DOES THAT PUT YOU IF YOU'RE NOT OVERT? AND YET YOU'RE NOT IN VOICE TIL TO(?!)

Right I think what you have to hope for for a little while is maybe one or two advocates of the patriarchy who can maybe help you along and ~~XXXXXX~~ to sort of realise that we're in a bad place We are in a bad place I don't think that there's any way just because we want our way out of it I don't think there necessarily is one... certainly not in this generation could you turn that off for a minute?

LESBAIN MAGAZINE

OH I don't want this to be in it I'll talk about some of the ^{article and the} poems in the article poems but I don't want to talk about who was printed

OK

I really don't

OK

You can be misunderstood so easily and taken out of context and nasty things could be pulled...and I as I said don't want any of that because of my friends and my positive ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ identification with lesbians is much too good for me to try and antagonise anyone

YES I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT

I mean as a Jew I am very sensitive to these things I know the ways in which non-Jews think they're saying nice things about ~~non~~ Jews which we experience as hostile or separate

SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE

Yeah right and I don't want any of that but now what I'm saying is I am working on this poem which I think may be difficult to print because it's primary relationship is between daughters and loving fathers and I think that there is a great deal of feminism which in which doesn't even believe this exists almost and I certainly see the patriarchal ^{relationship} of my father's relationship to me and so on and the way he would rather have me be a boy...

IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE EXPLORING IN YOUR WORK?

Yeah well I want to I haven't been able to concentrate much since I've been back but that's where I'm beginning and going back to some of my love affairs when I was younger which were passionate and I experienced myself as being born I've had to receive the gift of love which made it possible for me to go on living, My father wanted me to be a boy I think he wanted me to share the male side of his life with

him and also I think he gave me a great deal of unconscious seductive behavior which I experience as having been very good ~~xx~~ for me it made me feel attractive to men

THAT INITIAL CONTACT WITH A MAN WANTING YOU LOVING YOU THAT'S BEEN REPEATED

Yes and I think that my poems are adequate and true to my sense of feminism I have one which has never been printed which I can take excerpts out of which will include some things because I want to belabor it the competitive relationship between me and my mother but not which maybe my mother felt but which I felt in which I was going to push her into the kitchen and have a relationship with my father which was separate we were marching around the table singing until my mother brings my supper in...brings my dinner in that I hope will imply without me saying it that I was really competing with her...for him and I was really nasty about it too I gave her a bad time in these ways but it's still he being freer was able for example to give me the pink satin valentine an important part of the poem with my mother representing the culture giving me an elegant aesthetically elegant patriarchal wood parchment

THINGS ARE NOT WHAT THEY SEEM that WAY

Delicate colors so that I dreamed of his sensuous sexy but I was ashamed to admit it because I knew that she despised it and thought that it was vulgar and so this complicated the relationship I think my mother represented the patriarchy and my father not having to do it

HE BELIEVED IT

can really give her a greater sense of her involvement

~~THEN IF SHE CONTINUES LATER IN LIFE IT'S AN INTERESTING (tape ends here) WE WERE TALKING ABOUT WOMEN ARTISTS JUST THE IDEA THAT DIFFERENTIATES WHICH AS SHE TALKS ABOUT IF SHE SAYS IT'S ~~WOMEN WRITERS~~ VAGRICE(?) TO CALL YOURSELF A WOMAN WRITER BECAUSE WRITERS ARE THAT'S A UNIVERSAL DANGEROUS TERM FOR UNIVERSAL MAN AND WHEN YOU ATTACH THE WOMAN PART TO IT YOU MAKE IT ALMOST LESS THAN IT IS RATHER THAN MORE ?~~

~~Ok do you want me to talk about it?~~

~~YES I DO!~~

~~This is the first time in the afternoon which I have really ~~idxx~~ disagreed with you~~

~~GOOD IT'LL BE FUN~~

~~Mostly of the afternoon we've been in joyous ^{wonderful} agreement~~

I'M THROWING THIS OUT BECAUSE I'M COMFORTABLE WITH ALL OF IT WITH MY NEW FEELINGS AND WITH MY OLD FEELINGS AS WELL

Let me ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ talk to you about Cynthia Osit(?) I've read a ^{recently} ~~group~~ ^{book} of short stories of hers called Pagan Rabbi and Other Stories and that story Pagan Rabbi is a very important work in that story she talks about well in the first place her total identification in that story is with the man the woman in that story both of the women in that story are really awful the wife of the Rabbi and the spirit of the woods are really dreadful ok that happens you know but she is talking about a Jewish traditions apparently a Jewish Talmudic rule that says if a man is walking along thinking about ~~xxx~~ the Torah that's the Bible and he looks up various things and a bird sings and he watches it and enjoys it that's... because he's supposed to be thinking about god and the Torah and not the natural world and finally this man

*I want to talk about aesthetics and women?
Cynthia Ozick says
Do you think it's dangerous*

~~this Rabbi who sort of falls in love with the wood spirit and dies...he is not the vehicle of the writer's position she's criticising him she's in favor of the Palamudic regulation and It's an absolute head trip she was asked to speak inherently(?) by some women at the book party for Eleanor Ruses book...she said that she writes for Demica(?) now I am~~

Cynthia Ozick

THAT'S SORT OF AWFUL

from the neck up
~~from the neck~~

I don't think that anybody writes for Demica cause if you cut somebody's head off then they're dead you write with your whole body I don't really believe the whole thrust of Any Time Now is against the whole mind/body split... and I don't believe it I don't like it I think that it's bad for us It may have at one time been useful I think in order to develop civilisation and the whole human thing I think maybe we need the sky god and certain kinds of focusing in the left brain but I think that usefulness has seen it's day

Cartesian

BESIDES ~~XXXXXX~~ IN WESTERN CIVILISATION ITS A MALE ITS A PARTISIAN SEPARATION

Right and it's destructive finally I think that destruction can lead us to having for example a war in Viet Nam instead of human sacrifice in other words going from the mother goddess giving sacrifices to the superior thing of love thy neighbor you eventually and no revengeance on what you do is you get Viet Nam

RIGHT

Atom bomb and what you have is over population and so on so the mind/body split I think is...

Phyllis Chesler

ALSO ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ANOTHER THING IN MY ... I READ AN ARTICLE AN ARTICLE OF AN INTERVIEW WITH HERIN A JEWISH FEMINIST MAGAZINE IN IT SHE SAID THAT JEWISH WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY TO MAKE PROVISIONS(?) FOR THE MIND/BODY SPLIT LESS LIKELY BECAUSE IN JUDIASM THERE IS NO SEPARATION BETWEEN THE SOUL AND THE HEAD AND THERE'S NO SEPARATION BETWEEN THE INTELLECT AND THE SOUL THER E'S NO HEAVEN AND HELL REALLY

No but there is a separation in that men are the only ones who are allowed to speak to God

YEAH WELL THAT'S THE CRUCIAL SEPARATION

product

Yeah and I think Ozick is unconsciously a ^{product} ~~particle~~ of that in which she says she writes for ^{makeup} and she says that there are no such thing as women writers is a further extension of that... she doesn't write as a man... now I think that it's a serious mistake to think that you have to write as a quote woman as a kind of metaphysical command but I do think that there is maybe in all of us a compulsion to write out our female experience in a kind of concentrated way because so little has been written because we have been buried in the culture and as i wrote in my first article we do not know who we are and all the arguments about nature/nurture and so on involve the ^{just} question of are we really the same as men? or are we in fact different? does that x and y gene create some differences is there a difference in aggressiveness for example in neonatals in new born babies for example I read different reports and one says that the only difference is that female babies like sweets and male babies have a ^{more} ~~comprehens~~ ^{comprehens} ~~l~~ (?) visual...thing which could have a great deal of dispute about it on the other hand those researchers have collaborated and I think since as I said in my article that poetry among the arts may be the most ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ connected between the left and the right brain that it is a joy and an opportunity no art can be an obligation but I think you should feel free if you feel like it to really go into the effort to discover who we are and therefore to write as women ok now to your question of women artists as a put down that is to say as less than artists or writer, that is what I think of as female self hatred like a Jew I have Jewish self hatred and I translate that always it's clear that female self hatred is what destroys us over and over again

cd11

~~in other words we take on a vision of our culture and dislike ourselves and think of ourselves and here I once ^{went} pointed out what a Jew would think ^{with} when ^{who had seen} he was younger in those concentration camps and so on when he was 18 years old and he went to a party where there were a lot of rich Jews with furs and he said look at all ~~these Jews trying to look like people...~~ he had absolutely taken on the Nazi vision of what Jews are now I think women take on the patriarchal vision of what women are and so I think that if you say German writer ~~Polish~~ writer Russian writer Southern writer you do nothing of it as sort of a put down of course they're all ^{over} writers but they're writing from a certain locale and I think to be a ~~woman~~ woman is a certain locale, and that if you try to deny that and think that you're an international writer there are a few people who have been international writers like Conrad and Nabokov who write out of don't even write in their own native language and they may be called international writers but most people are not and it's not a put down to be an American writer~~

EXACTLY IT WASN'T THE DESIGNATION SO MUCH AS THE FEELING I DON'T WALK AROUND I DON'T THINK OF MYSELF AS A JEWISH WOMAN AND I AM BUT

There are times when you do

YES BUT IT'S NOT IT WAS THE FACT THAT I NEEDED SOMETHING MODIFYING

But you are writing about women

YES AND I'M NOT FOR A MOMENT THJNKING OF CHANGONG THIS PROJECT AND INCLUDING MEN IN IT

No because men have ~~been~~ written about for centuries

guess RIGHT I'M NOT INTERESTED I'M NOT INTERESTED BUT FOR SOME REASON IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS I'VE THOUGHT WELL ISN'T IT TIME THAT I HAVE TO STOP EXPLAINING MY CONCERN AND I HAVE TO STOP RATIONALISING IT

Yeah oh i don't think you should explain it I think you should say it and if people argue with you the time has come when you should just look at them and not argue

I DON'T MUCH ANYMORE I'M GETTING BETTER AT IT

In other words I agree that it's time to stop rationalising but I don't think it's time to stop doing

NO I WILL NEVER

Ok there's this other thing about being a woman writer you see I'm really interested see here is where ^{Issac} really drives me up the wall(?) I really disagree with her

YEAH I QUOTED SOME INFAC^t SHE IS DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO ^{Moers} ~~MOERS~~ IN ALMOST EVERY^{thing} SHE SAYS

I ~~am~~ know they were foolish to invite her to speak with her

THE WHOLE BUSINESS OF

Do you pronounce that moiers? Moers? I say Moiers but I have no idea...

Issac ANYWAY I WAS TALKING ABOUT HOW LDERATURE UNIVERSALISES AND MOERS

Moers is specific in the beginning she writes about Jews all the time she said she's noyt

a Jewish writer she'd die before she'd admit she was a wasn't a Jewish writer... I mean so why not be a woman writer?

YEAH

I mean really

YOU ARE NECESSARILY BY THE FACT THAT YOU'RE FEMALE AND YOU'RE WRITING

~~But if you're a Jew and you're writing you're just a writer you're not a Jewish writer but if you're writing about your experience which has been Jewish then you're see for example if you are writing a novel and there are men in it see I think it's time for women to really be adventurous and write novels with women and men in them as Pravela Esin (?) does in some and make to an effort to make men fully realise as for example Karenina...It's difficult and I don't think we can ever think that we are experiencing a man as a man experiences himself but I think what we can really do that's illuminating is really experience do vivid images of men as women experience them as the best women the most insightful women and imaginative projecting women who can you know but it's like the whole Jungian bullshit about Onamous and Onama I mean I don't it's a useful concept...Onama is the man's experience of women and for example Tolstoy writes Karenina he is writing about an Onama but when Newman writes about Ampur and Psychie he is not writing about a woman he is writing about his experience of women...in fact it's what Jung calls the Onama they haven't got but they say you know females don't have any spirit you know that's what I mean about bullshit but it's a useful concept to think that we can write very good novels are written by women with men protagonists... men are so willing to jump in and scorn them and say well that's not what a man's like you know?~~

OH! ARE WE WHO THOSE CHARACTERS...

What are we going to say about ~~THE~~ A Portrait of a Lady or Anna Karinena ? well they seem at first glance what women are like and you read them as an adolescent and it changes your whole life because you begin to think oh that's what a woman is like and I will act like that when in fact when you get very critical about those works you begin to see that there's ways

NO ~~WOMAN~~ WOMAN IS LIKE ANNA REALLY

~~Yeah and also the experience of Anna would involve female experiences that are not in there a woman would write about homelier touches the household things which are for example the great book The Awakening she's sitting she's just had the news that her lover has left her and what does she do? she hears noises of the children playing in the playground that seemed to me so real...and no man would have written that... I mean at that moment that is what you hear and hear those sounds around you and you're likely at that moment to hear intensely the sound of your own children and that's female experience no man writing about the woman in that book Chopin I forget her name in the book... still a man could have written about that experience in fact Karenina is a male version of that experience in a way and he wrote a very moving book but finally it's a very male male image and I think women have to allow themselves to do the same thing so from that point of view where Osic ^{wants to} says we don't write as women we don't have to write about only women's experiences anything you write of course as a woman is going to be a woman writing~~

I DON'T THINK SHE ~~WELL~~ SHE DOES TALK ABOUT THAT SHE SAYS I AM FREE IN MY IMAGINATION AND THAT'S THE ONLY PLACE I'M FREE AND I'M NOT FREE IN REALITY BUT IN MY IMAGINATION I CAN BE WHOEVER I WANT TO BE AND THAT'S THE EXTENT TO WHICH SHE TALKS ABOUT

You ^{should} be entitled to that extent I agree but we should feel entitled to write about whatever we want for example there is a part of me which I experience as male part he appears in my dreams he's a boy he's a man...and it is clearly a part of me that is operating

Ozick
Female Aesthetics

Woman as men see them -
Men as women see them

forming

Newman

can be

Sometime I would like to feel free to write about him I don't feel ready but I will and ~~we~~ will write some good poems they will not however be men writing about men they will be a woman writing about a woman's image of maleness is

~~WELL THEN FINALLY I'M CONFUSED BY HER INSISTENCE... DID YOU HAVE A SENSE OF THAT? BECAUSE SHE WAS SO ANTAGONISTIC TOWARDS THE IDEA OF SEGREGATION A COUPLE OF POINTS SHE MADE I THOUGHT WERE VERY VALID SUCH AS IF YOU WE DO IN FACT SEGREGATE OURSELVES THEN WE WILL BE PUTTING OURSELVES INTO THE SAME STEREOTYPES THAT HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MADE FOR US THAT WE WERE ONLY ALLOWED TO WRITE ABOUT CERTAIN SUBJECTS THAT WERE FEMALE WE DON'T WANT THAT, WE WANT MOBILITY WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO WRITE ABOUT ANYTHING WE WANT TO WRITE ABOUT~~

No man could have written a Jane Austen novel and ~~there are novels that no woman could have written Moby Dick~~

~~YES THAT'S TRUE~~

And no matter how much you imagine... now in the future women go out as sailors on vessels they will be writing about the experiences that you have on vessels otherwise what you're writing is fantasy and that's ok write a fantasy but I mean I think you should be able to ~~writ~~ write about anything we want but I think that to write about our own experience as women we shouldn't be told not to do that and I don't think that's stereotyping for example if a woman writes about a female experience as she experiences it in this moment in history when we are segregated that's an authentic work of art and it will not be the same as the stereotype cause there will be all kinds of subtle differences it'll be the poetry of the writing or the actual detail.. and if you think of drama as a projection of parts of one's self and we will write about men in the ways ~~that~~ in the ways in which men matter to us not in the ways they matter to each other as they have always written... stop for a few minutes cause there's something I want to think about

FINALLY HE'S GOTTEN WHAT THEY CALL CONFSSIONAL

Yeah confessional

YEAH WELL I WOULDN'T LIKE HER ANYWAY... WELL PROBABLY FOR OTHER REASONS... WHICH WOULD BE AN INTERESTING

Ok what's your questions

OH I WANT TO GET BACK TO THE ^{NOTION OF} EMOTIONAL FEMALE AESTHETIC SINCE WE ARE ON THAT

That's what interests me

WHAT IS THIS? WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT WHAT IS ^{here} ~~THIS~~ IN THE FEMALE IMAGINATION THAT MAKES US THINK THAT WE HAVE A DEFINITE AESTHETIC ~~AND~~ OUR CONTENT IS DIFFERENT OBVIOUSLY AND YOU STARTED ON THIS IN THAT FIRST PAPER THAT'S WHY I THINK THAT PAPER IS SO INTERESTING

Between Eden(?)

YES

Ok I'm going to refer back to the concept in which I think more and more highly of I TOOK VERY DETAILED NOTES ON THAT PAPER GO ON BECAUSE I'LL BE THINKING OF QUESTIONS WHILE WE ARE

Ok why don't you write them... We were talking about a female aesthetic and it's precisely my argument ~~XXXXXX~~ with Osic when she ^{fig} writes from the neck up

a also it has a great deal to do with the left ^{brain} wing and the right ^{brain} wing, if you understand the right brain has in most cases no or very little language and yet it wants to communicate to us it does in many ways. you can superimpose notions of the unconscious and all kinds of things on it because it doesn't speak and you realise that in writing poetry much of the inspiration for the poetry the source ^{the} ~~the~~ enrichment the ~~feel~~ field from which it comes is the right brain which already (?) unconscious or a mixture of them whatever that may be so it gets ~~clustered~~ ^{clustered} crossed over and it gets into your left brain and it becomes language but it's a different kind of language. it's as I said spatial it's not really your concept of time is circular and it's not rational and it has fragments in it of all kinds of things that have happened to you in your life. the images and so on and still it is under the control of the left brain because it is a language. it's not like painting which you do with your hand then I think you realise that if we are really in touch with that source of inspiration which I think is clearly more in poetry, ^{the} ~~the~~ prose is the poetry is more than prose is then I think we will ^{find} ~~will~~ find out much more who we are, whether we are men or women we will have ^{more} ~~more~~ access to a more authentic picture of ourselves, and if you realise that in children there is an accident the left brain is damaged the child can learn language but in adults if there is an accident the amount of language that the right brain can learn is very limited... none at all you realise that really this dominance of the right and left brain is subject to conditioning and I've just been reading this book that very very clearly stated in this book called The Origin of Consciousness done by Canonimine (?) and he reinforces the whole notion that the dominance the whole question of the dominance of one brain over the other or one side over cerebral side of the other is conditioned probably in childhood or it can be conditioned and probably is in all of us and, ^{civilizational} ~~civilizational~~ has until now required great dominance of the left brain but this has been much more ^{trained} ~~trained~~ in boys than in girls ok so our experiences from the very earliest times are different, even in the conditions as to which brain is more dominant and whether women are more intuitive or not I think has to do with perhaps a greater connection with the right brain or greater equality the definition of the function of the right and left brain is often called by, men field independence, the left brain which can focus is called field independence, the right brain which doesn't focus but which is diffuse which you would expect to be called Mutsler (?) is called field dependent. in other words the left brain is called field dependent, but if you are an ecologist and/or a feminist... you could redefine those as my friend Gretchen Alin had and it's her original ^{phrase} ~~phrase~~ and say that the right brain is field relevant and the left brain is field irrelevant but right now in the history of ^{western} ~~western~~ civilization and the whole world civilization the problem of field irrelevance is the greatest problem that we have it is that that allows us to have over population and atom bombs and all that kind of thing because we just abstract one item alone and focus on that which is abstract study which is no interconnections the opposite of ecology... and that is why it is important for women it's important for everybody to tell Osic to shut up! and let women write out of our own experience which is ^{more} ~~more~~ field relevant maybe and find out what our own experiences is in order to add it to the culture and not spend so much time trying to do ^{be} ~~be~~ something that we're not and of course be free to use our imagination in any way we want because if we really allow our imagination ^{the} ~~the~~ reign that as women not as what ^{the} ~~the~~ culture says we ought to be find out what we really feel what we really think it's not only good for women but it's good maybe for the whole world as a matter of fact I think it may be the only hope for the whole world now as far as the separate female aesthetic is concerned, if you assume that the very language of criticism is male it has been since women have only been allowed into print into the wider world you know on sumpference (?) those women through history those women who didn't have a baby every year and die young or who didn't immesh themselves in the home and domesticity and tried to get into a more left brain a more intellectual political world were allowed in on sumpference (?) and it reminds me of when I was a girl and I went ~~XXX~~ to an Episcopalean boarding school which was a superb ~~carleatory~~ ^{boarding} ~~boarding~~ school they said you know it's fine if you want your Jewish daughter to come to our school we'll be glad to let her but she has to go to church

on Sunday and that's if you only go to church on Sunday she can come but that's one of the requirements and there are no synagogues in native Massachusetts so she 'll have to go to church... so I went and I went to church and learned to think like a Christian but in fact that's the only way I could go to such a school that's the only way women have ever been let into the ^{lighter} culture which has been patriarchal you have to learn to think like a man in fact this is a line I'm very proud of and I don't know whether I'll get it into a poem or not it's pulled from Yeats it's Did she put on ~~her~~ his knowledge with his power and in fact we do put on their knowledge with their power when we marry men when we live with a man when we enter the world of male power we take on that way of thinking and I think that in order to understand this some study of the language of criticism is useful for example these are words of praise strong sinewy lean tough like he writes with really tough prose right?...spare firm...dry

MINIMUM

minimal those are all

ECONOMIC

Those are all words of words of critical praise Now think about a man's body in a woman(?) and think of these words ~~massy~~ damp padded soft and you know the future is think about limp...

OH GOD!

You begin to realize how nobody writes from the neck up... and we have been forced to have as aesthetic criteria the definitions of the male body and the definitions of our own bodies from which we write are the words which are unacceptable as aesthetic criteria in the patriarchy

THAT'S WONDERFUL THAT'S AN INSIGHT IF I EVER HEARD ONE

Yeah it's mine

THAT'S AMAZING I MEAN WE ASSUME THAT THAT'S WHAT'S GOING ON THAT THEY'RE WRITING OF THEIR ^{summary} PHYSICAL BUT THEN IT'S THAT PHYSICAL IN FACT AND THAT'S OBVIOUS I MEAN WE KNOW THAT WORD PHALLIC

ok now we get back to Ellen Moers and why she's one of my heroes ok because there are places where I think she really gets beyond any of the feminist criticism and I said in my review I don't even think she realises how far out and wonderful she was that chapter on the female landscape in which she talks about the landscapes that certain writers write about like the African landscapes of I forget who I think of Lessing but I don't think she was talking about Lessing

ISAK DINESEN?

Yeah Dinesen and then she talks about Cather's landscapes and what she's talking about is that there is they are irregular and later ~~XX~~ on I will quote you a definition of how she describes those from an article by Sandra Gilbert but leave that and remind me to get it and read it to you because it's better than any summary I could give of that particular quality of landscape which Moers defines brilliantly as how a girl child experiences her own body not as a man experiences ^{her} I mean not a ~~woman's~~ woman's sexual body I mean when you masturbate how do you experience your own vulva and what it feels like to you and what it looks like to you and it does not look like a scabbard and it does not look like a cave...and I didn't know until I was 12 that I had a vagina...I didn't know what it was...and I think this may be true of a lot of little girls I knew perfectly well what the external genitalia were like and I looked at them I felt them I masturbated there and so on...and men write much of male landscape much of male literature is based on their masturbatory experience of their own bodies

when they were children which is when their deepest unconscious attitudes towards their bodies are formed and that concept permeates male art Mary said... couldn't learn the language for phallic she said there were no ~~xxx~~ as I put in my article you know ~~xxx~~ why don't I just call it tje article because I can't remember the Name(?) ... in which it is no longer sexual phallic doesn't just mean a penis anymore it is a whole aesthetic concept and there is none for the female body...and that's why we have so much trouble fi

AND THAT'S WHY WE HAVING ~~SO MUCH~~ ^{such} TROUBLE FIGURING ^{what} THIS AESTHETIC CRITERIA IS

And we don't know and I think that's why we have to be so ~~unclear~~ ^{uncritical} that's why I disagree with Robin Morgan so strongly in that article that delightful play she wrote on Christmas in *Chrysalis*

OH YES WASN'T THAT GOOD? THE MUSIC

But she was talking about finally we should have standards she never you know she started talking about men writers and she started admitting to the fact taht all the standards we have are male and I am adding to the fact that they are not only culturally male but there are physically male and we really don't know where to go for our standards

WASN'T SHE CRYING FOR HER ~~NAME~~ ^{Muse} (?) ?

She ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ simply stopped admiring everything that women write and started requiring standards(?) and I think it's time also to be more critical but the way in which we can be critical of women's writing I think are these when a woman first writes about menstruation the whole world has to be excited wow! you know? you who! what a thing to write about? and anybody who wrote about menstruation was an artist for a while you know? Now there are certain subjects which have become just as cliché and boring when written about by women ~~XXXXX~~ as certain subjects hve been written about by men you know in time now I think that it's very important for us to say ok you can write about a ll you want but it's boring it's not going to interest anybody else... and you really ought to read ~~More~~ ^{more} about what women write in order to see what's cliché and gon and write something more out of your own ~~experience~~ ^{experience} originally which is what we say when we tell young art students to go to museums so that you don't paint a Cezanne ~~over~~ ^{over} again or whatever it is and I think we have to set up that is where I think our standards should lie not on the inherited standards which have been given to us by men as to what is... ok now I have another thing to get to you know the subject/object now it is possible that even the term aesthetic distance is male if you imagine that all of us men and women have mothers and are born from mothers... and spend nine months in our mothers bodies and the first days of our lives against our mother's bodies and think for a long time that babies don't know the difference between themselves and their mothers and that's one of the primary learning experiences is to differentiate between our mothers and ourselves then you have to imagine that for women the relationship between self and other ~~X~~ is never going to be the same as it is for men that is to say a man's job is life is to learn to distinguish between himself and his mother fully then he fucks her when he grows up and that is a real relationship with the other... but it is back again to the first primary ~~XXXXXX~~ sexual erotic presexual erotic relationship with the environment that he has ok now a woman when she grows up and arrives at what Freud calls maturity we have to give up taht original relationship and have a relationship with the other that is trully other... ok nevertheless she is still will have physical responses I don't think you can say that those can be ~~erased~~ ^{erased} which involve identification with the mother and that sort of thing as far as ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{I think it is} I would like to go not having organizations with the father

WOULD YOU LIKE TO STOP?

So then if you say a woman a mature woman is heterosexual is going to relate to the environment with a kind of an identification that no man will ever have he does not think of his mother as himself after the very first days of his life yes there is a certain identification with the environment that we all have cause we're part of our mothers... but boys learn to separate themselves from their mothers and they don't go back to them little girls can always look at their mothers their primary environment as soon as they know they are girls they will identify with their mothers they never totally separate from them I imagine that therefore notions of objectivity and subjectivity are different biologically in men and in women most particularly in heterosexual women but not not necessarily not entirely... even in lesbians there is a different relationship between the environment and they will perhaps identify even more with the environment than heterosexual women who ~~retrieve~~ ^{achieve} (a) relationship with otherness which is an extreme as to have lovers among men... now I think this will certainly involve not only ecology but also art notions of subject/object relationships in art I think inevitably are going to be different in the female aesthetic that is truly free and authentic than there will be in ~~the~~ men we don't know but maybe the notions of aesthetic distance has to ~~XXXX~~ simply got to be modified as we are talking about authentic female art now what we are really saying is very radical and very dangerous cause what we are really doing is redefining art... and it may be that what we are going to call art is never going to be called art by the world as we experience it it may have to be called something else we may not simply be able to call it art because the men are going to say it's not art and we ~~are~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ may even want to find another term for it or maybe we're going to redefine all art to include a different relationship between subject and art much of men's art has been an effort to define subject ~~XXXX~~ and object Steven's often you know all those men

WHAT I THINK IS SO WONDERFUL THAT WE'RE TOUCHING ON IS I WAS READING YOU KNOW HAROLD ROSENBERG? *the Art Critic*

No

IT'S A BOOK THAT'S A LITTLE BIT DATED CALLED THE REDEFINITION OF ART ANYWAY WHAT ROSENBERG WAS TALKING ABOUT WAS THE 50'S and 60'S MOVEMENT TO GET AWAY FROM AND TO SOMEHOW EVEN BLEND SUBJECT/OBJECT INTO ~~SEXUAL~~ (?) ART AND PERFORMANCE ART THERE WAS NO OBJECT THERE WAS NO ART OBJECT *Conceptual*

Right and this is not just women the whole I think the feminist movement is not limited to just women

IT'S A FEMINIZING MOVEMENT

I think it's world wide and it may be evolutionarily and effort to stop the cataclysm and it's a romantic movement and we find it in the hippies where there was a kind of softening of the male role although the women's role was ~~worsened~~ worsened...but in general the whole softening effort of the hippie movement was like a last desperate gasp against the mechanization of the world

STOP OBJECTIFYING AND STOP

Right so we were talking about Rosenberg right?

NO JUST THAT I THOUGHT IT WAS INTERESTING THAT YOU SEE THIS AESTHETIC I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO CALL IT AS A MOVE TO SORT OF REDEFINE OR COME TO TERMS WITH THAT SEPARATION AGAIN ANOTHER SEPARATION SUBJECT/OBJECT

It's different in men however because well like John ~~Logan~~ ^{Sagan} (?) I just inscribed my book to him I said that you for your encouragement in your theory ~~and~~ your poems because ... he wrote an article a long time ago about what ~~XXXXXX~~ writing poetry is and I think I borrowed that Too(?)

I LOVE THE EXERCISE ABOUT

the remembering the mother

" *Our*
OUR UNLONELIEST TIMES "

Yeah you see men are trying to get back to relationships with their mothers which is not the same as female which is identification, you see men identify with their mothers maybe if they're in the womb and after for a while but I mean the conscious identification that women have with their mothers she is like the ideal woman I will be like her when I grow up and so on is I think a ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ constant definition... what we don't know are where are and I was arguing this with Rachel about this are where are the x and the y genes and all this what about the hormones what about the bathing of the baby in testosterone and so on up until now I have sort of been an amateur from the feminist's point of view student of primatology ~~XX~~ in the interest of finding out about what women really are and in the past they've come down really hard on women it's very clear think about hormones there's no question about it there is a masculinizing influence in the hormones that men get and that changes their nature they are more aggressive and so on and originally I wish I could *sign* remember where and I just got a track of stansin(?) one of the articles in ~~scientists~~ *signs* Magazine which is an intellectual feminist journal originally because of the influence on women where they had scholarly ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ left brain patriarchal type articles by women and men on subjects of article revisions that are in new books from ~~his~~ *a feminist* point of view and so I think it may have been in there apparently when they start looking for different things apparently there are even some articles some studies some news releases which might lead us to believe that women are not as definitive

YOU MEAN THAT TESTOSTERONE JUST ISN'T EVERYTHING

Well it'll make I don't know I'm just questioning the sea of information you know it could be I think for example the influence of the mind on the body is so powerful my guess is that what hormones to send out may come from the brain to ensure that happens

IN FACT AGGRESSION MAY BE MORE THAN JUST *natural* ACTIVE ~~MAGTILE~~ ACTIVATION OF TESTOSTERONE AGGRESSION SENDING MESSAGES TO THE PITUITARY GLAND AND SENDING THE MESSAGES TO THE TESTOSTERONE

Look I don't want to be held to this

NO IT'S JUST A THEORY, RIGHT?

This is my theory as to what they may mean in an article I haven't read the references to the footnotes and so on in the article imply that we are having a new look at this and that are new possibilities besides the old ones as to the influence of hormones on maleness and the x and y genes and so on may not be at all... and there is another question no what about the gene which says you can be a mother? Men don't have it does it in fact make certain nurturing identification and subject/object relationships possible in women which are impossible in men? although they may be learned or not learned... I was talking with a friend of mine who has an adopted child and she's a college professor in her thirties and she is *studying* ~~studying~~ the ways in which mothering can be a learned relationship and it may not be biological as Rich says in her book I said to her I have many questions about that because we don't know who can learn it that maybe only women can learn it that maybe men can learn it but maybe it's more brain dominated than we know and that the hormone may not be necessary of the gene or you know this is so unknown! It is so unknowable the present conditions of human culture... that I almost think it's you can speculate on it ...you can write a whole book such as Rich's which sort of assumes that men cannot do it...but she may not be right however I'm not going to attack her and say she's wrong...I think it's a waste of time to argue about it but I do not think it's a waste of time to write as subjectively as we can as *many* ~~and~~ women as possible and it's a pain (?) and

enclosed space this female space creates you know the compression of any enclosed space which is explosive and I think when that explodes it explodes into extremes such as what they call the melodrama everything is in black and white everything is the good guys and the bad guys melodrama which you look down in as an art form because of it's extremeness may in fact at this time in the history of culture be a legitimate and authentic ^{female} art form now ^{even} Rainer in an article in ^{Play} Ellus about her somebody it was Adrienne Rich or someone

I SAW THAT

Yeah which is one of the best articles I think I've read in years on female art she apparently Rainer is using melodrama as considering it an important ~~XXXXXX~~ legitimate art form she's ~~XXXXXX~~ takes it into the avante garde and breaks it up and makes us focus on it and see it not just simplistically and to enter it and really look at it but as an art form ~~is~~ which is really female... now I think we have to think a lot about that about about this alteration between the good and the bad which is the explosiveness of the confined space in which women have been forced to ^{accept} ^{the} logically socially

SO YOU'RE SAYING THAT THAT FORM IS ^{is} ~~A~~ ^{EPIC} RESULT OF ~~MADE~~ REAL REPRESSED ^{feelings}

Yeah the melodrama may in fact be be for women and authentic ~~XXXX~~ and quote good art form whereas in the larger culture where this kind of ~~explosiveness~~ is not necessary it's fake it's simply not true and for women it may be true that is to say authentic

BECAUSE WHEN IT WAS ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED AND POPULAR IT WAS IN FACT A PRODUCT OF VICTORIAN REPRESSION AND IT WAS VALID IN THOSE DAYS

So I think these are three areas I think I've talked about three areas subject/object and the male body and melodrama which you might imagine that the female aesthetic if it was authentic might be different from the male and these are just three that I've thought of there are I imagine many many others and it is the job of feminist artists and feminist critics I think one of the exciting jobs for us is to investigate things ~~XXXXXX~~ freely without recourse to what the men are going to say something that I really liked some feminist ~~praise~~ ^{praise} that ^{one of the} lesbians which is delightful is that they talk about the men the boys in which the same way that men call women the girls I love that ... so we don't have to really worry about what the boys are saying about female art we really have to listen to each other therefore I think it's important to ok to get back to our problems to where we're going to ~~XXXXXX~~ publish and so on to try as much as we can to create spaces for ourselves where we don't have to pay any attention to men and that really... you don't have to worry about being famous although it's hard not to want to be among the men but to try to get famous among women and to be satisfied with that as maybe being more important to us as artists than the other or at least as important or at least to allow ourselves to think of that as a possibility and to wonder whether we can't be more and richer feminist publishing outlets and so on... rather than fewer... we have to maybe turn to heterosexual ones who access to more money and sort of make clear to them that they need ^{we} ^{that} more money for publishing as well as the women's political associations and so on I think what without a female aesthetic which is a form of female religion which is what really matters which is what we've been talking about we find a real stronghold of the male opposition to feminism and female too we've got to have ^{outlets for} ^{we} ^{that} problems in female art and that's going to take money and we're probably going to have to get a lot of it from the women who have access to ~~women's art~~ (?) ^{male money}

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THAT LATER FURTHER

Yeah well that's my female aesthetic

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OK SOME OF THE THINGS WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT , I'M JUST GOING TO JOT DOWN ONE WAS THAT IN FACT MAE AESTHETIC CRITERIA THAT WHOLE PHENOMENON IS BREAKING DOWN AND THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT FEMINISM IS INJECTING SOMETHING INTO AESTHETICS THAT WASN'T THERE AS YOU SAID... AND THAT MEN ARE IN FACT THREATENED BY THE FEMALE AESTHETIC AND SO THE PREPENSE OR THEIR PART WAS TO IGNORE WHEN IN FACT THEY WERE THREATENED AND THAT WE WERE MAKING A CONTRIBUTION RATHER THAN TAKING AWAY I DON'T KNOW IT'S THERE'S PROBABLY NOTHING FOR ~~ME~~ ~~US~~ TO COMMENT ON THAT BUT I FELT THIS SENSE OF HOPE IN FACT THAT MY NEED FOR CREATING A UNIVERSE SOME KIND OF UNIVERSAL FEELING AMONG ARTISTS AND NOT BEING SEPARATIST I SUDDENLY SAW A WAY IN THAT I WAS IN FACT CONTRIBUTING TO A GREATER AESTHETIC AT THE SAME TIME I WAS THINKING THAT I WAS THINKING THIS MAY BE THE TIME IN HISTORY FOR VARIOUS AESTHETICS TO BE OPERATING

GURUS WE'RE LETTING IN THIRD WORLD CULTURE BLACK CULTURE LATIN CULTURE EASTERN EUROPEAN CULTURE WE'RE ALL INTO THE WHOLE ETHNIC THING YOU KNOW we're really trying to

ENOUGH TOTALISM IT OCCURED TO ME MAY BE ~~FEELING~~ female

Wow field relevant like the whole field

BECAUSE OF WHAT WE SAID... THIS MAY NOT BE THE TAPE OUR OTHERS EARS OR ANYTHING THIS IS OUR CONVERSATION

Cuse you brought ot up and it started jelling

Yeah because the single strand you know Mark talked to me about the single strand which is often that an artist can be totalistic in everything else but in his art the single strand

THAT'S WHAT A SERIOUS ARTIST IDS DEFINED AS HOW A GOOD & HOLD HE HAS ON HIS SINGLE STRAND

Right and pluralism I don't like part of my language when I said we are allowing they are pushing and demanding and when I say they that means the Third World and blacks and so on and then I meant to say we because I'm referring to women We are not necessarily finally what we want as women is not to be allowed in but to be

PART OF

but to we want to capture not be allowed in we want to take over so that our aesthetic is not entered as a position of weakness... that is going to take a tremendous amount of individualism we have to be as pluralistic as feminists as we expect the world to be pluralistic in this cultural malaise... and I think that with cultural pluralism and feminist pluralism we cannot be without them they're the only hope we have left

I AGREE

which is sort of a remarkably grandiose statement but

FOR TWO WOMEN IN SAN FRANCISCO TO BE MAKING

Well if this is going to be recorded on tape I want my comments that I realise how grandiose it sounds but finally you know if you really are serious if you think that you're into anything that you think is true you're trivialising if you don't allow yourself a certain grandiosity

OH YEAH HOW ELSE CAN YOU MAKE THAT MEANINGFUL STATEMENT YOU KNOW

IT'S ALRIGHT IT'S OK ALSO JUST ANOTHER COMMENTON IT JUST BECAUSE WE'RE HAVING A DIALOGUE AND IT'S NOT JUST AN INTERVIEW CAUSE SO MUCH OF WHAT YOU SAID I REALLY DO WANT TO COMMENT ON AND WON'T NOW BUT WILL LATER WHEN WE JUST TALK SOMETHING ABOUT OH GETTING BACK TO THE WHOLE SENSE OF ECOLOGY AND THE DEPENDENT VERSES THE INDEPENDENT FIELD WHICH IS WONDERFUL I LIKE THAT KIND OF ANALYSIS OF IT BUT PERHAPSWHAT WE CONSIDER ~~XX~~ TO BE FEMALE DEPENDENCY WE MIGHT SOMETHING ELSE IT MIGHT BE THAT SENSE OF BELONGING AND THAT THINGS HAVE TO FIT IN AN ORDER THINGS

this piece and

It's an interesting idea I have to think about it I know my immediate reaction my emotional reaction is not the same thing that is female dependency is unequal and ecology I think is dependency among equals(?)

YES

Glora WELL as we know it female dependency is unequal as we know it and as we think of it as we think of it what we think of as female dependency involves a higher and a lower

YES BUT I WAS THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING MORE IN THE LINES OF

you were thinking more of relevancy field relevancy

YES THE DEPENDENCY TRANSLATED AS INTERDEPENDENCY CONNECTEDNESS

that's good dependency as interdependency I think we have to work hard to make it that women's ~~reaction~~ *reaction* to the patriarchal world I don't think is actually dependency ...it's not that we recognise equals we don't have equal power but I mean I think we have to work hard to make it that

That's good dependency as interdependency I mean I think we have to work hard to make it that women's relationship to the patriarchal world I don't think is often interdependency I tell you what it's not that we recognize equals one with equal power but like take away all the women in the world who are blacks(?) of course not if they do cloning....

I GUESS IN FACT WE'RE COMING TO THE POINT WHERE CONTENT IS IN FACT MEANINGFUL BECAUSE IT'S BEEN BOTTLED UP FOR SO LONG LONG

I want to read something else from Priscilla... that quote from Dotra Ma about women and power that for women sophistication (?) reforms have always belonged to power and that women in power is a is an obstruction of power

I THINK THAT'S ABSURD WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT ACTUALLY BUT I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S RELEVANT OR NOT I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE AESTHETIC CRITERIA FOR HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH WOMEN'S ~~(REFORM REALISTICALLY?)~~ WORK FOR AESTHETICALLY?

ok that's a hard question

LET ME TELL YOU WHY I'M ASKING THAT QUESTION VERY VERY BRIEFLY AND THAT IS I HAVE BEEN CANCELING(?) CULTURAL CRITICISM I DON'T CRITICISE WHEN I WRITE ABOUT WOMEN'S WORK I DON'T WRITE ABOUT WOMEN'S WORK WORK THAT DOESN'T APPEAL TO ME I DO NOT SIT AROUND AND BADMOUTH IT BECAUSE I DONOT BELIEVE IN THAT WAY OF CRITICISING I DON'T HAVE THE TIME FOR IT BUT I HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF MAKING SOCIOLOGICAL/CULTURAL STATEMENTS RATHER THAN LITERARY ONES IN REFERENCE TO IN REFERENCE TO AND THIS IS NOT FOR THE TAPE KATHEEN'S WORK AND SOME OTHER PEOPLE AND MY OWN REJOINER WAS I CANNOT DEAL WITH THE FEMALE (?) PROBLEMS OF THEIR WORK MOST OF THE TIME I CAN DEAL WITH THE FEMALE PROBLEMS OF MALE WORK BECAUSE I WAS TAUGHT TO DO THAT IN SCHOOL AND I WAS A VERY GOOD STUDENT BUT I DON'T WANT TO DEAL WITH IT RIGHT NOW AND YET I DO BUT I

DON'T WANT TO DEAL WITH IT THE WAY I WAS TAUGHT TO DEAL WITH IT SO THAT'S THE REASON I'M ASKING YOU THE QUESTION

Well I can answer that question only with speculation

SURE THAT'S ALRIGHT

You know Mark is always asking me the question what do you think there would be if women had all the power(?) an example of feminist formal criticism is what I gave in my article about Moers book about my friend who wrote a poem(?) that was ~~XXXX~~ by men called anti-climactic... I think I made references to that... I think we can address ourselves to formal criticism by thinking of aesthetic distance in relation ^{female form} ~~ship~~ ~~XX~~ between subject and object it's not so much content very often as it is a formal position... I think rhythm for example there have been a lot of questions about female forms... ~~XXXXXX~~ female may be longer... longer everything for example I am going to give a very extreme example a man makes love and it's over a woman makes love and lasts ~~9XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ months... ok that kind of if she is pregnant or whatever her conditions that is the difference between two kinds of sex heterosexual sex with coitus or other kinds of sex heterosexual love where you stimulate externally that's an extreme sexual statement but it's one of the exaggerated ones questions of padding should be brought out softness roundness the question of using too many words you have to be very careful before you criticise feminism it may be that that is a female shape

^{Narrative} ~~URITAL~~ AS OPPOSED TO(?)

Oh it may be not even ^{narrative} ~~manitive~~(?) it may be ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ repetition you know all sorts of things which seem to us to be womanness I often when Mark is criticising my work and the work of women he says par again par again par again (?) but where is there ^{it down} ^{it down} an extra word? what defines extra may be different ?

PERHAPS THE MALE EAR IS DIFFERENT

Or perhaps has been trained to be different... and if you consider that the left brain experiences circular time and the left brain experiences linear time well that might make a lot of difference to women(?) because it's possible that more regular circular rhythms might not be as long ^{many} for female art as they are for male art it might be more female or less I think it is an area that we should be curious about rather than critical I think we should point to the difference that we like the (.....?) because for all reasons we have been taught not to like it which I think happens to a lot of us and for that reason we should be curious I wonder if this is quote bad taste or if it is in fact legitimate female taste and what in fact is the difference? as melodrama is concerned with taste certain kinds of colors but the colors that Judy Chicago uses I think are offensive to ~~XXXX~~ men but the way she uses pink and blue the way Georgia O'Keefe in a whole lot of things men don't like what about that? as a feminist gesture I deliberately I made the color of my book pink there's a line that says ^{present unless} ~~the lines of the week's brain(?)~~ are all pink that came you know that was one of those things that writes itself and I left it and decided I should add more color and I wanted to make the cover of my book pink you know it's considered relevant... the questions of vulgarity are very important and we should consider that as a formal ~~of~~ criticism rather than a content the cover of a book you call it pink may be a form of criticism you can translate that into shapes... my feeling is that we should not ^{we want} ~~ahead of time define what a female form~~ but when we find something that we like and men don't like which is often such as ~~milfick~~(?) patterns when we find something that we find that we like and we feel that all of our training has told us not to like what I'm recommending is curiosity rather than relevant ^{dramatic} ~~objectivism~~(?) to ask ourselves over and over again the questions that arise from the discrepancy of what we should like and what we do like and to be very alert to that as possibilities where we might maybe experience a female form th

THIS GETS BACK TO THE ISSUE THAT ^y WE WERE DEALING WITH IN THAT FIRST ARTICLE ABOUT WE'VE BEEN SO CONDITIONED TO BE ^{what} WHAT WE ARE THAT WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT WE FEEL

when you look at
I got a picture of maternity and the madonna ~~XXXXX~~ child and this is all you see it's not like thatat all *we think isn't that sweet*

RIGHT AND WE COLLECT MORE IMPRESSIONS OF WHAT WE'RE RESPONDING TO FOR INSTNAGE THE COLOR OF YOUR BOOK IS BINK AND THE LAST BOOK THAT BONNY DID MARY MACKEE'S ~~WITH THE IUDBOOK ORANGE WITH THE IUD ON THE TITLE PAGE I THOUGHT HOW WONDERFUL WHAT A WONDERFUL FEMALE ICON AND I WROTE ABOUT IT AND I DIDN'T HAVE THE CONFIRMATION THAT IT WAS AN IUD AND LAURA SAID TO ME HOW DO YOU KNOW IT'S AN IUD? AND I SAID I JUST KNOW, I HAVE ONE I JUST KNEW IT AND IT WAS SORT OF JUST NOT QUITE CLEAR AND NONE OF THE MEN WHO LOOKED AT IT KNEW AT ALL~~

I didn't know because I had never seen one I had never used one

YEAH I WAS DATA COLLECTING I HAD AN IMPRESSION AND WAS THINKING THAT'S A PEECE OF WORK DONE BY A WOMAN

I went into a book store one day this was very exciting and i'm very interested in this too point of view of women's art and what to do about it I walked into a book store and there were exhibits of drawing and things by some ~~book~~ *book* frequently happens in a book store(?) and at the other end of the room there was a male ~~mural~~ *mural* I could see it from a distance and I got very excited and I said to Mark you know I am convinced that that was ~~XXXX~~ *XXXX* painted by a woman that is a female sensibility of a naked man I bet you ~~KNOW~~ anything that no man could do that meanwhile sure enough it was done by a woman *we* looked at it and Mark said in the first place the man is put together wrong there was some discrepancy in the way the scrotum on the penis was put together...that any ~~man~~ man would instatly recognise as he how it *simply* anatomically is

WELL LET ME TELL YOU THOSE RUBENS HARDLY ANY OF US LOOK LIKE THOSE RUBENS ~~XXX~~ EITHER

Yeah as a matter of fact I've co me to love Rubens

THINK OF IT AS THE REVERSE THOUGH WE DON'T LOOK LIKE WHAT THEY THOUGHT WE LOOK LIKE

Yeah I particularly think the Michaelangelo womenwith the breasts sort of stuck onto their bodies is a very male concept actually I think a lot of women look like Rubens a lot of fat women do and what I sort of begin to like about Rubens a new discovery of mine in Spain this summer that I walked in of all the paintings the Rubens were some of the ones I liked the most because the sort of joy of the flesh is the least woman hating the least domineering the least phallic almost He knows women are large and fleshy and happy and not sly and not coquettish and they're just joyously flesh and I begin to think that there are lots of fat women and we have been trained in our culture to look down on that when in fact that man was just enjoying like I like to *exist* look at the naked body of a man and I don't think of it as it's not a put down it's joyous and i don't think a woman would paint women like that but on the other hand I'm beginning to think that there are a lot nicer than the ones we have been trained to look at men there's avery good article on that in a recent issue of

Forum
Art Week and the phallic way the images of women are really from the eye of a man dominating... there was something about the fact that women very seldom write about male bodies or paint them woman's love poems are usually very narcissistic they have to do with how it feels to be loved... Erica Jong and a lot of her stuff which was so much scorned in fact writes a lot about men's bodies as men write about women's bodies and I think it's too bad but there's a lot of stuff in there that I really would like more women to write about how men's bodies look to them and I think it's

I get very excited I bought that painting I brought it home and I mounted it because it was fun to have a sex I mean men are sex objects to women the thing that is objectable of ourselves as sex objects is we are seen only as sex objects ...but of course when we are in sex we want to be seen as sex objects if we are lesbians I think we want to be sex objects to them too I think to be a sex object is ok and there aren't enough paintings of men as sex objects when man say to me I really get annoyed oh but I love to be a sex object instead of a payroll... and I say yes but you don't want to be only a sex object!

EXACTLY IT'S THAT ABSTRACTION AGAIN

Right focussing that field irrelevancy and It think I really get tired of women's poems which are only narcissistic because we do in fact look at men's bodies lecherously

OH! MORE AND MORE TOO!

And I'm excited I'm beginning to ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ recognise that ~~XXXX~~ in myself alot and I think for years it was repressed we do research they wire people's genitals and they see if there was a difference in the male/female response to erotic tapes and there was no difference at all the women responded to the crude sex stuff the same way the men did and not just to the romantic stuff which they felt the women would feel the only difference was the women did not know when the instruments showed that they were ^{stimulated} ([?]) they had been so conditioned not to know their own sexual turn ons that that was repressed and the machine could signal turn on and the men of course would have an erection... and you could see it we have been taught not to feel it so ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ i try and let myself feel it

IT GETS LOST SOMEHOW BECAUSE IT'S UNSEEABLE

I know, we're trained not to know it so lately I've been allowing myself ad I notice in all kinds of like the male equivalent of the "dumb blonde" I will see what I call young men with awful satin and they block against the path of their leg(?) and I'll be walking behind them and men who I wouldn't want to have a single word with for reasons of class distinction or intellectual interests or whatever which are trained into us and are in fact turnons and yet I experience myself as physically turned on a 57 year old woman looking at this man and I get really turned on by the calf the purest sex object is that masculine calf and I would have never known that of men before

I THINK THAT GOES ON ALL THE TIME AND WE NEVER ADMIT IT

I think it's very important

SOMETIMES I HEAR WOMEN TALKING ABOUT MEN'S ASSES AND I'M ASTOUNDED BECAUSE I THINK FINALLY THEY'RE ALLOWING THEMSELVES TO TALK ABOUT THE VERY THING THAT WE USED TO BE TALKED ABOUT

Right and the only difference is simply don't abstract that and only fall for that I mean I might be physically turned on by that man's calf I would ^{possibly} never fall in love with him I mean it's conceivable that you might even want to go to bed with somebody just because they were a sex object but you wouldn't mistake that for the whole person men do you know they fall in love with the body with the sex object women in general when it comes to falling in love which is not the same as we don't interpret that as being physically turned on so much of a what a man is enters into what falling in love is which is I think much less of men

FALLING IN LOVE WITH THE WHOLE AS OPPOSED TO

Well there is another interesting theme about this and this I'm not sure I want on the tape one woman pointed out to me that in sex even even in sex men determine

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THEIR attractiveness to us their usefulness to us as their function they have to be able to fuck a woman only has to lie there so that in a deep way when we think about a man we want a functional one

AND WE'RE MORE TURNED ON BY THE BETTER FUNCTIONER

Right

THE MORE HE CAN DO IT'S SORTOF LIKE POWER TOO

Right I don't want this to go on

NO I THINK THIS IS VERY INTIMATE I MEAN

But it's real interesting It will however it should come out in our art

WOW THAT'S INTERESTING IT REALLY GIVES ME A LOT TO THINK ABOUT I WANT TOASK A COUPLE MORE THINGS AND WE CAN JUST TALK SOMEMORE ABOUT THE REST OF THIS

Want to change seats are you tired you can look at the tree if you want

NO I'M FINE

I mean I picked the best seat for myself so I would be relaxed

IN FACT WHEN I DO THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOU... I WOULD REALLY LIKE TO HAVE YOU IN THAT SPECIFIC SPOT

With the Chicago picture

YEAH

It makes me mad (?) because I cut the writing off the bottom of it what made me mad was she cut off the real writing that she had on the original picture and did a synthesis of all the writing she had on ^{the 5} all the pictures and put it on there and in fact I didn't like but I in fact do think it's comparable (?) to the shape... I really like it I'M so abrasive(?) you know

DID YOU NOT LET YOUR ABRASIVE SIDE OUT?

No whenever she comes out she explodes and is more unpleasant than she needs to be and then I lose friends and I become panicky... I haven't solved that problem... I was simply abrasive and I had very few friends and when I was 14 I was the kid nobody wanted to sit next to on the bus... later I noticed that people that I didn't like were usually unlikable and then (?) took over and I decided to watch and see how other people were likeable and I was typical of doing that I was totally transported(?) and that's when I (indistinguishable) ^{write} cut Serafin's head off -

OH NOW I UNDERSTAND THAT IT'S FUNNY BECAUSE I DON'T ~~REMEMBER~~ PERCEIVE YOU AS ABRASIVE

No because I'm always controlling it I'm not abrasive I mean when you give me a platform and say go ahead and talk i think i can be quite exciting as a talker but if i'm in a group and other people want to talk it's just too bad

YES BUT DOESN'T THE ABRASIVENESS ALWAYS COME AS A RESTORATION FROM FRUSTRATION

yes it comes from a lifetime of frustration.

NATURE OF THIS PROJECT IS AND WHAT I'M WRITING THIS BOOK ON I SAY I'M LOOKING FOR WOMEN ARTISTS OVER 40 AND SUDDENLY IT'S BEGINNING TO SOUND VERY FUNNY IN MY EARS AND IT'S BEEN SINCE THAT ARTICLE IN MS. WHEN I READ THE ARTICLE THE FIRST TIME WITH HANET BERET AND CYNTHIA OSIC I WAS ~~MOOSE~~ HOSTILE I FELT REALLY NASTY TOWARDS CYNTHIA OSIC I THOUGHT SHE'S JUST DENYING EVERYTHING THAT'S IMPORTANT SHE'S JUST REAL POMPOUS SHE'S WAY UP THERE AND THEN I READ IT AGAIN AND THEN I REALLY AGREED WITH HER

I don't I disagree with her

WE CAN TALK ABOUT THAT

(tape #3 side A ends here)

TAKING CONTROL OF OUR LIVES AND LETTING IT GO IN OUR ART

Using art the way I wanted to use it with StMay(?) bringing ^{my}art into our lives and our lives into our art

ABSOLUTELY AND NOT SEPARATING THEM

Not separating them

AND MAKING OUR ART BEYOND... BECAUSE IT'S SO NOVEL IN WHAT IT SAYS

And yet it's all serious and it's all jive at the same time

THAT'S THE IMPORTANT THING

I mean because it is a joke

BECAUSE IF WE TAKE IT TOO SERIOUSLY WE HAVE TO TAKE DELIGHT IN THE FACT THAT IT'S AN ART PIECE

I can't help thinking death is a joke

DEATH IS ERGO ALL OF THIS IS A BIG EQUAL SIGN

Yes we're really saying that all of this is going to be art because it's going to be jive(?) lifelike we'll warn ourselves

WE WILL CHANGE THE WHOLE NOTION OUR FRIENDS NOTION ANYWAY WHOEVER ATTENDS MAYBE THE MEDIA OF DEATH IN THE UNIVERSE

Maybe we can do the kind of thing where like the Exploritorium (laughing)

RIGHT THEY CAN PUT US IN A BOX AND WATCH ALL THAT

The stage of all this foam rubber that I have left over from the readings

WE COULD STAGE OUR DEATH

Stage it?

.....

I really don't know what that is all about It seems odd to me ~~XXXX~~ the realization that God made us x y and z ways

.....

HOW DO YOU FEEL KNOWING THE BIG THRUST OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IS SORT OF A SIDE
EXPLOSIONAIRE(?) COVERING LOST MATRIARCHIES AND EXPLORING PRE CHRISTIAN IMAGES OF
ART IN MATRIARCHIES THAT WERE PRE CHRISTIAN... WOMEN WHO ARE VERY CONSCIOUSLY SPEAK*
ING IN TERMS OF A FEMALE THEATRE

Well there has always been that I mean I'm sure there is that same response to
the virgin the mother of god as the feciundatoi(?) in Orthodox English the fruitful
body these profound and very primitive very basic kinds of fertility and fruitfulness
and that sort of thing it seems very normal to me

THE DIETY IS THAT SUPERCEDES

Well I don't think of an anthropomorphic god the father

YOU DON'T THINK OF A MALE GOD

Well I think of Jesus as a man
YOU THINK MORE IN TERMS OF A MORE EHEREAL SPIRITUAL CREATOR?

No I really don't think in sexual terms of that at all I just don't think in sexual
terms

EXCEPT ALL RELIGIOUS ALL MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIOUS TRAINING REFERS TO A GOD

Yeah that doesn't bother me particularly I think that's a definition that limits
god and to me do not quote me as any voice of organised religion or Eastern Orthodox
criticism but personally I do not think of an anthropologic father although there are
some Icons of the Tinity that we have

(I just realized that this is the same woman who was on the first side of the tape,
talking about Icons again and not Frances Jaffer)

which is hard to say when it started... cause when I make myself less explosive
 SOMEBODY WAS CUTTING YOU OFF AT ONE TIME THAT'S WHY IT CAME OUT THE WAY IT DID
 OH yeah but now I should be able to deal with it
 YOU SAID IN YOUR JOURNAL THAT YOU NEED TO BE MORE ADVENTUROUS

That was a very risky article

IT WAS WONDERFUL I WROTE ABOUT IT ACTUALLY IT WASN'T EXACTLY IN REFERENCE TO
 WHAT LEVER(?) SAID BUT IT WAS I DID A REVIEW OF THE LAST REXWORTH SENSATIONS(?)
 AND JAPANESE AND CHINESE POETS IN WHICH I MADE NOTE THAT THEY WERE NOT ADVENTUROUS
 AS MUCH AS THEY WERE NOT ONLY VICTIMS WITH BOUND FEET BUT THEY WERE THE ONLY WOMEN
 WHO COULD ~~WALK~~ WERE THE ONES WHO WERE PRETTY MUCH RESTRICTED TO THE PALACE
 AND LADIES WHO WERE REALLY IMOBILE AND I FOUND A WONDERFUL ~~OR~~ PASSAGE
 FROM... IN WHICH SHE SAYS ~~THE LAST~~ HAS TO BE MOBILE AND ADVENTUROUS I MEAN THAT'S ^{you think about it this}
 A PARAPHRASE ... THAT'S JUST A JOURNAL ENTRY BUT IT CAME AT A TIME WHEN EVERYTHING
 YOU READ YOU READ TALKS ABOUT IT SO I JUST WANTED TO TALK ABOUT IT YOU SAID BEING
 A POET GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE MORE ADVENTUROUS AND ALSO SOME OF YOUR
 TRAVELS YOU SAID IT WAS A LIFELONG AMBITION TO GO TO GREECE

I can't answer that because it was a true struggles I didn't like much of Greece
 modern Greece I was not nearly adventurous enough I was much too frightened and I
 found the hysterical condition of modern Greece in the summertime overrun with
 tourists and untrained personnel who get hysterical when they can't handle the
 situations they simply yell and scream at you just constantly threatening my paranoid
 self and my fears traveling I was disappointed in the goddesses deeply deeply
 disappointed I knew the environment and I immersed myself in the study of the ^{tried}
~~Chad(?)~~
 from a feminist point of view tried to make capital for myself out of Athena whose
 images had appeared to me in dreams and in visions and so on and I began to discover
 that she was daddy's good girl and Zeus said I have a thunderball(?) sit down and
 shut up and she sat down and shut up and and finally there was a patriarchy even the
 goddess of wisdom had no real power and particularly if they were female if they were
 masculine... finally I decided that the images I had come to find in Greece were not
 satisfactory but those were all literary when I went into the museums I was absolutely
 ecstatic and the sights the actual classical sights were so exciting to me I was
 in another place I was high on them but modern Greece and Byzantine Greece with all
 those Christian images just made me so unhappy that I just decided to leave although
 I spent days running in and out of the museum in Acwinon and Athens so I alternated
 between ecstatic joy and so the alternation between ecstasy and unhappiness may have
 to do with my difficulty in being adventurous my middleaged needs for comfort are
 very strong and just the wish to get rid of them doesn't always get rid of them
 so I want to be more adventurous and I don't know how to do it without frightening
 myself out of existence and I think the feminist pool are such an adventure out of the
 confines of the middleclass Jewish community of Hartford Connecticut where I
 was brought up that that might be much of the adventurousness that I can handle I
 am learning to be adventurous in other ways I am very athletic and my toe joint is not
 even in my socket and yet I have learned to walk three miles in an hour and I am
 learning to jog I can jog 5 minutes without stopping that seems silly to some people
 to me at 57 and arthritic that may be the adventure that is for me I have to be careful
 maybe not to go to extremes I would like to be much more adventurous and travel and
 explore and just explore all kinds of things but I think I am conditioned and it
 is very much against me I really feel that we have to entitle ourselves to our own
 self pity if you have no self pity you have no art but I think maybe self pity is
 our own form of our own self for women at this point but maybe that's another aesthetic
 for women at this point that we have to be careful of any of the rulework(?) for art
 is three dimensional art(?) but self pity that is pity for women makes it into a kind
 of courageous honesty may be more legitimate in our art than we allow it to be that