

# WOMEN AND DESIRE: DISRUPTIONS IN ENGAGEMENT\*

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*ABSTRACT* Engaged desire reflects agency, creativity and an external expression of subjectivity. Desire can be expressed in many forms and, if acted upon, is always transformative. Where desire exists so does a subject and object – that is to say desire is relational and socially constructed. For women, as well as for men, desire tells a cultural and therefore a gendered story. Despite 30 years of post-feminist social change, the thwarting of women's desire is pervasive and endemic to our culture. Intrapsychically, through the process of normal dissociation, desire resides in a self state that may remain out of awareness. In the psychotherapy relationship this dissociation may be shared by both therapist and patient resulting in a less fulfilling analysis.

**Key words:** women, psychoanalysis, dissociation, creativity

It's not surprising that when we think of desire we think of sex because desire has been coupled with sex both within as well as outside of psychoanalysis. For nearly 100 years now we have lived with the Freudian account of an instinctual psychic economy based largely on a sexual drive with libidinal energy being the fuel of desire. But psychoanalysis is no longer synonymous with the sexual economy of the mind, and libidinal energy has taken a few theoretical turns along the way. Post-Freudian schools have been criticized for abandoning sexuality altogether and emphasizing solely the desiring subject's search for the object (Dimen, 1999). This criticism has been directed equally to schools on both sides of the Atlantic – most

notably Fairbairn and Bowlby in Britain, and Harry Stack Sullivan and the Interpersonalists in the US – for moving from a model of libidinal discharge, to libido seeking interpersonal connection. Critiques over the past decade have claimed that the baby has been thrown out with the bath water but most recently the new relationalists are attempting to put sexuality back on the agenda for psychoanalysis (Davies, 1994; Orbach, 1999).

The past decade has also seen psychoanalysis take up gender as a category intrinsic to the relational paradigm (Arons, 1991). The contributions of feminists within psychoanalysis have extended the discourse of object relations and intersubjective theory to include

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gendered constructions of intrapsychic life and the intersubjective field (Chodorow, 1978; Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983; Benjamin, 1988). Women's object status has been discussed not simply as an external, social phenomenon but rather one that takes up residence in the mind and permeates relational configurations. In rethinking women's object status psychoanalysis now includes the feminist proposal of introducing women's subjectivity into our ever-evolving relational theory. No longer is woman the object of other's dependency and attachment, but now encounters the other as a subject thereby shifting the terrain from that of subject-object to subject-subject and hence a more honest intersubjective theory. As we elaborate woman as subject we find layer upon layer of material requiring us to rethink previously constructed formulations. Desire is but one that demands such review.

Desire is an active, motivating, energetic, psyche-somatic state originating in the subject and moving outward, as it were, towards engagement with the world. Just as Winnicott suggested that there was no such thing as a baby, where there is desire there are object relations. Desire reflects aliveness, creativity, lust, craving, hunger and appetite. Activated desire, induced by our internal object world, creates a moment of engagement wherein subjective energy extends outward and encounters that which is outside of oneself. That engagement, then, affects both the subject and the object – changes them in some small, or perhaps more significant way. Desire can be expressed in many forms and that expression always has an impact on the external – the other, the culture. A painter holds an image (and a skill) and it is imagination transported by desire that transcends the

image from an internal space to the external, tangible canvas. A poet may be musing on a poem internally by single words, by a phrase, by a feeling and it is desire that takes it from the internal subjective space to the page. Desire links the internal to the external space. As the fuel for engagement, desire has the power to transform. One experiences lust – intense sexualized desire and craves the body and erotic energy of another – the desire unleashed towards the object simultaneously pulls the other into the fold of one's inner world. This sexual desire opens the physical pathway from subject to object and the participants are changed, in some way, as a result of the erotic exchange. (Obviously where there is an absence of mutuality as in the case of sexual abuse, what is altered is of an entirely different nature.)

Unlike Freud's libidinal energy, which exists within the realm of what is now referred to as one person psychology (Ghent, 1989), desire in a contemporary relational view is essentially social. Expressed through language and cultural symbols, desire is culturally and communally determined. If language and culture forecast our self states, a concept now widely accepted within psychoanalysis, then desire is inseparable from the social influences that give it shape and meaning. For women, as well as for men, desire tells a cultural and therefore gendered story.

Just as we read the cave symbols at Lascaux and speculate about many aspects of the culture of the cave dwellers, similarly, psychoanalysis decodes the language symbols of its participants and from that base has the tools to create a complex map of contemporary culture. As we read the map of Western, twentieth-century culture, we interpret the markings of its citizens. Its citizens, women and men alike, produce,

create, and transform existing structures through complex dialectical processes. Desire is embedded in those processes and is an essential component of cultural transformation – without it there is stagnation. Desire reflects aliveness and sets in motion our search for making a personal mark, leaving a footprint, creating a sign of our having been alive.

Following closely to a Fairbairnian schema – libido is object seeking – many socially minded psychoanalytic theorists broaden the concept of object to include not only people but the wider concept of the culture as object (Fairbairn, 1952; Gutwill, 1994). Desire, then, experienced subjectively, occupies a place in the realm of cultural transformation.

As the subtitle of my paper – disruptions in engagement – indicates, I suggest that desire is disrupted for women. Roadblocks, diversions and stop signs chart a circumscribed path rendering women primarily the objects of others' desires. As desiring subjects themselves, women are limited by the internalizations of cultural prescriptions that continue to delineate acceptable masculinity and acceptable femininity (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983, 2003). We (in psychoanalysis) tend to speak of gender in more fluid terms these days and refer less to a unified gendered self and more to a multiple self-structure in which gender differences reside whether one is male or female (Butler, 1990; Dimen, 2003). However, desire as previously described as reflecting an active, motivating, energetic movement outwards towards engagement with the world, continues to be problematic for women to orchestrate (Young-Eisendrath, 1997).

Conceptually I think it's helpful to think of desire as we think of appetite. Physiological hunger is a self-regulating mechanism that signals our need for the

intake of food. The signal of hunger can be a pleasurable experience opening us to the possibility of engagement with a satisfying object. We feel hungry, we think about what might satisfy that hunger, and we reach for it and feed ourselves. Very simple. However we all know that it rarely is this straightforward and this is especially true for women and increasingly over the past 10 years for men, in a culture of diets and inescapable external pressures on body size (Bloom et al., 1994). Because of these pressures women become disenfranchised from their own physiological hunger and frightened by the possibility of appropriately responding to their own signals for feeding. The ability to feed oneself without imposing external restrictions (the diet), the ability to feed oneself just the right thing and just the right amount, the ability to be that attuned to one's physical being has powerful psychological consequences (Orbach, 1978; Bloom et al., 1994). The ability to comfortably be in relation to the outside, to feel safe rather than anxious in relation to need, to be secure in the feeling of satiation and peaceful going on being is a Winnicottian, Fairbairnian, Bowlbian, Sullivanian prescription for mental health.

I suggest we think about desire in a similar way. That is, just as women have come to feel frightened by their own hunger and appetite, so too have women come to feel frightened of, and alienated from, their own desire. Just as physiological hunger is the signal reminding us of a need in relation to something outside of ourselves – and all that psychologically accompanies that most inescapable and complex of human experiences – desire similarly thrusts us beyond ourselves, linking us with the outside, opening a path for the expression of self and a glimpse at one's power to transform.

And just as hunger signals our need for food, reminding us each and every time that we are dependent beings, it also, if addressed, moves us to become active consumers of the external object, possessors of the pancake that once sat on our plate. Hunger and desire are experienced as exquisitely subjective whilst utterly reliant on an outside object for satisfaction. Desire craves engagement and, if acted upon, transforms the outside – altering what was. Desire resides within one of our multiple self-states. Like our life blood, which can be altered by environmental influences, like the embryonic self of a new-born infant that arrives with the potential to become a complex human subject, desire is in a continuous and complex dialectical exchange with the culture surrounding it.

Desire can be manipulated and distorted by external forces (Lichtman, 1982). And, as we all know, consumer culture and economic forces are continuously channelling our desire. Options for engagement with or satisfaction of desire may be random or chaotic. In America, since 9/11, our need for safety and our desire for unchallenged prosperous lives have been manipulated by an administration that blankets us in fear at every opportunity. Desire is then converted into a defensive stance of aggression and protection in place of generativity.

Locating desire where it resides within one of our multiple self-states may occur through the creative process. A white canvas is destroyed as a colourful painting emerges. One creates an elaborate meal and then heartily consumes it, leaving the once-full plate empty. Unleashed desire results in some form of change, transformation. Unleashed desire leaves behind proof of life. Desire is not passive. It thrusts us into what Bromberg (1995) calls the intermediate state, what Winnicott (1975) calls transitional

space, what contemporary psychoanalysts call the intersubjective field (Stolorow and Atwood, 1992) – the space of potential where the individual encounters the world. Unleashed desire brings to mind Winnicott's concept of the use of the object in which he suggests that destructiveness creates externality (Winnicott, 1971). He describes destructiveness as a ruthless form of moving ahead with all one's might. Winnicott referred to Greenacre's (1952) example of violence as intrinsic to the hatching process – the chick breaking out of the egg. Michael Eigen, in discussing Winnicott's *Use of the Object* says 'it is an all out, nothing held back, movement of the self-and-other feeling, past representational barriers, past psychic films and shells, a floating freely in a joyous shock of difference. At this moment one is enlivened and quickened through the sense of difference' (Eigen, 1981).

Ruthless moving ahead with all one's might . . . not high on the list in the rule book of femininity. For women the thwarting of desire is pervasive and endemic to our culture. Channelled into consumerism – the quick fix to fill the emptiness or longing – women's desire is suffocated by products, leaving little breathing space for the desire that might be generative and productive. Disturbances to acting on or with desire begin in earliest development, in the mulch, as it were, of our cultural transmissions. These conflicts are embedded in our internal object relations and attacked both internally as well as from outside sources. Restrictions on desiring are firmly established in interpersonal dynamics. Although the social restrictions that women faced 30 years ago have changed, allowing for many more possibilities, women and adolescent girls today continue to experience conflict in relation to their desire (Tolman, 2002). The dialectical complexities abound –

barriers are crumbling, more seems possible, desire, like appetite gets whetted, while internal constrictions and road blocks remain leading to greater self-blame and at times a paralysis in one's ability to move towards that which one so deeply desires.

In earlier work that Susie Orbach and I did together (1982, 1983, 1987), our project was to articulate the internalizations of the culture that shaped femininity and women's psychology. In our earliest work we emphasized women's experience of their needs not being sufficiently met. We suggested that, as caregivers to others, women themselves were deprived of the same kind of emotionally reliable nurture. From a social and feminist perspective we questioned the asymmetrical nature of boys' and girls' and later women's and men's experience of emotional dependency. Women's internal object world, we suggested, was made up of what we called the little-girl inside, a libidinal ego that held the continuing need for nurture and initiative; an adult persona interacting in the world as capable woman, fitting herself more or less to the appropriate requirements of femininity; and a judgmental, critical, self-hating, anti-libidinal ego always reminding her that her needs were excessive, unacceptable and signifiers of weakness. One moved in and out of any one of these multiple self states. Women's sense of self-worth derived from their capacity to be the providers to others – often at the expense of developing any familiarity or comfort with their own relational needs. This, we suggested, obviously impeded women's development. From this vantage point – some twenty years on – our emphasis on needs makes historical sense because we intuitively followed the developmental path focusing on what was needed for the development of a healthier subjectivity. We

articulated the consequences of the socially constructed position of woman as object. We described the effects of this on the mother-daughter relationship and the reproduction of a feminine psychology that left women starved for emotional nurture. Just as the anorectic finds herself involved in the feeding of others, women were emotionally catering to others while starving and our work was a plea for the social and emotional redressing of this painful reality. We argued that in order for women to develop a more secure subjectivity it was essential for them to be the recipients of the very same kind of emotional exchange they knew so well how to deliver. We translated this into its practical application within the analytic dyad where the acceptance of and relating to women's emotional needs were central (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983). In the latter part of the 1980s our work, along with the wave of contemporary feminist and psychoanalytic theoreticians and practitioners, shifted to woman and analyst as subject (Benjamin, 1988). No longer the container for the other, no longer selfless, woman as subject becomes a more active participant in shaping the inter-subjective field.

At that time Susie Orbach and I deconstructed the concepts of envy and competition and connected these feelings, previously felt to be abhorrent, to desire, suggesting that they no longer should be seen as proof of women's greedy and insecure nature, but rather to interpret competition as a sign to the wish for recognition and to understand envy as a gateway to desire (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1987). We posited that the underlying experience of desire and of the need for recognition were problematic and had few acceptable avenues of expression. Desire for women was constricted and

split off from a more agreeable view of the feminine self. In the consulting room the exploration of envy while branching off into any number of meanings for any given individual, inevitably contained a conflict with desire. We understood envy, to be the signpost to the unsettling, volcanic rumblings of unfulfilled desire.

Philip Bromberg's description of normal dissociation is extremely useful and can be applied to this view of women's experience of desire. He defines normal dissociation as the 'natural hypnoid capacity of the mind that works in the service of adaptation' and distinguishes it from 'dissociation as a pathological mental structure developed as a defense against the recurrence of trauma' (Bromberg, 1995, 2003). For women, I suggest, desire resides in a dissociated self state – as an undigestible, unacceptable aspect of self experience – incongruent with the more deferential, accommodating, other-oriented characteristics that have shaped feminine psychology. We are, after all, only one generation beyond the feminist movement of the 1970s and transmission of acceptable characteristics of femininity as passed on from our mothers, grandmothers and their mothers before them still palpably lives on in our internal object world.

I need to digress for a moment and say a word about mothering. How can one speak of women's cultural influence and power without discussing mothering? In the first half of the last century, for women, desire was to be channelled into the reproductive experience and satisfaction was to be derived from the act of mothering. The last quarter of the century saw a women's movement that challenged the limits of that role and opened the way, for the first time, for a woman to get closer to having a real choice about whether or not to become a mother (which in the US is currently in

jeopardy). In the process of writing this paper my thoughts wandered off into the experience of mothering as a creative act and thereby one embodying desire. I thought about my own experience and my own children as two people who will go on beyond me and, I am confident, make their own rich contributions to the culture. I allowed myself to feel that my loving and raising them contributes in no small measure to that. I wondered about how love connects with creativity and desire – thought I should leave that to the poets to answer – or to the topic of another paper. But I felt strongly that I could not leave the creative aspects of mothering out of this paper for that has been done far too consistently in psychoanalysis. Fairbairn (1952) told us that the good just gets assimilated. Like any good nourishment it gets digested and becomes part of the person. The failures of parenting and the disappointments and frustrations the child experiences creates the world of internal object relations – the dramas that we spend a lifetime living out or hopefully working through. And although I have obviously found this model of the mind to be enormously useful, my feminist lens questions why the good becomes invisible, why it vanishes before our eyes into the nether world of the psyche. With mother as object, desire is lost in what appears to be an offering of oneself in the service of the other. But with mother as subject the richness of her internal world takes on more significance. Her desire has a place, her active loving (parenting) is acknowledged and her historical transcendence made visible.

A desiring woman is an active agent – active on her own behalf. She is not only in the more familiar self-state of caregiver, midwife to others (to potentiate their desires) but rather more connected to her

own cravings, her own personal idiom, her own lust and eroticism. The desiring woman is a woman who, in the sexual arena, can actually say the words 'I want you'. A desiring woman takes time and claims a place and connects with her creative urges – waiting for them, looking for them, moving things so that they can emerge. A desiring woman doesn't find herself continuously lost in a web of ambivalence. A desiring woman is a woman with a hearty appetite who loves her body and lives within it proudly – as if to say I have BIG appetites and I love it. Does this describe the majority of women you have encountered?

I dare say that I doubt it. Sadly one can all too easily describe the woman who feels out of touch with her own appetite or experiences it as frightening or shameful. Rather than signifying a reaching towards life, hunger is something to be feared, a trigger for feeling a lack of control. The women we may know who come in all shapes and sizes are not the ones who feel comfortable in their bodies but rather disconnected, looking upon their own bodies as objects found lacking, seeing their bodies as they imagine others gaze upon them, critically examined inch by inch, pressured to decrease in order to fit the space allotted. The women we may know may not be able to declare the words 'I want you' but rather feel acutely in need of being wanted by the other. The women we may know are not lusting, staying exquisitely connected to their own erotic desire, but rather feel constricted, shut down, disconnected from their sexual appetites or trapped in the language of somatic expression. The women we may know are flooded with guilt when they respond to their own needs and not those of the other. For some, time and solitude bring anxiety. Sabotage of time for oneself comes easily; filling it with others' needs comes even more easily.

How, as clinicians, do we think about or listen for the desire of our women patients? In what disguise does desire hide within the consulting room and manifest within the therapy relationship? Does the gender of the analyst alter or effect the presence or expression of desire?

I turn now to a discussion of a patient because our relationship illustrates the dissociated creative, desiring self – Ruby's and my own.

Ruby, a 46-year-old, robust, psychologically astute woman with a terrific sense of humour came into her session to tell me of the offer she had received for a new job. It was a good offer and would allow Ruby to leave the job she had recently grown to hate. For several months we had been talking about her dissatisfaction with work and her increasing sense that she must leave and find new employment. This she did. Ruby put out the word, went on interviews and quite quickly (because I think she is probably exceptional at the work she does) was offered this new and improved job. During that session Ruby began by expressing her joy about the new possibilities and the relief of no longer being trapped in the other situation. She moved on quite quickly to her anxieties related to making the change. What if the new job was not all she hoped it would be, what if she had fooled them into believing she was up to the task, what would it be like to meet all new people? As she spoke I became aware of my own feeling that we were moving away from a kind of shared rejoicing in her confidence and recognition in the work world to the much more familiar turf of her insecurity and lack, from her forward movement to the retreat to the familiar of when, as she said 'the other shoe would drop'. As I stayed with my own feelings I knew that I wanted to stay in the

psychologically challenging and alive new place and not return to the old familiar, safer place of self-doubt and undoing. I found myself suggesting that perhaps the anxiety was not only about facing an unknown future, but that perhaps it also was a response to her having taken this step and making it happen all on her own. That recognizing her unhappiness, paying attention to it and taking it seriously (rather than a more familiar questioning of her own experience and undermining of herself) and then acting on it AND getting results, was just too much. She giggled a bit anxiously and said that she thought that was certainly true. At this moment a new thought entered for me, seemingly an intrusion into what we were currently discussing. I found myself wondering what ever happened to the drawing class that I knew she had wanted to pursue. I decided to follow the impulse and ask her. We had been sitting in silence for a minute or two and I said – ‘You know Ruby, this may seem a bit out of the blue, but I suspect it’s connected to what we’re talking about. I just found myself wondering about whether or not you enrolled in the drawing class that you told me about several months ago.’

Oh yes. I did. In fact last night was the class and it’s funny you should bring it up because yesterday I had a real struggle getting myself there. In the middle of the day I remembered it was Tuesday and thought oh god, class tonight. I’m tired, I really don’t want to go. I felt so strongly that I wanted to come up with an excuse not to go. Then I kind of talked to myself and said ‘look, you don’t have to go. You’ve wasted more money than this before, you are an adult, it’s your choice.’ It’s the same exact feeling I have when I think I want to sit down and write – I have the impulse to do it – but then find myself sitting at the table and going completely blank and wondering why on earth I ever thought I had anything to write. So yesterday I let myself think about why I wanted to take the class in the first place and knew that the only reason I didn’t want to go was

that it’s so hard to be there. I feel so vulnerable. I do the drawing and the teacher comes around and comments and it never looks like what I want it to look like and even though he’s very kind in his comments and suggestions, I just feel so exposed.

Ruby is an extremely creative person who happens to be a computer techie (a job that barely scratches the surface of her creative abilities). In the course of our work together she has gone through different periods of being connected to and expressing herself in poetry, pastels and furniture building. A year ago Ruby fell in love and poetry came pouring out of her. She brought her poems to me and I felt blown away – as if I was encountering this person in my consulting room for the first time (when I had been meeting with Ruby twice weekly for the previous 5 years at that point). Her poetry was a reminder of that particular self state and reminded me that I had encountered this part of Ruby about 2 years prior when she brought in a short story after her father’s death and then again a year or so before that when she brought in some of her pastel drawings. She really was a gifted artist and both her writing and her drawing/painting far exceeded those of an amateur. Each time I encountered that part of Ruby I was really taken – each time it felt like a blanket was being lifted and this colourful, soulful, richly creative person emerged. So here I was again, remembering to ask her if she had signed up for her drawing class. But it had been months since that part of Ruby – that self state – had been present. Why did I keep forgetting? Why did I keep letting that part of Ruby slip away behind all that we found to talk about in her daily life – divorce, work, new relationship, connecting or disconnecting from her body. Here we were again and this time I felt disturbed by my abandonment of the artist Ruby. I was failing in my ability to hold the knowledge



of her creative self and keep it present with us. Just as Ruby dissociated from that aspect of self – so did I. In that session talking about the new job, my initial countertransference awareness of not wanting to return to the old ground but to somehow hold the new place of Ruby's strength and effectiveness in the world allowed the space in my own unconscious process for 'remembering' the art class. It felt odd at that moment in the session to ask about the class precisely because it was bubbling up so to speak from my unconscious and so appeared as quite a foreign thought imposing itself. And it did feel as though I had to take the leap and grab hold of it while it was still in my consciousness. I believe that had I not, we both would have gone on, perhaps for months, with Ruby dissociated from that self state and my joining in that dissociation.

As Ruby talked about the experience in art class she described how exposed and vulnerable she felt and how she could not escape the sense that she was being judged. In those moments it felt as if her whole self was on the line and the acceptance, praise or criticism would determine how she would feel about herself. She went on 'but I'm always battling with the feelings that I can't do this, that I will never be able to translate my being onto the lines on the page. Then I just wonder what the point is? Why do I bother?' I suggested that maybe there was something important about following her desire, claiming the time and the space for that part of herself to live and breathe and that connecting with her desire was the point, not the object created. In that light we both understood that what came out onto the page was not really important. If she was pleased with it – great. More often she felt frustrated with the result, but when we put the spotlight on her desire and the open pathway from

inside to outside we both knew that it was that act that mattered. And, it seemed, we were doing what we were talking about – the isomorphic experience Ed Levenson (1991) describes. What previously had been split off and relegated to the nether world of dissociated self states was now alive and breathing in the space we created together. Had Ruby and I followed the other path earlier in the session of her experience of lacking in the world, we would have unwittingly focused on one self state and neglected another. Philip Bromberg (1998) speaks of staying the same while changing and says this is every person's wish. Although our patients are always with us ostensibly in order to change, the power of the internal world to hold us and keep us the same is the challenge of psychoanalytic work. My unconscious collusion with keeping Ruby the same – my neglect of her creative and desiring self state – made sense, as does so much of the analytic process, after the fact. I now understood that I, just like Ruby's mother, didn't keep this part of Ruby in mind. She could live with me month after month, year after year, with neither of us relating to this, very beautiful, powerful, creative, part of her. Again, with hindsight I can see how important my forgetting was – forgetting time and again this part of Ruby that embodied her passion and uniquely Ruby stamp.

As Ruby and I carved out the space for this voice to emerge there was, in that dialectical process, a creation of the new. In place of the more powerless, self-critical voices that can dominate Ruby's self experience came an experience of self capable and desirous of externalizing her subjectivity and penetrating her world. Did this change threaten Ruby's internal object world wherein she protected her depressed and alcoholic mother? Undoubtedly. For the claiming of her own desire and the

outcome of reaching out into the world stood in direct contrast to the path of retreat into the bottle which so characterized her mother's life. But I don't think that it is insignificant that I too am a woman with conflicts about my own desire and creativity. Ruby's aliveness sparks a very particular aliveness in me. It connects me back up to my own often deserted desire.

When we ponder what our work is really all about, is desire (ours or our patients') included in the equation? How does the place of desire in our own lives emerge in the analytic relationship? I think these are questions we can begin to ask ourselves as people who spend the majority of our time working with the delicate balance of people's search for wellbeing, a sense of effectiveness and meaning. As I scan my practice and focus on the women in it and their desire I see a montage – Ruby's art, another patient's unwritten screenplay, another's wish to go to college after years as a fashion model, another's desire to get a PhD in psychology, a true interest, after 15 years working in the insurance industry, another's dream to teach children after being a magazine editor, another to dare to leave an oppressive family business and create the space to wonder what she would choose to do if she didn't follow the path laid out for her, and another lost at the prospect of finding herself after decades of relying on another to provide her identity. For each of these women, acting on desire feels a bit like jumping out of a plane with a parachute. It's scary. They know they are taking a risk. They struggle with following their own desire feeling they are being selfish or terrified, that they will see that in opening up the path from inside to outside nothing will emerge. Being a desiring subject might mean revealing a personal idiom, which may not be about or for anyone else. It is about engaging in the

world as a person with appetite and one who leaves the world changed in some, perhaps very small, way – an expression of oneself, that lives on beyond one's physical life. Desire is the fuel, the spark, the current that links the subject to her world. If women's desire was not curbed and channelled for others, would there be many more signs of feminine life in the universe?

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