

Béatrice Cloutier-Trépanier on Cindy Hill

April 29, 2025

After our meeting, I am giddy at the idea of writing something for Cindy's show. I am a fan, and feel like in cosmic ways we have already been friends. I don't think I would be writing this companion to her exhibition if I felt otherwise. Our conversation reminds me of Lucy Lippard's "Lunch I" (c. 1970s), a fictional dialogue between two anonymous women I have been reading for years now.

Lucy Lippard: "Open ends. Unraveling. Interruptions absorbed. No need to finish sentences. I. You. Trailing off unfinished as soon as the other understands. (...) Conversation as a chain of clues. Open to interpretations. No need to spell it all out. Yes. Eyes. Hands. Right. I know. And the...Yes! You know. Me too."

I look at the images of Cindy's bronze diaries, unlocked and left open and I wish I could hold them. Or that they could hold me.

I think of this text as a diary, unlocked and left open. A conversation as a chain of clues.

Recently, I have felt increasingly worried about my obsession with the words of others and how I always prefer letting someone else write. But on the heels of reading McKenzie Wark's *Raving* (2023), in which the words of others—gossip and anecdotes (yum)—punctuate and echo her own writing, I feel I can push my worry aside for now.

Yvonne Rainer: *Feelings are facts.*

April 30, 2025

I had diaries as a young girl, but they were either left empty or filled with words by others, which might have made them just notebooks with locks. In my mind however, I wrote the equivalent of many novels, rehearsed scenarios, made films. Mostly to do with one-sided love. How boring. Or was it? I never considered my experience extraordinary enough to be worthy of words on a page.

William J. Simmons: "And above all—our intellectual venture or our art do not need to be ashamed when they are just rehearsals of trauma, attempts at star-fucking, or touchy-feely reparative projects."

I read too closely. I reread obsessively. I overidentify. I loop back. I flip between pages and put exclamation marks in the margins. And when I finally write, I write around and with the words of others. It often feels like I do everything you are not supposed to do. It feels thrilling.

May 1, 2025

Writing as a technology of the self. I read this in an essay that discusses Italian feminist and art critic Carla Lonzi's *Self-Portrait (Autoritratto)* (1969)—an autobiography that is in fact a self-effacing suite of interviews with artists, a collage of audio recording transcriptions. Cheeky. Lonzi left the artworld shortly after to cofound Rivolta Femminile, a separatist feminist collective, with her friends the artist Carla Accardi and writer Elvira Banotti.

In "Io Dico Io" ("I Say I") (1977), they write: "What I have to say I will say on my own."

I read and write many I's, and mine is the only one I cannot read.

May 2, 2025

I look again at the images of Cindy's bronze diaries this morning. The locks beside them, shaped like little hearts, remind me of chalky Valentine's Day candy.

Later, I go see the Joyce Wieland exhibition at the museum. In the first room, there is a watercolour drawing of messy, pink bleeding hearts. Some full, some simply outlined. I learn that Wieland used to say: "I must show in my work what it is to love."

William J. Simmons: "For no one is legible to anyone else without love, which I have come to understand is a form of fandom."

When Jan and I were in Mexico City last year, I spotted a carved heart in a cactus, inscribed with J + B. It is a sweet, shimmering moment. I will probably regret writing this. Fuck it.

Hearts, butterflies, flowers, and stars. Carved on desks, scribbled in notebooks, dangling from keychains. Tattooed. Rhinestoned on sunglasses. Painted on nails and beside our lashes.

The boredom, the idleness, the thirst. The feeling of summer. Days that stretched in cool bedrooms and basements. Hours on the phone thinking about driving in cars with dumb boys.

Later, I get spooked by what I'm doing here. What am I doing here? I try to not think about what people might think.

In Wark's *Reverse Cowgirl* (2020), a hard sour candy, I read: Jordy Rosenberg: "Writing the self is, at its root, a question of marking with language the places where history touches us. And reader, it touches us *everywhere.*"

May 5, 2025

I feel stuck, and it feels like I'm edging writing. Stuckness seems like the very worst thing when it catches me. It is never-ending. It stretches. It clings. Like strings of bubble gum. *everywhere.* I light a tiny joint (it's 2p.m.), so that I finally can sit down to write, try to get rid of the sticky feeling of stuckness. I have been wondering all day until now what, if anything, would make it into this last entry. Everything feels and sounds corny, excessive, embarrassing. Maybe if I had not taken the weekend off, this would not be happening. When I was at the museum for the Wieland show last week, I picked up Mona Chollet's *Résister à la culpabilisation: Sur quelques empêchements d'exister* (2024), which discusses the internalized discourse that tells us we are too much, not enough, not right, always wrong. She writes (I translate): "When nothing we do or say or think can be right in our eyes, perhaps it is because we are unsure of our legitimacy to exist."

May 6, 2025

It didn't occur to me until today that the journal, as a form, is what I have been reading and rereading obsessively, too closely—the material of my research: artist and least of girly-girls Lee Lozano's Private Books 1 to 11 (Private Books 10 and 11 remained mostly empty, and as such have not been published). In Private Book 5 (1969-1970), Lozano writes:

"I WILL NOT SUFFER ANYMORE

I WILL NOT SUFFER ANY

I WILL NOT SUFFER

I WILL NOT.

I WILL

I.”

(Transcribing this, I take note of the periods and their curious placement.)

The other is art critic Lucy Lippard’s experimental novel *I See/You Mean* (1979), which reads like a “hippie aunt’s psychedelic sex diary, both shocking and oddly reassuring.” This description is from Julia Bryan-Wilson, and no other—especially not mine—seems to capture *I See/You Mean’s* vibe more accurately.

Lippard’s autofictional character, A, asks: “Why can’t I explain these things to him? I’m a writer. I’m supposed to be able to express myself. But I say things I don’t mean in the process of trying to say *well* what I do mean. If words weren’t ‘easy’ for me I would say less things wrong, badly. He freezes everything I say and won’t let me try to say it better. I’m always held to the half-formed and inaccurate. ‘You said’ he’s always yelling at me. Yes, I said, but I didn’t say it right so I’m trying again. It’s so fucking hard to say anything right, so anyone else can understand.”

Hmm.

Undoubtedly, privilege is the condition of possibility for the kind of thinking out loud I’m doing here—the half-formed. I have been told I have too much time to think, that I complicate and read too much into things, that I am negative. (Living with three other girls in my first apartment in my early twenties, it was decided that I was definitely a Miranda—held to the inaccurate.)

May 7, 2025

I look at Cindy’s diaries again. Were they pale pink? Leather? Covered with stickers? I intended yesterday to be my last log, but I worried that it might not be as light-hearted as I thought it would, or actually not at all. I don’t know where I got the idea that it should be. I struggle to find in myself the authority to write, to not be a good girl, to not shut up. Rereading Sara Ahmed’s *The Feminist Killjoy Handbook* (2023)—to light a tiny fire.

Other killjoys I turn to always—Lozano, Lonzi and recently—Wark. I long to be a bad girl with them, to obsess and be unreasonable, to get in the way out of love.

Asking for a friend: “What can I do about my emotions which are excessive?” (The question is from Lee, on the last written page of her last *Private Book*. I’m happy she gets the last word.)

Citations

- Sara Ahmed, *The Feminist Killjoy Handbook* (London: Penguin Random House, 2023)
- Julia Bryan-Wilson, “Lucy R. Lippard’s *I See/You Mean*,” *Tin House* 4, no.1 (Fall 2002), 67.
- Mona Chollet, *Résister la culpabilisation: Sur quelques empêchements d’exister* (Paris: Zones, 2024), 14.
- William J. Simmons, *Love and Degradation: Excessive Desires in Queer-Feminist Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2025), 4-6.
- Lucy R. Lippard, *I See/You Mean* (Los Angeles: Chrysalis Press, 1979), 42-3.
- . “Lunch I,” in *Headwaters and other short fictions* (Los Angeles: New Document: 2025), 154-5.
- Carla Lonzi, *Self-Portrait* (1969), translated by Allison Grimaldi Donahue (Brussels: Divided, 2021)
- . “Let’s Spit on Hegel” (1970) <https://my-blackout.com/2020/11/18/carla-lonzi-lets-spit-on-hegel/>
- Lee Lozano, *Private Book 5* (1969-1970, ed. 1972) (New York: Karma Publishing, 2018), 94-5.
- . *Private Book 11* (1970, ed. 1972), 11. Courtesy of the Estate of Lee Lozano and Hauser and Wirth.
- Rivolta Femminile, “I Say I,” in *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader*, edited by Paola Bono and Sandra Kemps (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 59-61.
- Yvonne Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2006)
- Francesco Ventrella, “Magnetic Encounters: Listening to Carla Lonzi’s tape recordings,” in *Feminism and Art in Postwar Italy: The Legacy of Carla Lonzi*, edited by Francesco Ventrella and Giovanna Zapperi (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 45-74.
- McKenzie Wark, *Raving* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2023)
- . *Reverse Cowgirl* (South Pasadena: Semiotexte, 2020), 18.

Béatrice Cloutier-Trépanier is a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow in the Film and Media Department at Queen's University. She is also a horse girl.

19bct@queensu.ca

© Béatrice Cloutier-Trépanier 2025

Published on the occasion of Cindy Hill's solo exhibition titled "Mirror-Reverse" on view at Pumice Raft from May 24-June 29, 2025.

Published by The Centre for Experiential Research, 2025

PUMICE RAFT