“Minor Characters”: Subjectivity of Women Beat Writers

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This paper aims to explore a cultural phenomenon—how women Beat writers achieve their subjectivity in male Beats’ boy-gang circle. Is it true that those women are powerless lacking the insight and talent of expression? Or, is it only because we are not yet prepared for the stories of these minor characters of the Beat Generation? How to understand the subjectivity of women Beats under gendered discourse of Beat culture?

I. Literary Review

As for the Women Beats, the attention wasn’t paid until the late 90s when American scholars began to reconstruct their images and discourses of their writings, diaries and letters, and to recover the voices of those “silent women in black”. There
are three important books, written by American women scholars on the discussion of personal lives, writing techniques and significance of their works.

*Women of the Beat Generation: The writers, the Artists and Muses at the Heart of a Revolution* (1998), written by Brenda Knight, is the first and most complete document of women artists involved in the Beat cultural movement. She introduces the whole three generations of Women Beats as well as the scattered poems of other women artists. Ronna C. Johnson and Nancy M. Grace are two important American scholars in recovering the women's voices of the Beat Generation. Their first important book *Girls who wore Black: Women Writing the Beat Generation* (2002) is a critical anthology on nine women Beats and their works. These essays revisit the Beats' cannon and history. *Breaking the Rule of Cool: Interviewing and Reading the Women Beats' Writers* (2004) is a collection of interviews with major female Beat writers, such as Diane di Prima, Joyce Johnson and Russ Weiss. It provides valuable primary resources of women Beat writers' lives and literary philosophy. Interestingly enough, the women Beats' understandings of the term "Beat" are by no means consistent, and they don't care whether they are labeled as Beats or not. In the book, Ronna C. Johnson says: “Their works represent women asserting autonomy from the fifties gender roles, as well as from the Beat Generation’s male-defined requirements and domination, by appropriating, transforming, or correcting Beat discourses to inscribe their own subjectivity”.[1]

However autonomous they are, “appropriating”, “transforming” and “correcting” imply an interrelatedness between female and male beat writers. Ronna C. Johnson argues that they adopt the strategy of “writing in between”, that is, “Beat’s female memoirists […] write their Beat tales in the discursive interstices between the genres it encompasses, and in between the women’s discursive positions as both subject and subaltern, to achieve a retrospective, transgressive reconstruction in which they can be figured as subjects”. [2] That is to say, on the one hand, they tell the Beat life as a narrator; on the other, they are situated and recognized under the norms of Beat culture which is defined by men.

Meanwhile, Chinese academia’s interests for BG (the Beat Generation) can be categorized into three aspects: introduction of the lives and works of BG, nonconformity themes of the Beat spirits, and the religious liaisons with Buddhism. Little attention has been paid to heroines of BG, given both the difficulty of accesses to the first hand resources and the sensitive topics on sex, drugs and defiant attitudes. And the Chinese BG criticism lags behind the cross-cultural study of its legacies,
like BG and visual arts, music and performance arts.

Therefore, this paper intends to quest the existence and works of women beat writers, while their subjectivity and agency of writing is at the core of the whole discussion. Existentialism holds that existence precedes essence; in other words, man is "a project which possesses a subjective life, instead of being a kind of moss, or a fungus or a cauliflower". The subject, the woman artist, is not the pre-existing metaphysical journeyer, "it is a subject-in-process that is constructed in discourse by the acts it performs". To make it simple, from existential and postmodern perspectives, women's subjectivity is realized in the process of becoming. In Judith Butler's words, "woman itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end. It is an ongoing discursive proactive". Subjectivity is not stable and fixed; it is a "discursive" notion when the free agent performs and makes actions. For women Beat writers, the road to subjectivity is not easy. Considered as the incomplete man and Dark Continent, no matter what race, class, religion they are, women haven't enjoyed equal status in public life. For instance, male artists think there is no women competitor for Jack Kerouac, and most of women are just miserable silent muses. However, this author of this thesis holds they did strive for the recognition and subjectivity amid boy gangs in a transformed hipster code of living in between. This author thus views women's beat writers' identity as an authentic process of becoming, through experiencing, thinking, expressing and acting for themselves.

"Subjectivity for women Beat writers is a compromised achievement in light of the code of Cool and the gendering processes of writing itself." Because unlike men, women have double roles of being a mother and a writer and they have to shoulder full responsibility of feeding children and doing housework once get married. Marriage is dangerous for women. "Many women have to choose between two sorts of alienation: the alienation of the housewife and that of the working women. The children bring about all sorts of difficulties in life." Women Beats, most of them, like Ann Waldman, Joyce Johnson, Ann Charters, Joanne Frazer and Diane di Prima did choose to have babies, though Frazer left her daughter to be adopted in Mexico. And they managed to lead a life of supporting a family and writing. Their double roles infiltrated new meanings into male-defined Beat code. Therefore, their unconventional life choices lead to experience subjectivity.

Besides, their understandings of women as a person and religious pursuit are the very channels to autonomous person. Especially, subjectivity of thinking is manifested
by their androgynous philosophy toward sex and gender. Women beats’ literary works are the evidences for subjectivity of expression, which reconfigures the male-written history and records women’s feelings and thoughts to involve more women in. Finally, it comes to subjectivity of action if Beat writing is seen as more of a cultural event rather than literary phenomenon.

II. Experience Subjectivity: Liberation

Experience subjectivity is based on one’s life experiences and feelings. For women beat writers, they experienced the chaotic lifestyles as well as the routine domestic field. The relationship between these two aspects is controversial: "maternity is inimical to being Beat for women,"[8] because it makes women less available for sex. At the same time, “rebellious women Beats appropriated the domestic space defined against them by bohemian and hipster life and used it as a rhetoric and set of representations for their liberation through vehicles usually reserved for men, such as sexual freedom and travel on the road". [9] Besides, women Beats’ experimentation with drugs, music and free cross-racial love relationship embodies their early life experiences and inspires their aesthetic techniques. All these experiences are the very distinctive life choices for women bohemians, then at least in width they got to know the other sides of life, crude yet real.

However, for women striving for subjectivity in boy’s game, what really significant here is sexual. Sexual liberation might be the most courageous movement women Beats made to broaden their life experiences. What really significant is that sex is less a curse for women than a possibility for an authentic life. “Sexual freedom—the capacity to take at will lovers both male and female—is at the core of Beat female subjectivity, as well as Beat women’s writings, although it was not as great as that in the subsequent era of the sexual revolution.”[10] They are not forced but desire to engage in brave activity.

Why were most of us babes even in that Boyland? Sex of course—let’s start with this and get it out of the way. Most, though not all, of the guys wanted us there for sex. And we ourselves were expecting it [...] With the Beats [...] we escaped to a place where women could admit, or at least take for granted, their desires. Sort of. Sometimes.[11]

In that sense, it liberated women from conventional moral shackles to enjoy and love their bodies. That’s when young girls became groupies to get involved in men’s artistic world. “The lovemaking was really central, rather than getting to know
somebody over the years and then marrying him. Maybe that’s what the sexual revolution did for us.”[12] Johnson writes in *Minor Characters* about the delicate relationship between sex and power:

> Real life was sexual. Or rather, it often seemed to take the form of sex. This was the area of ultimate adventure, where you would dare or not dare. It was much less a question of desire. Sex was like a forbidden castle whose name could not even be spoken around the house, so feared was its power. Only with the utmost vigilance could you avoid being sucked into its magnetic field. The alternative was to break into the castle and take its power for yourself.[13]

This “feared power” is very true for women, especially for young women. When girls are young and beautiful, they need to have techniques to cope with male partners who may expect more from just work relationship. However, “utmost vigilance” may prevent uncomfortable association with men’s world, which might make her lose job opportunities and friends. She could learn how to negotiate the power rather than to give up the opportunity at first hand. Johnson’s brave and open approach to sex, if handled properly, is the prescription for those women yearning for more freedom and power in public fields, for the feared power blocks the way to life possibilities. “Sex is the burden of the past, but sex is the way to the opening future.”[14]

Free sexual experience justifies their bodies. Women Beats were really the minor characters in the 1950s when it was not only a time of political repression but of sexual repression as well. Any public discussion of sex was taboo: “it was an era when masturbation was seen as a cause of insanity and premarital sex was immoral, when half of American women were married by the age of nineteen, oral sex was considered sheer perversion, and adultery and homosexuality were regarded as criminal acts.”[15] Most of the women Beats were confident with what they had gone through in their sexual lives, and Hettie Jones admired Di Prima for her bisexual freedom. Carolyn and Di Prima could sleep with many guys, yet they did not have any feeling for them. In *Come and Join the Dance*, the heroine set herself as the consumer of sex. She denied men by rejecting Jerry’s kiss, and chose to loose her virginity and seduced Peter.

Sex is a very important channel to enjoy, suffer, grow, for it reopens the door to new life. Self-reliance and self-awareness is grounded on experience subjectivity. “The heroine’s transformation from the object of the scene to its subject-chronicler,
from observer to actor, from prevaricator to narrator explodes the ‘chick category’. ”[^6]

“Chick category” is conventional femininity, young, attractive and sexually available, also in Kerouac’s dictionary the silent women in black. A all these matter, because women’s autonomous awareness is waken up, which is not the passive taking orders from other’s guidance or warning. They are free since when they realize the doctrines are unfair and there is no one to count on, and they are bound to make a choice and live their own way.

Sexual experience authenticates female subjectivity. However, sex should be written “critically”, as Johnson says, “disclosing its pivotal role in women’s experience without condemning or trivializing female sexuality”.[^7] The women’s sex politics justifies subjectivity in sexual life, and their description of sex is very straight and crude. Di Prima is admired by both women writers as well as Ginsberg about her autonomous approaches to life, the mother of five children and bohemian artist.

Women’s sexual liberation is often met with institutional pressure. Promiscuous women were viewed as whores and were sent to mental hospitals by their parents. Gregory Corso says, “there were women, their families put them in institutions, they were given electric shock. In the 50s if you were male you could be a rebel, but if you were female your families had you locked up.”[^8] Sex was acceptable to men at the 50s, yet women’s sexual liberation had to be approached cautiously, for it was before the contraception pills were readily available. These unchained sexual creatures had to face great physical pains and abortions. Elise Cowen underwent a hysterectomy during abortion. Di Prima brought five kids along with her across the country. It was women who raised up the children, while men instead saved himself the energy to protect a tangible self.

Women beat writers’ rebellious life experiences, caught between the breeding chores and artistic creation, formed their strange life and availed them with bigger picture. Their men avoided familial responsibility and employment, making women breadwinners and mothers. However, it is those versatile experiences, happy and sad, that turn to be the complete proof that women beats lived their drifted confidence, troubled life. Their passion and misery appropriated the domestic space as the hotbed of all inspiration.
Thinking Subjectivity: against Gender Dichotomy

Thinking subjectivity is closely related to experience subjectivity, for the former arises from the physical and psychological experiences in life and in return to form one’s own value system. Here, this value system is not forced upon them by others, but the natural and creative outflow of thoughts and judgment of themselves. For women Beats, what is interesting enough is not their defiant stance against man, though they frequently address unfairness within the Beat mores, or rather something beyond the supposed anti-dichotomy attitude towards gender. In spite of their consensus on men’s unfriendliness for further communication with them, women Beats are not therefore nailed down or depressed, but instead taking existential hipster code to find their own essence.

Their understanding of women is by no means the counter results of the opposite sex, but a total independent person out of free soul and body. For women Beats, they think the essence for female is identity in flux, which means self is in the process of being. De Beauvoir claims gender is a social construct, since one is not born but becomes a woman, yet Judith Butler goes further by arguing that “sex and gender are both cultural categories”. Biological sex is not stable any more. The problem with Beauvoir’s argument is, according to Butler, “it works with the assumption that there are only two biological sexes, which are determined by nature, and which in turn generate and guarantee the binary gender system”. Butler provides the potential for many different ways of living gender, like what is envisioned by women beats: not fixed and anti-dual.

Most of the women Beats evaded the label “feminist”, because they did not want to be limited and defined against certain restrictions and expectations. Carolyn agreed that individual qualities were lost when people were stereotyped. Hettie Jones said she did not identify herself with any label, for it reduced life possibilities. One-dimensional articulation of women was denied by women Beats. Also, Janine Pommy Vega admitted that she was lucky to have been influenced by male poet Huncke’s perception of people as individuals rather than two sexes. Vega was not a sexist, neither boosting nor denying either sex, but “just a person, just a human being”.

Women Beat’s articulation of femininity is not fixed but something beyond sexes. Joanne Kyger claimed in an interview on why she thought confessional poetry was too much for a woman, for it exposed negativity. “Female identity is part of it, that you should be able to tell, or go into, these other dimensions and characters and not
get hooked on our own personal identity.”[22] Kyger believes it is true especially for a writer, who need to draw a bigger picture in life. “Self is more than a distinct female voice or male voice [...] It’s always a danger to set a male/female dichotomy or duality; the self is more than the sum of the parts.”[23]

Anne Waldman in her early works evoked every masculine impulse in words and performance, potentially alluring readers to consider her a chauvinist. However, Anne Waldman, living a postmodern philosophy, wanted to eliminate the limitations of gender boundaries altogether by going beyond binary oppositions. She expressed clearly in “Feminafesto” about androgyny:

I would like to declare an androgynist poetics defined by primal energy not by a heterosexist world [...] I propose a transsexual literature, a hermaphroditic literature, a transvestite literature, and finally a poetics of transformation beyond gender [...] In fact, you could be a man with a “lesbian” consciousness in you, a woman with a “gay” consciousness inside. The masculine and feminine energies may be perhaps comprehended in the Buddhist sense of Proajna and Upaya, wisdom and skillful means, which exist in all sentient beings. That these energies co-exist and are essential one to the other. That poetry is perceived as a kind of magical accomplishment that understands these fundamental energies [...] [24]

Ginsberg says, Anne Waldman is a poet orator; her body is an instrument for vocalization; her voice a trembling flame rising out of strong body. Throughout the poem, she is trying to come to terms with her own male energy and impulses. However, in Iovis II she is trying to explode not male, but female energy. This echoes well with Radical feminist Kate Millet’s sexual politics of fusing the distinctiveness of each sex, like efficiency and rationality in men and tenderness and caring in women, and recommending them all to both sexes.[25] Indeed, Men may know more yet understand less, for women possess the qualities like caring and friendliness. Though artistic aesthetics vary, women Beats share a relative agreement on androgynous subjectivity, against any gendered stereotyping of sexes.

IV. Expression Subjectivity: Writing

When women have experienced life and get their own values of life, they may write them down so as to nurture the thoughts and find a language of her own. French feminist Helene Cixous credits writing crucial tactic to find her subjectivity. And writing is potentially political of endorsing women writers a public life. For instance, she needs to find the publishing house, negotiate with the editors and interact with critics and readers. Expression subjectivity, regardless of what and how ideas are expressed, matters because writing itself is the trial of competence and
power. My point is that expression is first a private and then a public territory. Each generation of feminists grows up with the nourishment by former feminists' wisdom in words. So do three generations of women Beats. It is the efforts of every woman Beats' writings that constitute a group of female writers in history of Beat literature.

On the personal side, writing is the premise of women artistic creation. “Speaking becomes both a way to engage in active self-transformation and a rite of passage where one moves from being object to being subject. Only as subjects can we speak.” In the essay “Snapshots, Sand Paintings, and Celluloid”, Nancy Grace writes, “autobiographic writing also takes on political and artistic importance for women writers in its connection to self-validation, self-expression, and authority, a conceptual link assuming heightened importance for women writers effectively erased as legitimate artists from the historical Beat record.” Male artists’ prejudice towards women has been held for a long time. It is only through persistent learning and improving writing skills can women Beats negotiate their expression subjectivity in the gendered discourse of Beat culture.

The complex narrative styles of women writers disclose women’s broad and brave imagination. Like Anne Waldman, the third generation of women Beats, her poetry “exhibits the open-form aesthetics, of using spontaneous techniques, collage, cut-up, and dream and journal investigations in her own work” [26]. For other women Beats, their writing technique are versatile, including performance-based techniques by Russ Weiss and Elise Cowen, spontaneous jazz poetics by Prima and Weiss, and revolutionary, mystical, vernacular poetics by Kyger and Vega, and Helen Adam’s utilization of Ballad tradition.

Besides, women writers willfully shift the narrators in the memoir novels. In the memoirs of women Beat writers, the narrator is changed from the original peripheral “she” into the protagonist “I”. This switch of narrator in form guarantees active initiatives of narrators. Carolyn Cassady’s novel Off the Road, Joyce Johnson’s Minor Characters and Diane di Prima’s Memoirs of A Beatnik are all narrated in the first person throughout the pages. This consistent narrative style presents a very vivid, complete and original female image in front of readers. “I would write about furnished rooms and sex. Sex had to be approached critically, I thought. I would not succumb to the ladylike stratagem of shimmering my way toward discreet fadeouts. I’d decided this even before meeting Jack or reading ‘Howl’”. Her determination of what and how to write under “I” as narrator is clearly decided by self rather than by others. “Before meeting Jack or reading ‘Howl’” is significant, for it to some
extent justifies women's autonomy in writing aesthetics and thus their writings could be considered independent of male beats' doctrines as well.

Besides, bold exploration of sex in and out of the novels witnesses the liberation of female sexuality in the 60s' Countercultural Movement. Sexuality is of crucial importance to one's gender identity. One distinctive feature of women Beats' writings is choosing sexuality as subject of writing. In novel, narrator Diana is the queen of her female identity. Her outrageous and unruly imagination could almost drive every sane person crazy. She dares to let one of her male friends to take pictures of her most personal area and also dares to drip off clothes in front of stranger without a shame. In her novel *Memoirs of a Beatnik*, "marriage" is compared to "chastity belt", and Diane views them the same devils in different forms. Diane and her other peer women writers like Cassady and Brenda Frazer writers make the similar confession of sex and desires in their works.

Their unconventionality of life experiences in terms of sexuality is the evidence of their radical feminist agenda, Diane seems to be the best spokeswoman in this sense, for she is a famous "free love" believer not only in personal life but also in writing. She is a bisexual, and Ann Charters once claims in an interview that she envies Diane's ability of separating love and sex like a man. She has sex with men and women, with different ones, with every possible crazy means. Even when she has intercourse with a man and his son, and one of their friends, one unacceptable sexual habit, her defense is "I lost myself in my new-found woman's role, the position defined and reveled by my sex: the baking and mending, the mothering and fucking, the girls' parts in the plays—and I was content".[30]

The author of this thesis does not want to make moral judgement of their promiscuous life styles, but thinks they could be qualified as precursors of Radical Liberalist Feminism in the 60s and 70s. Radical liberal feminists believe: "sex is the pleasant exchange between mental desires and physical pleasures. However it is distorted into a political tool of discriminating good and bad sex, and thereafter constrains people to good ones."[31] Good sex is often related to heterosexual, loyal and marital love relationship, whereas Diane di Prima in her novel stirs every possible nerve and goes for bad sex, with unashamed and joyful feelings. Women Beats' writings and practices of female sexuality are bounded to self exploration for them to "venture onto the brink where writing, freed from law, unencumbered by moderation, exceeds phallic authority, and where the subjectivity inscribing its effects becomes feminine".[32]
V. Action Subjectivity: out on the Street

Marx says practice is the sole criterion for testing truth. Writing itself is a private thing, yet it at that time became a public thing when women Beat poets performed outdoor their works and expanded experiences on the road. This outdoor spirit of action is the significant step to empower them with a public space, yet these women writers fail to develop a sisterhood community to nurture each other like male Beat writers’ boy-gang circle. Maybe it has to do with their extreme aspiration of individuality, yet it potentially weakens possibility of a community and underrates the power of collectiveness. “The phenomenon of girls bonding together as a group of equals is valuable in the process of navigating adolescence and incipient womanhood.”[33]

VI. Not Domestic

Beat generation has “On the Road” complex. Leaving home is particularly attractive for the young yearning rebel and novelty, and for sure male Beats articulated this vividly in words and actions. It is harder for women Beats who shoulder breeding jobs.

Even though some women Beats’ poetry is obsessed with trivial daily things, they point out that their literary inspiration comes from traveling or walking on the street. Poetry is conceived through air, noises, smells, colors or just a simple breeze. Johnson notes this in Minor Characters, if someone wants to be a writer, “you wouldn’t be enrolled in school or in class. You’d be hopping freight trains, riding through America”.[34] Indeed, this spirit of getting to know people and reality are valuable in artistic creation. Though “the risks to girls of life on the road and very act of venturing out into public space could compromise a girl’s respectability and generate assumptions about her sexual availability”,[35] those who stick to and survive the difficulties grow into a stronger and maturer state.

In Beat culture, this outdoor spirit is interrelated with the Jazz musical aesthetics of being grass-roots. Black music comes from everyday life and performs for the ordinary people. Di Prima, Hettie and Weiss openly express their gratification for black music which influences their writing and performance. This form of music is very much different with white European symphony with hierarchical and highbrow performances based on fixed music scores. Classical musicians are brought together under strict formulas and doctrines, and it is highly metaphysical. Audiences sit far
away from and lower than the orchestra whose performance is serious and allows for no interaction within the orchestra and with the audiences. But Jazz or bebop, quite the opposite case, is physical and concrete. Stage is just a small piece of land surrounded with crazy and excited crowds. Musicians could be very busy on the stage, shaking, dancing, sweating, flirting and playing with instruments, with each other and with audiences. Bebop show is the epitome of the life of lower class in America, often the depiction of the underdogs in a sentimental and obscene way ironic enough to make people burst into tears or laughter.

Russ Weiss, who is a great lover of Jazz music and its grass-root philosophy, acknowledges the necessity for real experience outside home as well. “I’ve read in the most unlikely places—anywhere on the street, just anywhere, and it has always been like that. Artists need all those wide communications, and it becomes rather incestuous if you don’t go out and make other connections.” She implies a risk of narrow scope of artistic imagination if artists do not touch the flesh and blood of life, which is the stimulation of artists’ appetite. Russ Weiss is considered a street poet, for her connection with people always fixes her with idea and mood. She says, “I’ve read anywhere on the street, and it has always been like that”. She often went out at the middle of the night, talked to strange women at a coffee shop; somehow at moments something was very human and much understood. Just as during the performance, poet speaks with the music not as the background but only sounds and rhythm to slip in and fade out. It is similar feeling as “IT” for Kerouac, something authentic, primitive and it is sense of time.

In a word, this outdoor spirit of creating and performing first nourishes women artists with real life excitements, and then it is a political stance in showing that women artists may survive as well as excel in public sphere.

VII. No Girl Gang

Women Beats agree on the fact of lacking-sisterhood community which is supposed to circle around female artists and their works, together discussing, learning and inspiring. These communities can serve as consciousness-raising groups, “in which women talked together and shared their personal experiences and insights in an effort to analyze women’s position in society”.[36] Therefore, a woman’s identity is constructed when she loses herself and her boundaries in a group identity through action subjectivity of sisterhood bond.
Women did not share each other's works in Beat Movement. “Some of these women did not even know each other during the height of the Beat Movement, a few not meeting until the 1990s when Brenda Knight published Women of the Beat Generation.” They never mentioned each other's works, even with close friends, like Johnson, Hettie and Di prima. Hettie explained it a luxury for her as a busy and poor mother who squeezed time for a cup of coffee with friend Johnson. Also, it may as well result from their lack of understanding of the power of collectiveness when writing for Johnson and Jones was still a private activity for women. Hettie Jones kept her writings away and would not show anyone including her husband LeRoi, for she thought it as a private territory.

Admittedly, total separation from sharing may seem to protect the distinctiveness of works. For instance, Brenda Frazer never had the support of friends in needy days. Actually total loneliness shut the door for larger picture. Beat boy gang was otherwise the best exemplary here for they not only enriched each other’s lives, but also in letter or community brainstormed artistic ideas. The result was not what Frazer feared the identical genres but a wider range of practices: Kerouac in spontaneity, Ginsberg in performance, Burroughs in cut-up and Snyder in Haiku. So, what really matters is the aggregation process itself, which overwhelmingly widens original writing imagination by engaging with multiple art circles like movie, music and paintings, and once again establishes the lopsided gender structure by increasing male players and breeding charismatic male leaders in public sphere.

To sum up, this article explores the process of women Beats’ negotiation of a position in the male centered Beat culture. The author has shown women’s agency of striving for a voice, and their active searching and pondering for self as well as outrageous breaking-out pattern, against being incorporated into any system. These movements make women Beats proto-feminist warriors. My analysis follows a four-step means to that end.

The analysis begins with the discussion on premise of tangible experiences for women artists whose adventure on sex and compromise of hipster code complete women’s life as mother, artists and muses, though bitterness and sweetness are always the twin sisters. Then thinking subjectivity is realized through women’s particular feelings and retrospectives towards an autonomous, androgynous and religious person. Next the author moves to the expression subjectivity, that is, the artistic representation of thoughts, which serves as the evidence of women’s writing capacity often negated by men, and the proof of women’s overturned status as a
performer rather than a mute. The final part comes to action subjectivity, often neglected by literary scholars: though their uninhibited coalition with other bohemian circles and grass-roots spirit as street literati spread their voices into public space, their public lives fail in terms of fostering a bigger share in public life.

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Notes:
[1] Nancy M. Grace and Ronna C. Johnson ed., 2004: 21.
[2] Ibid., 33.
[3] Robert C. Solomon, 1974: 198.
[4] Judith Butler views gender identity as “performative construct” and “a sequence of acts”.
[5] Ibid., 45.
[6] Nancy M. Grace and Ronna C. Johnson ed., 2004: 48.
[7] Schwarzer, Alice, 1984: 68.
[8] Nancy M. Grace and Ronna C. Johnson ed., 2004: 27.
[9] Ibid..
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