

## Looking for Lyotard, Beyond the Genre of Feminist Manifestos

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In the late 1960s responses to activists arguing for women's liberation movement were twofold, either outright laughter at the notion that women were oppressed, or indignation that women felt their oppression compared to the horrors of war or racism or capitalism, all of which were considered paramount to sexism. Participants in women's liberation therefore spent a great deal of time explaining why women needed to organize on their own behalf. These documents, often labeled retrospectively as manifestos, serve as evidence for historians writing about women's liberation. However, historians' narrow definition of the genre has resulted in a limited focus on a few early groups, making the conventions of the genre of manifesto crucial to understanding the historiography of women's liberation.<sup>1</sup>

Jacqueline Rhodes in *Feminism, Writing, and Critical Agency: From Manifesto to Modem*, offers a succinct definition of "the manifesto and its cousins the pamphlet and position statement – [as] invocations of identity, a collective and decidedly temporary subjectivity formed for the purpose of immediate and radical rhetorical action" (24-25). Janet Lyon, in *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*, offers a more expansive view specifically eschewing "a definitive profile" as too "sharply limiting" (13). She instead suggests that manifestos may be identified by certain "resemblances" such as a "hortatory tone," a "declarative, passionate voice," claims to "unobstructed rhetorical clarity" and "nascent fury" (14). Lyon's broad approach reflects the conclusion reached in a recent survey of writing about manifestos; the use of manifesto has become so stretched as to have no conventions at all. While "the term manifesto, strictly speaking, applies to (often short) texts published in a brochure, in a journal or a review, in the name of a political, philosophical, literary or artistic movement," the expanded usage means that "the manifesto may be viewed as a programmatic discourse of power because it aspires to change reality with words; the manifesto is a discourse where knowledge is asserted rather than developed because used by the person who utters it as a revolutionary tool representing his or her discovery of knowledge" (Yanoshevsky 261, 264-265).

The idea of a manifesto as a discourse of power and knowledge is precisely how I wish to approach an expanded notion of feminist manifestos in the writing of women's history. Reading broader set of documents that grappled with the relationship between

power and knowledge as manifestos allows us to see how women's liberation activists trespassed the boundaries of the genre in various ways, while a comparison of two feminist groups reveals the consequences of trespassing along divergent paths. The Chicago Women's Liberation Union (CWLU) was born out of the disintegration of the New Left in Chicago following the protests at the Democratic National Convention in 1968 (Echols). Activist women in the city organized a national women's liberation conference in November of 1968 and a subsequently a founding conference for a union of women's groups in the fall of 1969. For the eight years of its existence, the CWLU functioned as the most visible socialist feminist organization in the United States. I compare the CWLU to a lesser-known group, the Feminist Studio Workshop. In 1972, Judy Chicago, Sheila de Bretteville, and Arlene Raven, frustrated with the sexism of a male-dominated institution, turned their backs on the prestigious California Institute of the Arts to create the Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW). For nine years the FSW served as the core of the Woman's Building in Los Angeles, a highly influential and visible center for the women's art movement (Moravec 2008). Neither the FSW nor the CWLU explicitly labeled any one document as a "manifesto." Of necessity then, I follow their stretching of the genre as I draw on four pieces of evidence, a statement of political principles, a play, a published announcement, and a broadside to explore how these two groups went beyond the oft-reprinted and cited exemplars of the feminist manifesto.<sup>2</sup>

While none of the works I discuss are considered in Rhodes' or Lyon's examinations of feminist manifestos, both authors' framing of the genre is germane to my argument.<sup>3</sup> Lyon considers the intervention of manifestos as part of "the revolutionary discourse of the plebian public sphere," following Jurgen Habermas (171).<sup>4</sup> While Rhodes grounds her work in Foucault, her references to "public feminist discourses" (6) "public directed ends" (13) and most particularly her concept of public textuality (20) tie her to Habermas as well. Although feminist theorists have debated the validity and applicability of Habermas' idea of the public sphere for women, they are in many ways indebted to the notion of rhetorical public discourse, which has become foundational to understanding how women sought to achieve social change.<sup>5</sup>

At the heart of Habermas lies emancipatory knowledge. His argument that the "insights gained through critical self-awareness are emancipatory in the sense that at least one can recognize the correct reasons for his or her problems" ("Towards a Theory of Communicative Competence" 371), sounds similar to the practice of consciousness-raising in the women's liberation movement. Women, via consciousness-raising, would come to understand problems that initially appeared personal were systemic, or as it was more popularly phrased that "the personal is political." Emancipatory knowledge always rests on some version of meta-narrative, an overarching theoretical framework to which appeals can be made (*Knowledge and Human Interests*). In the case of women's liberation, patriarchy, asymmetrical power relations between men and women, provides the metanarrative that explains women's subjugation. As Janet Jakobsen notes this "story ...of coherent oppression and liberation is one which is consistently [re]told as both a modern meta-narrative and the founding narrative [of WLM] in the United States" (78).

On the opposite side of the postmodern divide sits Jean-Francois Lyotard who resists any "metanarrative implying a philosophy of history ... used to legitimate knowledge" (*The*

*Postmodern Condition* xxiv). In “One of the Things at Stake in Women’s Struggles” (1978) one of Lyotard’s earliest and most explicit statements about feminism, he writes “Let us set to work forging fictions rather than hypotheses and theories; this would be the best way for the speaker to become ‘feminine,’” (118). For Lyotard, femininity bears no connection to actual women or men, but rather represents the “refusal of the temptation to grasp, to master;” the rejection of the totality of meta-narrative (quoted in Olson 392).<sup>6</sup> In *The Postmodern Condition* he offers the following: “The little narrative remains the quintessential form of imaginative invention” (60).” In a 1995 interview he elaborated, “If we are vigilant against master narratives, it means precisely that we try to consider the small narratives of specific groups” (quoted in Olson 401). Taken together Lyotard seems to propose that inventing fictions (rather than emancipation narratives) of the feminine (anti-totally) into little narratives (rather than meta-narratives) of new ideas (rather than totalizing theories or -isms) offers the best path for women’s liberation.

Because Habermas’ notion of the “public sphere” overlaps, both linguistically, and conceptually with one of the most pervasive, tenacious and controversial frameworks of women’s history, public versus private, his work informs many histories.<sup>7</sup> Lyotard, who speaks confusingly (to the historian) in the language of literary analysis, is used by almost no Anglophone women’s historians.<sup>8</sup> Every major history of women’s liberation written in the past two decades has made at least passing reference to the CWLU, which follows the path laid out by Habermas by relying on the metanarrative of socialism, while the FSW, with its the fragmented, feminine project, remains on the wrong side of history and excluded from written histories.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Chicago Women’s Liberation Union**

Although the CWLU is now enshrined in histories of the women’s movement, its success was far from certain in 1969. Not everyone in the Chicago leftist community supported the creation of an autonomous women’s group. Conference planners anticipated that women committed to working in New Left groups with men might disrupt the proceedings. Therefore in addition to preparing to debate political principles, the conference organizers also planned to stage a play, *Everywoman, Past, Present and Future* as a means to unify attendees and to refute the anticipated objection socialist feminists were counter-revolutionary.<sup>10</sup>

A lengthy document circulated among the women’s community prior to the founding conference, although Debate during the conference resulted in a considerably shorter document, formally adopted ten days later.<sup>11</sup> Most historians searching for the “manifesto” of the CWLU would happily use this document, although the group never labeled it as such. The Statement reflects the tight definition of the manifesto offered by Rhodes. Six concise statements position women’s liberation “as a revolutionary struggle.” While the first three principles assert women’s liberation as a valid part of the Left’s agenda, the second three outline a program of action: end male supremacy, fight “racism, imperialism and capitalism,” and create a model organization that unifies “theory and practice.” The identity of the participants is not a subject of their political deliberations. The document speaks from the neutral “we” neatly avoiding the debates engendered by the identity “socialist

feminism” and indicates the extent to which the CWLU viewed itself as an action oriented group.<sup>12</sup> The problems are not with socialism, but rather with socialist men.

Sexism in the Left provided the key subject matter for *Everywoman, Past, Present and Future*. The narrator poses a series of questions that begin the play:

What is the revolution? When did it begin? It began a long time ago. And as with all revolutions, there were women who were there who we don't know about. We don't know how they lived or how they died. The history of women has not been written. The history of women's resistance has been hidden from us. Women have cried out against oppression and THEIR VOICES WILL NOT BE STILLED LISTEN.

Women's quarrels are with history that when revealed properly, through the “stilled” voices of women, will show them as true revolutionaries. *Everywoman* offered a chronological narrative running from Enlightenment-inspired revolutions through the nineteenth-century American woman movement into twentieth century labor movements and finally to women's participation in Communist movements. The play ends with rallying universal sisterhood and a call to action:

I am all women, I am every woman. Wherever women are suffering, I am there. Wherever women are struggling, I am there. Wherever women are fighting for the their liberation, I am there.  
I am with all women; I am all women, and our struggle grows.  
And where there are women too beaten down to fight, I will be there; and we will take strength together. Everywhere; for we will have a new world, a just world, a world without oppression and degradation!

*Everywoman* united all revolutionary women past and present, by performing the crucial affective work that the drier statement of principles could not. The script of *Everywoman*, which consisted largely of the words of revolutionary women themselves, was distributed to audience members who read parts aloud, becoming part of the performance. Both the content and performance of the play were meant to inspire participants, drawing them into the story as they read the words of their foremothers, and to rally them to the cause of organizing the CWLU on behalf of all women.

Although the organizers of the CWLU blurred the boundaries of manifesto by using the creative form of the play to provide additional support for the identity they hoped to mobilize at their founding conference, ultimately the narrative followed that of the more conventional Statement of Principles. The queries that opened the play are answered in the conclusion. Women were present in all past revolutions. Their cries against oppression remain in the fragments of history woven into the script. Re-produced, in the reading of women's history by women, is a traditional historical narrative that reclaims agency in the past and implies legitimacy in the future. History then, in the Habermasian tradition, became the ultimate emancipatory knowledge, offering an irrefutable response to Leftist critiques of the autonomous women's movement as counter-revolutionary, bourgeois, and

narcissistic. If history revealed women's crucial participation in movements of "oppressed people" and their commitment to Leftist politics, most importantly, it offered ample evidence of their revolutionary potential.

### **The Feminist Studio Workshop**

Unlike the CWLU, which left pamphlets and statements of principles, complete with preambles and numbered points, few groups of feminist artists authored similar documents. The comparison of feminist artists and socialist feminists is confounded by the fact that the founders of the Feminist Studio Workshop held no organizing conference.<sup>13</sup> Instead, two potential "founding" documents, an "announcement" published in *Womanspace Journal*, one of the earliest periodicals of the feminist art movement, and a broadside mailed out to publicize the program, exist to be read as possible manifestos. If the CWLU blurred the boundaries of the manifesto by using a play, the founders of the FSW created a broadside that barely fits into the genre unless under an expansive definition such as that offered by Lyon. While certainly speaking with "declarative, passionate voice(s)," it lacks pretense to "unobstructed rhetorical clarity," as well as the exhortation and anger so often expected of manifestos.

As in the case of the CWLU, these two documents read together reveal how the authors hoped to alter "discourse(s) of power" and change "reality with words" by asserting new knowledge.<sup>14</sup> The announcement of the FSW published in *Womanspace* in early 1973 begins not unlike the play *Everywoman*: "women throughout history have made substantial contributions to culture, and yet we know little about these women or their contributions" (17) with the key difference that "culture" replaces "revolution" in the hidden history of women. It continues, however, along a divergent path. Rather than documenting women's contributions to a chronological narrative of history, the method taken by the CWLU, the account offered here focuses on why women have been hidden from history in the first place: "Many [women] have expressed their femaleness in their work, but that work has not been perceived on its own terms" (17). Women's femininity, as expressed in art, explains the devaluation of it, and only the "emerging consciousness of women [that] is and has been outside of the mainstream culture" has allowed it to be seen now (17). Changing the "system" as suggested by various Left critiques will do nothing to achieve this goal, nor will altering the metanarrative of art history. As Chicago proclaimed in the fall of 1969, just at the CWLU was busily asserting women's liberation as revolutionary, "I'm tired of revolutions." However, like the organizers of the CWLU, the founders of the FSW also felt required to justify their split from male groups: "As long as women continue to produce within male-dominated institutions, we and the work we do will be subject to the values of those institutions whether or not those are our values" (17). Note that the statement does not assume or assert that women's values will differ from men's, only that under a patriarchal power structure their work would continue to be judged by the male-dominated art world standards.

Chicago and the other founders of the FSW found inspiration in women's past, however, what they made of this discovery differed dramatically (all puns intended) from that of the CWLU in *Everywoman*. Chicago claimed that "by reading and studying for the past five years in women's history and literature and art, I discovered a coherent body of

information, a whole subcultural perception of the world that differs from men's" (qtd. in Liappard 60). Rather than seeking to insert women into narratives of, for, and by men, feminist artists used a common heritage to piece together "the world that differs." Like the founders of the CWLU who combined a play with a more formal statement of principles, the founders of the FSW also offered a cultural manifesto in the form of a broadside distributed in late 1972 and throughout 1973 to advertise their new art program. While created by two distinct groups with fairly divergent identities, these documents, the play and the broadside, are in odd ways, similar. Perhaps the most obvious is that the broadside also takes the approach of using the voices of women in the past to articulate the demands of women in the present.

Unlike the linearly-structured chronology of *Everywoman*, which relies on notions of continuity in women's revolutionary experiences, the FSW documents offers a "multiplicity" of narratives that stress disjuncture with the past (de Bretteville 117). This "fragmented organization" of history, cherry picked for the antecedents they preferred, was not represented in a timeline or chronological narrative, but rather as a "matrix" with many areas left purposefully blank (de Bretteville 117). As the designer, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville explained:

As the reader unfolds the mailer, new bands of written and visual work, by women past and present, are revealed followed by a progression containing some of our own work, work done with students, and text written collectively about the goals of the workshop. The viewer can read any or all of the quotes, can connect the images in any way personally meaningful, and we hope that she will be enticed to respond. (119 -120)

Most of the broadside, like the CWLU play, consists of quotations from women in history. However unlike the clear historical metanarrative of *Everywoman*, the broadside offers an anti-narrative, a collage of ideas, suggestions and implications. They appear in no discernable order, mixing genre with period, and represent no single defined aesthetic.

Unlike the singular story told by the CWLU documents, the broadside danced around the question how can a woman be an artist? Tellingly Chicago picked a selection from Sojourner Truth's now infamous Aren't I A Woman speech, in which Truth references the incommensurability between her identity and dominant understandings of womanhood. This quote no doubt resonated with Chicago who often voiced the contradiction she felt as both "woman" and "artist." Similarly, a selection from George Eliot, the masculine pen name of the author Mary Anne Evans, picks up the idea from Truth that "woman" has multiple meanings and stresses the difficulties created for Evans/Elliot by men, forcing her to be a "woman writer" who hides under a male pseudonym. Finally Chicago invokes O'Keeffe who she viewed as an artistic foremother, in a quote explains that the (male) art world never understood her or her art, an sentiment Chicago repeatedly expressed.

If Chicago spoke to inability to fit into the category of woman as constituted in present art world discourse, then Raven addressed the difference ascribed to woman by it. The quote she selected from Anais Nin sounds like an early description of *écriture féminine* "of flesh and blood and the body." Raven also quotes Simone De Beauvoir another favored antecedent for all radical feminists but rather than the "woman as other," this Simone de

Beauvoir sounds much more like Virginia Woolf speaking about the function of art as it articulates “human liberty.” A woman must assert her subjectivity, “the status of a being who has liberty,” but not by becoming like as man, as is made clear in the next two quotes in which both Mary Cassatt and the contemporary artist Barbara Hepworth emphasize the “feminine experience.” These quotes are framed by works of the artists, along with three images featuring women by women artists.

If Raven’s response to the “woman problem” was to explore the feminine, De Bretteville’s stressed the need for the women to seek liberation together. She quotes Margaret Fuller, “women are the best helpers of one another” as men’s “minds” are “encumbered by tradition.” Similarly the quote from Emma Goldman (who very oddly is not in the *Everywoman* play) also advocated for a sort of women’s activism on their own behalf “history tells us that every oppressed class gains true liberation from its masters through its own efforts.” The final quotation from Virginia Woolf stresses the danger of women becoming too much like men as they attempt to move from their limited purview, emphasizing the need for women to remain “feminine” but powerful.

At the very bottom of the brochure, three very brief descriptions appear. “The feminist studio workshop is an experimental program in female education in the arts. Our purpose is to develop a new concept of art, a new kind of artist and a new art community built from the lives, feelings, and needs of women.” This “new concept” of a “new artist” in a “new community” based on knowledge “from” women, would create, as elaborated in the next statement “an integrated female support community in which art making, art historical and critical analysis, public, design arts and feminist consciousness” produce a new frame of reference for understanding the work about her experiences produced by a woman artist. The final statement indicates the desired outcome “women will be free to explore alternative ways of introducing their female perspective into society.”

So unlike the definitive conclusion of the *Everywoman* narrative that boldly asserted woman as revolutionary, the FSW narrative offers only qualified suggestions. Liberation will result from independence, but not becoming like men, separating and expressing a “feminine perspective,” leading to liberty of the self, but a singular sort of liberation that women pursue together, hinging on a re-framed “femininity” and a sharing of “female perspectives.” The feminine here, however, does not reflect its usage in widely recognized and cited women’s liberation manifestos. In the FSW documents, feminine stands for women’s consciousness, not her attributes. Feminine is about women, not about what women do.

### **What is at Stake in Genres**

The documents from both the FSW and CWLU trespassed the boundaries of the genre of manifesto, but these groups took divergent paths leading to different consequences for the writing of history. The CWLU, which took the path associated with Habermas’ metanarrative, has been recognized by historians. The FSW, traveling along Lyotard’s path, deviating not only from the conventions of the genre of manifesto, but also from the preferred narrative strategy, has been largely written out of histories of the movement.

In place of Habermas' metanarrative, Lyotard introduces the concept of *genre* "a social universe consisting of addresser, addressee, referent, and meaning," to explain how we construct various narratives (Leitch 76), while "genres of discourse" refers to the relations between various narrative accounts. Lyotard argues that a thing that exists in the gaps between genres of discourse, what he calls the *differend*, are rendered unspeakable. (*The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*). The problem of the *differend* is explicitly political as the *differend* renders wrongs unadjudicable. Thus, that which cannot exist is a political cause for Lyotard. As Lyotard explains, "the stakes of a genre are often set by a phrase of canonical value" (137). What is great art query members of the art world?<sup>15</sup> How can we liberate women ask members of the CWLU? While the "canonical" ideas of greatness and freedom drive the genres of discourse of women's liberation and art, for women artists, no metanarrative standard existed. Instead the efforts to create the identity "woman artist," which hinges on reframing femininity, results in the *differend* which has silenced women artists in most histories of women's liberation.<sup>16</sup>

Art history positioned woman as object, model, muse, mother, but never as creating subject. Women artists were, as early feminists art historians pointed out, constructed out of the discourse, either via exclusion, misidentification, or tokenism. Art described as feminine was understood as inferior, whether produced by a woman or a man. The results of a survey of art critics and historians about women's art conducted by the artist Cindy Nemser in 1971 reveal the extent of the resistance to the idea of women as artists. The responses ranged from the "avowal of the impartial," i.e. I have no idea what you mean by "woman artists" to insistence that recognition of "woman artist" was equivalent to denigrating the artist, who was expected to be a genderless genius (1). Yet Nemser also quotes extensively from these same critics, who "put down ... the feminine" and imply that femininity is "something that that minimal artists have and are trying to cover up" (1). She also cites historians who equate woman with not great artist. "To honor Grandma Moses as a remarkable old lady ... and talented amateur" is one thing, but to "confuse this pleasant image with an artist of great stature" is quite another thing, opines one historian (2). That conflict between the terms woman and artist gave rise to the feminist art movement, in which, as one scholar noted "both the subject and the object of debate were now female" (Kader 42).

Yet the discourse of women's liberation could not contain "woman artist" either, sharing with the art world a disdain for the feminine pursuits of women in the arts. Following the New Left, much of early women's liberation discourse consigned art (along with culture) to mere superstructure. Analyses of women's role in society led to a rejection of women's artistic endeavors. For example, in a much reprinted statement "I am Furious (female)"(1969), the authors argue that

acceptable activities [for women] include all kinds of work that can be done in isolation such as writing, painting, and music . . . What is the large social function of these activities? Most important, they perpetuate the status quo by stabilizing the function and position of women in society. Any frustrations she may feel are co-opted if she can express them in these accepted ways. The heretical alternative is for a woman to assert herself in the male world, the public world, in which fulfillment involves communication, social interchange, self-assertion, and implies the exercise of the masculine traits of



organizational ability, rational analysis, and the application of theory to practice.

Thus the affiliation of women with “artistic” and the “feminine” was one of the things women needed to be liberated from, and the path to achieve this was clear. Women must assert themselves “in the male world ... in public.”

The refusal to take the path of clearly rejecting femininity marked the authors of the FSW documents as on one side of a contentious debate within the larger women’s movement of the 1970s. Straying from the rejection of feminine, which as Bonnie Mann notes has deep roots in “the euro-masculine tradition” (20), risked wandering into the territory of another metanarrative, that of the essentialist camp, where patriarchy become matriarchy, and women’s oppression becomes celebration of women’s difference, their femininity. Thus it is not surprising that many artists and writers who are women explicitly shunned the label embraced by the authors of the FSW documents. As the literary critic Toril Moi notes, when one “has been taken to be a woman [writer or artist] by someone else,” to have had one’s legitimacy as a writer or an artist challenged, the defiant assertion “I am a woman” is not the expected response. In fact, many women argued “I am not a woman artist/writer. I am (just an) artist/writer.” As Moi reveals, this counter-assertion should be understood as a rejection of the “attempt to force the woman writer [or artist] to conform to some norm for femininity” (Moi, 2008, 259). To claim “woman artist” involved re-framing of the feminine along with an effort to de-couple it from the prescriptive, to *avoid laying down requirements for what women’s writing [or art] must be like*” as Moi emphasizes (259). That the founders of the FSW seized upon Woolf, quoted in both the announcement and the broadside, is telling. As Moi argues, Woolf worked desperately to avoid taking sides in the I am (not a) woman writer debate. Instead Woolf insisted, like the FSW authors did, that some identity existed such as “I am a writer who is a woman” (267).

These examples of the radically divergent uses of the feminine, the rejection by many, the efforts to reframe by a few, highlight the difficulties faced by the “woman artist” both in the art world and as part of the larger movement for women’s liberation in the 1970s. It also explains why the FSW writings I discuss here do not look like those produced by other participants in women’s liberation, such as those of the CWLU, and offers further insights into why women artists have been excluded from histories of the movement.

If we look only for Habermas, then we will find only emancipatory stories resting on metanarratives of freedom. Following Lyotard we might find all sort of genre-busting manifestos that defy the conventions, but nonetheless perform important work for cultural, political, and social movements. In the process, the history of women’s movements for liberation could become detached “from its origins in Enlightenment teleologies and the utopian promise of complete emancipation” as Joan Wallach Scott has noted (19). Instead of telling “all embracing true tale(s),” we might trace “the path of desire” (26). Following “passion” in “pursuit of what has not yet been thought,” we might arrive at more of Lyotard’s new ideas (26). As Scott argues, this approach transforms our understanding of women’s liberation into a form of critique rather than an alternative account of reality, in which we never reach the end, but are “driven by our critical faculty (inspired and aroused by Clio) always to revise, always to each beyond our grasp for new knowledge, new stories to tell” (26).

## Notes

1. Most histories of women's liberation include references to documents labeled only explicitly as manifestos. The only document Echols describes as a manifesto that does not include the word in the title is the 1972 CWLU pamphlet *Socialist Feminism: A Strategy for the Women's Movement*. Both Kathleen Greenwood and Ruth Rosen consider Casey Hayden and Mary King's "A Kind of Memo" as a manifesto. Sara Evans describes both "The Eco-Feminist Imperative" and "Towards a Female Liberation Movement" as manifestos. I'm thinking in particular of the short-lived yet much discussed groups New York Radical Women, New York Radical Feminists, The Redstockings, and the Feminists. Although these groups were involved in some of the earliest activism of the women's liberation movement and the production and circulation of their formal manifestos influenced the development of movement ideology, the women's liberation movement, as a grassroots phenomenon is far broader, and longer lived
2. According to Rhodes, that honor belongs to the Redstockings Manifesto (41).
3. Rhodes discusses "To the Women of the Left," written by members of the "Westside group" in Chicago, some of whom went on to found the CWLU and Lyon considers the artist Mina Loy's Feminist Manifesto, which had yet been re-discovered when 1970s feminist artists were writing their own.
4. Lyon includes two footnotes to Lyotard (24, 182).
5. A comprehensive review of the literature is precluded by space limitations, but the work of both Nancy Fraser and Rita Felski has been particularly influential on my thinking.
6. Lyotard frequently however employs gendered dialogue as a mechanism for debating both sides of an issue. As Dorota Glowaka notes, in *Que Peindre* Lyotard allows the female voice to interrupt the male to accuse it of repeating a canonical western art history that omits women, a point graciously taken, and quickly dismissed by the male (121). Similarly, in "Can Thought Go On Without a Body" (1988), Lyotard frames a conversation between "he" and "she" in which "she" concludes "we think because 'the human body has a gender.'" (Grebowicz and Zakin 16).
7. See the work of Mary Ryan, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, and Joan Landes for applications of Habermas in very different fields of history. I use a Habermasian framework to discuss women artists' in "Feminism, the Public Sphere and The Incest Awareness Project at the Woman's Building."
8. Instead, feminist literary scholars have done the most "historical" work with Lyotard. The closest approaches to what I seek here are Judith Roof's "Lesbians and Lyotard," Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, 'Agency in the Discursive Condition' and Katherine Kearns *Psychoanalysis, Historiography, and Feminist Theory: The Search for Critical Method*.
9. The most powerful statement of this wrong side of history argument is Alice Echols' *Daring To Be Bad*, the most influential history of the women's liberation movement. Review of monographs that survey the U.S. women's movement including *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960* (1990) *Feminism and the Women's Movement* (1992), *The Women's Liberation Movement in America* (1999), *The World Split Open* (2002) *Tidal Wave* (2004), *A History of U.S. Feminisms* (2008), *Radical Feminists: A Guide to An American Subculture* (2011), as well as the anthologies *The Feminist Memoir Project* (1998) and *Dear Sisters: Writings from Women's Liberation* (2001), reveals that all works include the CWLU, while none discuss the FSW. While the FSW receives plenty of attention from feminist art historians, it is only very recently, in books that focus more narrowly on aspects of the women's movement, that feminist artists, writers and poets have come out better in histories of the women's movement. Although not by a historian, Carolyn Bronstein's *Battling Pornography* positions the FSW and women artists' activism as part of the larger women's liberation movement.
10. Although the CWLU website attributes authorship of the play to Marylee A., Ellen A., Amy C., Pat M. Sherry Jenkins, Amy Kesselman, Naomi Weisstein (1969) and titles it as "The Last Of The Red Hot Mammias, Or, The Liberation Of Women As Performed By The Inmates Of The World " also known as *Everywoman, Past Present and Future*, this information is not consistent with what Amy Kesselman recalls in my correspondence with her. According to Kesselman, the play was called *Everywoman* and it purposefully had no credited authors, in keeping with the collaborative spirit of the CWLU. While she would like to reconstruct the authorship, she does not remember the names of the people on the writing committee. <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/cwluherstory/CWLUArchive/witch.html>
11. Untangling the trail of documents proves quite difficult. A lengthy piece authored by Terry Radinsky and Lucy Gadlin, members of the New University Conference, that circulated prior to the conference is often discussed in the literature. However, Suzanne Staggenborg makes clear that the principles

- “hammered out” during the conference were those formally adopted after the conference by the Unity Committee in “Statement of Political Principles” (79).
12. In the 1972 *Socialist Feminism: A Strategy for the Women’s Movement*, the CWLU again sidestepped a focus on the identity of “socialist feminist.”
  13. In the early days of women artists’ activism there was greater emphasis on the emancipatory process of “rights” and demands for greater inclusion in museums and galleries. All three women had experience in various social movements of the 1960s (Moravec 2012).
  14. The broadside has been described as “Equal parts promotional literature and radical manifesto” (Owens and Reinfurt 74) while Faith Wilding, participant in the FSW community described it as their “statement of principles” (41). It may be viewed at <http://womensculture.omeka.net/items/show/34>.
  15. Linda Nochlin “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” addresses this issue from a feminist perspective, but wholly rejects the reframing of femininity.
  16. Lyotard himself alludes to identity as *differend* most notably in the section titled “result” (*The Differend* 86-107). Michelle Boulous Walker argues that femininity can be viewed as the differend or “that which is silenced as a result of the *differend* (74). For an important application of Lyotard to identity and the resulting debates among feminists see, Michelle Ballif, D. Diane Davis, Roxanne Mountford “Negotiating the *Differend*: A Feminist Trilogue,” the responses by Krista Ratcliffe and Eileen Schell, as well as the authors’ reply “Listening with Empathy.”

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