

Right Now



Part I: Jeannine

0

The first time I saw a man and a woman copulate my first reaction was: is that it?

1

I'm from the Earth ten centuries from now, but not your Earth. It's an independent world, not at all affected by your Earth's past. I'm from the future, but not your future (7). If you understand what I mean?

2

Sometimes you bend down to tie your shoe, and then you either tie your shoe or you don't; you either straighten up instantly or maybe you don't. Every choice begets at least two worlds of possibility, that is, one in which you do and one in which you don't; or very likely many more, one in which you do quickly, one in which you do slowly, one in which you don't, but hesitate, one in which you hesitate and frown, one in which you hesitate and sneeze, and so on. To carry this line of argument further, there must be an infinite number of possible universes [...]. Every displacement of every molecule, every change in orbit of every electron, every quantum of light that strikes here and not there - each of these must somewhere have its alternative. It's possible, too, that there is no such thing as one clear line or strand of probability, and that we live on a sort of twisted braid, blurring from one to the other without even knowing it. Thus the paradox of time travel ceases to exist, for the Past one visits is never one's own Past but always somebody else's; or rather, one's visit to the Past instantly creates another Present (one in which the visit has already happened) and what you visit is the Past belonging to that Present - an entirely different matter from your own Past. And with each decision you make (back there in the Past) that new probable universe itself branches, creating simultaneously a new Past and a new Present, or to put it plainly, a new universe. And when you come back to your own Present, you alone know what the other Past was like and what you did there (6).

3

MC: How do you like it here, Jeannine?

JE (looks around the studio, confused): It's too hot.

MC: I mean how do you like it on, well, on Earth?

JE: But I live on the earth.

MC: Perhaps you could explain what you mean by that? I mean, the existence of different probabilities and so on; you were talking about that before.

JE: It's in the newspapers.

MC: But Miss Jeannine, if you could, please explain it for the people who are watching the program.

JE: Let them read. Can't they read?

...

MC: Our social scientists as well as our physicists tell us they've had to revise a great deal of theory in light of the information brought by you, our fair visitor from another world. In Miss Jeannine's society, there have been no men for at least eight centuries. I don't mean no human beings, of course, but no men. And this society, run entirely by women, has naturally attracted a great deal of attention since the appearance last week of its representative and its first ambassador, the lady on my left here.

Miss Jeannine, can you tell us how you think your society will react to the reappearance of men from Earth, I mean our present-day Earth of course, after an isolation of eight hundred years?

JE: Nine hundred years. What men?

MC: What men? Surely you expect men from our society to visit.

JE: Why?

MC: For information, trade, ah-cultural contact, surely. (laughter) I'm afraid you're making it rather difficult for me, Miss Jeannine. When the-ah-the plague you spoke of killed the men, weren't they missed? Weren't families broken up? Didn't the whole pattern of life change?

JE (slowly): I suppose people always miss what they are used to. Yes, they were missed. Even a whole set of words, like "he," "man" and so on, these were banned. Then the second generation, they use them to be daring, among themselves, and the third generation doesn't, to be polite, and by the fourth, who cares? Who remembers?

MC: I see. But to get back to the question... Don't you want men to return to your world, Miss Jeannine?

JE: Why?

MC: One sex is half a species, Miss Jeannine. Do you want to banish sex?

JE: Huh?/What?

MC: I said: Do you want to banish sex? Sex, family, love, erotic attraction-call it what you like-we all know that your people are competent and intelligent individuals, but do you think that's enough? Surely you have the intellectual knowledge of biology in other species to know what I'm talking about.

JE: I'm married. I have two children. What the devil do you mean?

MC: I-Miss Jeannine-we-well, we know you form what you call marriages, Miss Jeannine, that you reckon the origin of your children through both partners and that you even have "tribes"; I know the translation isn't perfect-and we know that these marriages or tribes form very good institutions for the economic support of the children, and, though I confess you're way beyond us in the biological sciences, but, Miss Jeannine, I am not talking about economic institutions or even affectionate ones. Of course the mothers love their children;

nobody doubts that. And of course they have affection for each other; nobody doubts that either. But there is more, much, much more-I am talking about sexual love.

JE (enlightened): Oh! You mean copulation.

MC: Yes.

JE: And you say we don't have that?

MC: Yes.

JE: How foolish of you. Of course we do.

MC: Ah? (He wants to say, "Don't tell me.")

JE: With each other. Allow me to explain.

4

She never communicated with her home, as far as we know.

She wanted to see a man naked (we got pictures).

She wanted to see a baby man naked (we got somebody's nephew).

She wanted newspapers, novels, histories, magazines, people to interview, television programs, statistics on clove production in the East Indies, textbooks on wheat farming, to visit a bridge (we did). She wanted the blueprints (we got them).

She was neat but lazy-I never caught her doing anything.

5

JE: I bore my child at thirty; we all do. It's the vacation. Almost five years. The baby rooms are full of people reading, painting, singing, as much as they can, to the children, with the children, over the children... There has been no leisure at all before and there will be so little after- anything I do, you understand, I mean really do-I must ground thoroughly in those five years. At sixty I will get a sedentary job and have some time for myself again.

MC: And this is considered enough, on your Earth?

JE: My God, no. (14).

6

MC: How do the women of your world do their hair?

JE: They hack it off with clam shells.
(9-11).

7

We work all the time. We work. And we work. And we work. And we work (53).

8

There's no being out too late in my world, or up too early, or in the wrong part of town, or unescorted. In all of my Earth there is no one who can keep you from going where you

please, no one who will follow you and try to embarrass you by whispering obscenities in your ear, no one who will attempt to rape you, no one who will warn you of the dangers of the street, no one who will stand on street corners, hot-eyed and vicious, jingling loose change in pants pocket, bitterly bitterly sure that you're a cheap floozy, hot and wild, who likes it, who can't say no, who's making a mint off it, who inspires him with nothing but disgust, and who wants to drive him crazy.

You can walk around the equator twenty times with one hand on your sex and in the other an emerald the size of a grapefruit. All you'll get is a tired wrist (80-81).

Part II: Right Now Symposium

(E) Good evening.

It's my great pleasure to welcome you to the *Right Now* Symposium here at Kinning Park Complex. I trust you've all had a chance to meet and greet one another and get a refreshment at the bar. It's really exciting for us that this day has finally arrived.

'Speculate', she said, 'right now.'

When we first decided to hold a symposium, thinking around the speculative possibility of the act of claiming and we came up with a really ambitious list of speakers ... we thought it was unlikely that even half of them would come... so you can imagine our surprise and *delight* when every single one of them said Yes. You can *also* imagine our panic when we wondered how we were going to pay for all this...but... thankfully CCA and KPC came through for us in a very generous way and we're incredibly grateful for that. I also want to thank all of *you* for coming and for supporting the work that we do here today.

So, as you'll see in the programme, over the next 45 minutes to an hour we'll have with us a superb line up of speakers and panelists from not only all over the universe but from a significant space in time. They'll share with us some revolutionary demands and critical, utopian claims, which might reveal to us their potential to be or to be *otherwise*.. without simply postulating fairytales in which every change is possible for pure, courageous souls....

... and with change in mind, I'll now hand over to our first speaker so that our speculative feast can begin. Joan-as visits us from the not so distant past of *our* earth to give a historical perspective with some concerns of theirs.

So without further ado, please welcome... Joanas. Welcome

Lecture by Joanas

Hello. Thank you for having me. The title of my lecture is: Reveling in old wounds - is that what we are doing?

"Three years is a long time to leave a letter unanswered, and your letter has been lying without an answer even longer than that. I had hoped that it would answer itself, or that other people would answer it for me. But there it is with its question still unanswered. How in your opinion are we to prevent war?"

"But one does not like to leave so remarkable a letter as yours unanswered. A letter perhaps unique in the history of human correspondence, since when before has an educated man asked a woman how in her opinion war can be prevented?"

And she answers.

. . . those three dots mark a cliff, a gulf so deeply cut between us that for three years and more I have been sitting on my side of it, wondering whether it is any use to try to speak across it.

Let us then ask someone else to speak for us: Mary Kingsley.

"I don't know if I ever revealed to you the fact that being allowed to learn German was all the paid-for education I ever had. Two thousand pounds was spent on my brother's, I still hope not in vain."

It is strange what a difference a tail makes.

Mary Kingsley is not speaking for herself alone; she is speaking, still, for many of the daughters of educated men. And she is also pointing to a very important fact, a fact that must profoundly influence all that follows: the fact of Arthur's Education Fund. [...] Ever since the thirteenth century English families have been paying money into that account. [...]

The result is that though we look at the same things, we see them differently. What is that congregation of buildings there, with a semi-monastic look, with chapels and halls and green playingfields? To you it is your old school; Eton or Harrow; your old university, Oxford or Cambridge; the source of memories and of traditions innumerable. But to us, who see it through the shadow of Arthur's Education Fund, [...] Oxford and Cambridge [...] appear [...] like petticoats with holes in them, or cold legs of mutton [...].

It is strange what a difference a tail makes.

When it comes to considering this important question—how **we** are to help **you** prevent war—that education makes a difference. Some knowledge of politics, of international relations, of economics, is obviously necessary in order to understand the causes which lead to war.

The letter also asks her to sign a manifesto “to protect culture and intellectual liberty” to help prevent war.

She answers:

“Consider, Sir, what this request of yours means. It means that the sons of educated men are asking the daughters to help them to protect culture and intellectual liberty. And why [...] is that so surprising?

Once more we must [ask] you, Sir, to look from our point of view, at Arthur's Education Fund. Try once more, difficult though it is to twist your head in that direction, to understand what it has meant to us to keep that receptacle filled all these centuries so that [...] our brothers may be educated every year. It has meant that we have already contributed to the cause of culture and intellectual liberty more than any other class in the community. For have not the daughters of educated men paid into Arthur's Education Fund [...] all the money that was needed to educate themselves? [...] And now, out of the blue, [...], here is your letter informing them that the whole of that [...] fabulous sum—the sum that filled Arthur's Education Fund—has been wasted [...]. For with what other purpose were the universities of Oxford and Cambridge founded, save to protect culture and intellectual liberty?

What possible help can **we** give **you**, [...]. We, who have been shut out from the universities so repeatedly, and are only now admitted so restrictedly; we who have received no paid-for education whatsoever, or so little that we can only read our own tongue and write our own language, we who are, in fact, members not of the intelligentsia but of the ignorantsia?

One quickly forgets the history once a right is acquired, and I refuse to record the fact that this past is bygone.

Reveling in old wounds - is that what we are doing?

(E) Thank you for sharing your reflections, Jonas.

So, moving on, our next speaker is Janet, who will bring these somewhat 'historical' concerns a bit closer to some of our present day experiences. Janet needs no introduction, as she'll introduce herself: Janet.

Lecture by Janet: claiming identity

I am a man. Now you may think I've made some kind of silly mistake about gender, or maybe that I'm trying to fool you, because my first name ends in a, and I own three bras, and I've been pregnant five times, and other things like that that you might have noticed, little details. But details don't matter. If we have anything to learn from politicians it's that details don't matter. I am a man, and I want you to believe and accept this as a fact, just as I did for many years.

You see, when I was growing up at the time of the Wars of the Medes and Persians and when I went to college just after the Hundred Years War and when I was bringing up my children during the Korean, Cold, and Vietnam Wars, there were no women. Women are a very recent invention. I predate the invention of women by decades. Well, if you insist on pedantic accuracy, women have been invented several times in widely varying localities, but the inventors just didn't know how to sell the product. [...] Even with a genius behind it an invention has to find its market, and it seemed like for a long time the idea of women just didn't make it to the bottom line. Models like the Austen and the Brontë were too complicated, and people just laughed at the Suffragette, and the Woolf was way too far ahead of its time.

So when I was born, there actually were only men. People were men. They all had one pronoun, his pronoun; so that's who I am. I am the generic he, as in, "If anybody needs an abortion he will have to go to another state," or "A writer knows which side his bread is buttered on." That's me, the writer, him. I am a man.

Not maybe a first-rate man. I'm perfectly willing to admit that I may be in fact a kind of second-rate or imitation man, a Pretend-a-Him. As a him, I am to a genuine male him as a microwaved fish stick is to a whole grilled Chinook salmon. I mean, after all, can I inseminate? Can I belong to the Bohemian Club? Can I run General Motors? Theoretically I can, but you know where theory gets us. Not to the top of General Motors [...] And then, I can't write my name with pee in the snow, or it would be awfully laborious if I did. I can't shoot my wife and children and some neighbors and then myself. Oh to tell you the truth I can't even drive. I never got my license. I chickened out. I take the bus. That is terrible. I admit it, I am actually a very poor imitation or substitute man. [...]

What it comes down to, I guess, is that I am just not manly. Like Ernest Hemingway was manly. The beard and the guns and the wives and the little short sentences. I do try. I have this sort of beardoid thing that keeps trying to grow, nine or ten hairs on my chin, sometimes even more; but what do I do with the hairs? I tweak them out. Would a man do that? Men don't tweak. Men shave. [...] I tweak. [...] And I don't have a gun and I don't have even one wife and my sentences tend to go on and on and on, with all this syntax in them. Ernest Hemingway would have died rather than have syntax. Or semicolons. I use a whole

lot of half-assed semicolons; there was one of them just now; that was a semicolon after “semicolons,” and another one after “now.”

And another thing. Ernest Hemingway would have died rather than get old. And he did. He shot himself. A short sentence. Anything rather than a long sentence, a life sentence. Death sentences are short and very, very manly. Life sentences aren't. They go on and on, all full of syntax and qualifying clauses and confusing references and getting old. And that brings up the real proof of what a mess I have made of being a man: I am not even young. Just about the time they finally started inventing women, I started getting old. And I went right on doing it. Shamelessly. I have allowed myself to get old and haven't done one single thing about it, with a gun or anything.

[...]

I keep thinking there must have been something that a real man could have done about it. Something short of guns, but more effective than Oil of Olay. But I failed. I did nothing. I absolutely failed to stay young. And then I look back on all my strenuous efforts, because I really did try, I tried hard to be a man, to be a good man, and I see how I failed at that. I am at best a bad man. An imitation phony second-rate him with a ten-hair beard and semicolons. And I wonder what was the use. [...] If I'm no good at pretending to be a man and no good at being young, I might just as well start pretending that I am an old woman. I am not sure that anybody has invented old women yet; but it might be worth trying.

(From Ursula Le Guin's *The Wave in the Mind: Talks and Essays on the Writer, the Reader, and the Imagination*)

(E) 'I'd now like to welcome our final speaker for this section of today's programme: our very special guest Jeannine, who will present us with some reflections on their planet in light of their recent visit to ours. Welcome Jeannine.'

Lecture Jeannine: claimed another planet.

Thank you. I'm going to make myself a little more comfortable I think... it's been a long day!

I was born on a farm. When I was thirteen, I stalked and killed a wolf, alone, using only a rifle. I made a type of sled for the head and paws, then abandoned the head, and finally came home with one paw. I thought that was proof enough. I've worked in the mines, on the radio network, on a milk farm, a vegetable farm, and for six weeks as a librarian after I broke my leg. Now, I work as a safety officer for the county. I've supervised the digging of fire trails, delivered babies, fixed machinery, and milked more moo-cows than I wish I knew existed. I love my parents. I love my daughter. I've fought four duels. I've killed four times (1-2).

I claimed a planet (VIDEO ON) but surely this can't be utopia. Utopia is something far away, something mythical or beyond our reach. We know this from the colonial history of your Earth. Utopia has always been rational, it has been western, and it has been masculine. It is a power trip with a premise of progress, not process; it has no habitable present, and speaks only in the future tense. And in the end reason itself will reject it.

Yes, I claimed a planet. I used the method of organised forgetting, and called it discovery. But this claim wasn't not made for personal or private use,- it is made in the we-form. It functions as a common claim, a demand from the need of many. And in the process, my final loss of faith in a radiant, rational paradise, enabled my eyes to adjust to a dimmer light and in it perceive another kind of utopia; one that is not rational, not western, and not masculine. Not a power trip or a model but a potential in the here and now. (essay 9). A refusal of resolution. When utopia is a method, and not a goal, is it still a colonial claim?

You never know what is enough until you know what is more than enough.

We on my planet are inhabiting utopia. It is hard; We are constantly concerned with preserving our existence. Yes, we have a modest standard of living with our arid plains and our tedious natural resources. Yes, our political life is boring as it is based on consent, but we have learned to live without destroying our environment or the people next door (essay 16). If we let one another down, if we don't give up our personal desires for the common good, nothing, nothing on that barren world can save us. Human solidarity is our only resource, our only hope.

If anyone would offer me the choice: will you choose freedom without happiness, or happiness without freedom? The only answer I can give is: No. (17) It is not an either/or situation; neither the either nor the or is a place where species can live. Utopia isn't perfect, and if it is seen as having any end, it will never truly begin. I don't think you can get to utopia by going forward, but only roundabout or sideways. So to say: not linear.

I wonder about your planet. Your utopian imagination is trapped in a one-way future of growth (Essay 6). What kind of utopia can you claim from the margins, negations, and obscurities? Who will even recognise it as a utopia? It won't look the way it ought to, you can be sure of that. (Essay 9-10). Thanks.

Part III: Panel Presentations

(S)M: Thank you all for staying with us. We had some fascinating keynote lectures, and will elaborate on that now as we gather for the panel discussion. So I'll start by introducing the panel, most of whom you have seen before in the keynote lectures.

Look at panel. Welcome. In the next 20 minutes or so, they will offer you some claims from their space and time, without kicking up a self-referential fuss, they promised. Over to the panel then. And remember: if anything is possible, be careful what you wish for!

I'll start with the first claim: In 1996, after 20 years of use as a council run neighbourhood centre, when Glasgow City Council decided not to carry out essential repairs to run-down parts of the building but to close it instead, the community refused to accept this conclusion and demanded that the centre be kept open.

S(M): You want to make the first claim?

SLIDE

(E)Yes, a situation can become interesting, worthy of making people think, able to stimulate a taste for thinking, if it has been produced by a concrete learning process, in which the difficulties, the hesitations, the choices and errors are as much part of the narrative as the successes and conclusions arrived at.

Pause

Turn head and look at the claim on the powerpoint. E reads last part of the sentence again.

(S)M: Okay, well that is a good claim to start with. Let's hear someone else. *All raise hands.*

(S)Yes.

SLIDE

(E) It is not yours. Nothing is yours. It is to use. It is to share. If you will not share it you cannot use it.

(S)M: Yes, nothing is yours, a very good claim. Anyone who would like to give a response to that?

S raises hand

(E)M: Yes, you?

SLIDE

(S) I was on a jury of three choosing a literary prize. From 104 novels, we selected a winner and four books for the shortlist. We were three women, and the books we chose were all written by women. The eldest and wisest of us said, Ouch! If a jury of women picks only women finalists, people will call us a feminist clique and dismiss our choices as prejudiced, and the winning book will suffer for it. I said: but if we were men and picked all books by men, nobody would say a damn thing about it.

True, said our Wise Woman, but we want our winner to have credibility, and the only way three women can have credibility as a jury is to have some men on the short list. Against my heart and will, I agreed. And so two women who should have been there got bumped from our shortlist, and the two men whose books we had placed sixth and seventh got on it.

E raises hand and starts speaking. Slowly.

(E)How can we think and act together without excluding certain parts of society? We shouldn't be surprised that it is people who have got some time to think & imagine & all that who get together...

Thinks for a sec.

SLIDE

We all need some time to think and imagine and all that. Think we must!

SLIDE

(S)We must think!

E continues swiftly, she did not want to be paused.

(E) And Arthur's education was not merely in book-learning; games educated his body; friends broadened his outlook and enriched his mind. In the holidays he travelled; acquired a taste for art; a knowledge of foreign politics; and then, before he could earn his own living, his father gave him an allowance upon which it was possible for him to live while he learnt the profession which now entitles him to add the letters K.C. - whatever that means - to his name. **SLIDE** All this came out of Arthur's Education Fund.

(S)M: Yes, Arthur's Education Fund, we've heard of that one before.

Slow down.

SLIDE

One of our finest methods of organised forgetting is called discovery.

...

SLIDE

Dry

(E)Jacqui in accounts has confirmed that although the shooting crew are generally working Sunday-Thursday for the rest of Block 3, the 7 pound daily lunch allowance will not be affected and we can continue to claim for lunches Monday-Friday.

E raises hand.

(S)M: You? Yes go ahead.

SLIDE

(E) The nature of the utopia I am trying to describe is such that if it is to come, it must exist already.

Both turn heads and look at the claim on the powerpoint.

...

(S)We in this room, here and now, are inhabiting utopia. This future exists, we just need to claim it. **SLIDE** The great danger may be not that we want too much but that we do not want enough.

SLIDE

(E)Claiming is an emancipatory action.

(S)M: Yes. Someone else perhaps? You?

(E)M: You?

(S)M: Me?

(S)Okay, this is a long one, but it is not very difficult, so bear with me.

He claimed that the [...] influence which women have over men always had been, and always ought to be, an indirect influence.

Man liked to think he was doing his job himself when, in fact, he was just doing what the woman wanted, [and] the wise woman always let him think [that] he was running the show when he was not. **SLIDE** Any woman who chose to take an interest in politics had an immensely greater power without the vote than with it, because she could influence many male voters. His feeling was that it was not right to bring women down to the level of men. He looked up to women, and wanted to continue to do so. He desired that the age of chivalry should not pass, because every man who had a woman to care about him, liked to shine in her eyes.

And so on.

Make vomit sounds all.

SLIDE

If that is the real nature of women's influence, and we all recognize the description, it is either beyond our reach, for many of us are plain, poor and old; or it is beneath our contempt, **SLIDE** for many of us would prefer to simply call ourselves prostitutes and to take our stand openly under the lamps of Piccadilly Circus to make our own money.

No pause/faster!

(E): I love you.

(S): And I love you.

SLIDE

(E): They say it is love. We say it is unwaged work. They call it frigidity. We call it absenteeism. Every miscarriage is a work accident.

More smiles? More money. Nothing will be so powerful in destroying the healing virtues of a smile.

Neuroses, suicides, desexualisation: occupational diseases of the housewife.

(S)M: Okay. We haven't heard anything from you yet.

(E): Burned any bras lately har har twinkle twinkle A pretty girl like you doesn't need to be liberated twinkle har Don't listen to those hysterical bitches twinkle twinkle twinkle I never take a woman's advice about two things: love and automobiles twinkle twinkle har **SLIDE** May I kiss your little hand twinkle twinkle twinkle. Har. Twinkle. (female man 49).

...

(S)There is nothing doing and doing nothing for the rotten middle class; if they truly prefer property and accumulated dead labor to life, let them become it, become our property **SLIDE** #eattherich.

...

(S)Middle-aged women are leading the anti-Trump resistance. My people. We shall overcome. **SLIDE** #persisterhood.

...

(S) We want to call work what is work so that eventually we might rediscover what is love and create what will be our sexuality, which we have never known. **SLIDE** #workisworkloveislove.

(E)M: Yes.

(S)M: Yes.

(E): Your birthday in São Paulo two years ago was one of the best nights ever. **SLIDE** Happy birthday mi querida. I send my love!

SLIDE

(S): Ayn Rand walks into a bar. The bartender serves her poisoned alcohol because there are no regulations. She dies.

...

E: Is your dog drinking cold fountain water?

S: I guess so.

E: If your dog drinks cold water, he'll get colic.

S: It's a she. And I don't care about the colic. You know, what I really worry about is bringing her out in public when she's in heat like this. I'm not afraid she'll get colic, but that

she might get pregnant.

E: They're the same thing, aren't they? Har har har.

S: Maybe for your mother they were.

...

E raises hand.

(S)M: Yes.

SLIDE

(E) Taking power presupposes that someone or something has power. How to reclaim power is doubtless a better question.

(S)M: Yes.

(E) Wealth is the product of the collective labour of society. **SLIDE** Property is the monopoly of that social wealth; property is the claim to an individual right not only to use our wealth, but to prevent others from using it.

SLIDE

(E) All struggles that are not specifically women's struggles are coded as male.

(S)M: Yes.

SLIDE

(E) Nobody can do anything, very much, really, alone. *Both look up at the audience. Small break.*

(E)M: Yes.

S raises hand. E points at S

SLIDE

(S) And [I] had to explain my laughter by pointing at the Manx cat, who did look a little absurd, poor beast, without a tail, in the middle of the lawn. Was he really born so, or had he lost his tail in an accident? The tailless cat is rarer than one thinks. It is a queer animal, quaint rather than beautiful. It is strange what a difference a tail makes [...].

E gives up. SLIDE

(E)M: It feels like we're peddling really hard just to stay in the same place

(S) What would people do in this utopia?

(E)I don't think there will not be a problem. **SLIDE** If we truly had abolished all unpleasant work, people would have the time and the energy to develop healthy interests of their own.

SLIDE

(S) We must affirm what we have become as ground from which we can become otherwise. To will a new future in which the self we affirm would no longer exist. Could we bear the eternal recurrence of everything that now exists, including ourselves?

...

(E) It isn't bad to want to help, to want to work, to seize history... but to want to do it alone is less good. **SLIDE** To hand history to someone like a cake you baked is not a good plan (Piercy pp.188-189 – in Haraway pp. 20).

...

(E)M: Do you want to react to that?

(S)Yes. Euhm. **SLIDE** + *move to E*.

The sciences are collective expressions. *Sympoiesis* is a simple word; it means “making with.” Nothing makes itself; nothing is really autopoietic or self-organizing. [...] *Sympoiesis* is a word proper to complex, dynamic, responsive, situated, historical systems. It is a word for worlding-with, in company.

E: worlding

Pause for a sec.

S moves back. E starts speaking.

(E)I love living almost as well as I love writing. It was tough trying to keep writing while bringing up three kids, but my partner was totally in it with me, and so it worked out fine. **SLIDE** One person cannot do two fulltime jobs, but two persons can do three fulltime jobs — if they honestly share the work. The idea that you need an ivory tower to write in, that if you have babies you can't have books, that artists should somehow be exempt from the dirty work of life — rubbish (E+S).

SLIDE

(S) There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives. It's true.

Part IV: back to Jeannine

Jeannine: Once upon a time a long time ago there was a child who was raised by bears. Her mother went up into the woods pregnant and gave birth to the child there, for she had made an error in reckoning. Also, she had got lost. Why she was in the woods doesn't matter. It is not related to this story.

Well, if you must know, it was because the mother was up there to shoot bears for a zoo. She had captured three bears and shot eighteen but was running out of film; and when she went into labor, she let the three bears go, for she didn't know how long the labor would last, and there was nobody to feed the bears. They conferred with each other and stayed around, though, because they had never seen a human being give birth before and they were interested. Everything went fine until the baby's head came out, and then the Spirit of the Woods, who is very mischievous and clever, decided to have some fun. So right after the baby came out, it sent a rock slide down the mountain and the rock slide cut the umbilical cord and knocked the mother to one side. And then it made an earthquake which separated the mother and the baby by miles and miles.

M: Isn't that going to be a lot of trouble?

J: Do you want to hear this story or don't you?

M: Yes.

J: So they were separated by miles and miles. When the mother saw this, she said 'Damn!' Then she went back to civilization to get a search party together, but by that time the bears had decided to adopt the baby and all of them were hid where it's very rocky and wild. So the little girl grew up with the bears. When she was ten, there began to be trouble. She had some bear friends by then, although she didn't like to walk on all-fours as the bears did and the bears didn't like that, because bears are very conservative. She argued that walking on all-fours didn't suit her skeletal development. The bears said, 'Oh, but we have always walked this way.' They were pretty stupid. But nice, I mean. Anyway, she walked upright, the way it felt best, but when it came to copulation, that was another matter. There was nobody to copulate with. The little girl wanted to try it with her male-best-bear-friend, but the he-bear would not even try. 'Alas' he said, 'I'm afraid I'd hurt you with my claws because you don't have all the fur that she-bears have. And besides that, you have trouble assuming the proper position because your back legs are too long. And besides that, you don't smell like a bear and I'm afraid my Mother would say it was bestiality.' That's a joke. The little girl was very lonely and bored. She said good-bye to her bear-friends and started going South, and they all wept and waved their handkerchiefs. The girl was very hardy and woods-wise, since she had been taught by the bears. She traveled all day and slept all night. Finally she came to a settlement of people, just like this one, and they took her in. [...]

So the little girl went to school and had lots of lovers and friends, and practiced archery, and got into a family, and had lots of adventures, and saved everybody from a volcano by bombing it from the air in a glider, and achieved Enlightenment.

Then one morning somebody told her there was a bear looking for her.

M: Wait a minute. This story doesn't have an end. It just goes on and on. What about the volcano? And the adventures? And the achieving Enlightenment-surely that takes some time, doesn't it?"

J: I tell things the way they happen. Anyone who lives in more than one world, is bound to have a complicated life.

(From The Female Man, Joanna Russ).

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