

[0:00:00]

Janet Batsleer: I need to keep an eye on the time.

Kieran Connell: I was going to ask first, Janet, about if you can remember what brought you to the Centre in the first instance? And how you ended up there?

Janet Batsleer: I think I saw an advert in the 'Hire' so I had gone to Cambridge but really unusually I think I was the first person from my family ever to go to university, and somehow or other I got into Cambridge, and done a degree in English. And so at the end of that degree ---

Kieran Connell: What year was that in?

Janet Batsleer: It finished in '77 and I went to Birmingham September '77. Yes so I was there '77 to '80, in Birmingham. And so at the end of that degree, I thought well I probably would like to carry on doing this academic thing, but I had probably had enough of Cambridge.

Kieran Connell: What was that, as an experience? What was that like, in Cambridge?

Janet Batsleer: Well the things that connect it with the Centre, we were doing loads of different things. It was quite ... I mean in lots of ways it was absolutely amazing, because I was in a women's college, and I was with other girls, other women, who were very much interested in working and studying and there were no kinds of stigma attached to being interested in work, so that was just fantastic. And I got really interested in Raymond Williams' work, and he was there when I was there so he was writing, I just took myself along to, of course I didn't really understand anything, I don't think, because I was so much from outside of the system, I didn't know certain rules, so I just took myself along to a seminar that he ran, not knowing that you had to be a graduate to go to it. And he was working on a book called 'Marxism and Literature' at the time, so I had the opportunity to think alongside him in my third year, and then I suppose the woman who was my director of studies said well you could stay in Cambridge, but Birmingham would be really great for you.

Kieran Connell: Is that because you were kind of getting into the Williams and ---

Janet Batsleer: I was interested, yes.

Kieran Connell: I suppose you were talking about Gramsci had written that book, hadn't he?

Janet Batsleer: Yes, culture rather than literature, yes definitely. And ideas and rather than just the literary tradition I suppose with ... English studies was shifting anyway at that time but Cambridge was still quite Cambridge! It probably still is. So that is one thread. Yes.

Kieran Connell: Can you remember, did you have an interview?

Janet Batsleer: Yes, I did, I think Rebecca was on the panel.

Kieran Connell: She was on the panel, was she?

Janet Batsleer: I think so.

Kieran Connell: How was that like? Being interviewed by your peers?

Janet Batsleer: It was interesting, it was good, I thought it was great actually! Of course I don't suppose those sorts of things go on very much now in universities. They go on a lot in my world, so like youth work there would be a real acceptance that you would have young people on the panels and sometimes you would have ... but I don't think it happens much. I don't suppose you were appointed to your post?

(0:03:46)

Kieran Connell: I am pretty sure that the university at the time wouldn't have known that that was going on, I think it was quite a lot even then, quite a radical thing to have done. What were your first impression then of the place, when you kind of arrived and that would have been ... you arrived in September '77?

Janet Batsleer: I thought it was quite small, compared to --- the big thing that shocked me, this is so snobby now I think, but I had no idea that other places didn't have university libraries like Cambridge had, so I just thought the Birmingham University library was really small. And I was a bit shocked about that. I mean it was quite quiet when I went for the interview. The person that I can remember is the woman who worked in the office, and I think she was called Joan?

Kieran Connell: Joan Good.

Janet Batsleer: I can remember her really well, from that interview. She was so calming.

Kieran Connell: She was there for the interview then?

Janet Batsleer: She was there when I arrived, to do the interview, she was the person who kind of welcomed me and made me feel comfortable, and she was a really lovely woman. Is she still around?

Kieran Connell: I have not been able to track her down. I mean I don't know how old she was when you were there?

Janet Batsleer: No, neither do I. Because you know when you at school you think everybody is really old! And that kind of carried on for me! So you are talking my early 20s, so she might have been in her thirties. I thought the staff were old, they weren't that old, they were a lot younger than I am now!

Kieran Connell: So I have not been able to track her down, but she comes through in the archives quite a lot.

Janet Batsleer: So there was somebody working on the (inaudible 0:05:30) machine, which was in the office, I remember that. And that might have been one of the students, so I think she was amazingly tolerant of the way folk occupied that space really, because it was used a lot to produce papers and she was there for sessions and so on, that is probably why she sticks in my mind so much. And I remember being introduced to Stuart, that day. I think I had to go and have another interview with him, or some kind of a chat with him as well.

Kieran Connell: Okay. So he wasn't on the actual panel?

Janet Batsleer: He wasn't on the panel. But to be honest, I can't really remember who was, it must have been Michael, I suppose. And I got the studentship, which ... amazingly!

Kieran Connell: So you got the full grant to do the Masters?

Janet Batsleer: To do a doctorate, which I never did.

Kieran Connell: You are not alone in that, far from it.

Janet Batsleer: I am certainly not!

Kieran Connell: In terms of I guess how the place was structured, how was it different to what you were used to, as an undergraduate at Cambridge?

Janet Batsleer: Oh the thing that was just wonderful, and I remember saying to Mike I am not having a supervision, because he was meant to be my supervisor, was that everything at Cambridge was one to one. And then suddenly everything was collective, and it was great. And it suited my take on the world at that stage of my life as well.

Kieran Connell: So when you say everything was collective, was that ---

(0:07:06)

Janet Batsleer: It wasn't as it turned out, there loads of people getting on with their PhDs! But you know! For some of us everything was collective.

Kieran Connell: So in terms of general meetings where ...

Janet Batsleer: There were the general meetings, and then there were the groups, the study groups.

Kieran Connell: Which ones were you at?

Janet Batsleer: English studies and the women's studies group bit, at the beginning. Yes that was all because I lived just outside London and I worked all the time I was studying so I wasn't living in Birmingham. So I would come up really early in the morning for the days and stay overnight in different people's places, and so I was one of the people who had quite a ... well a different take on it really.

Kieran Connell: Not really living there, you were kind of coming in and coming out? Yes.

Janet Batsleer: That is it, and I carried on even though I had got this award I did carry on working right through on the playground, so I was always, I would probably have said in those days I had a foot in the real world, I would imagine I would have said something like that, something quite sharp, I wasn't entirely in the Centre bubble. Or the Birmingham bubble.

Kieran Connell: Was that quite important for you, to have that foot in the real world?

Janet Batsleer: Yes, of course, I think so, for me, yes. I think it was. I mean I had a really, really strong working class work ethic, from childhood, so the idea of not earning my living, not paying my way, was not something that entered my head, really. So there was quite a studenty culture around the Centre, I think. At that time, you know people very much into their work and all of their ... their intellectual work and their politics, earning a living didn't come up a lot.

Kieran Connell: Which is kind of ironic, given their Marxist commitments?

Janet Batsleer: Take on the world?

Kieran Connell: Their take on the world, yes. Were you politically formed then? I mean did you have a ---

Janet Batsleer: Before going to Birmingham?

Kieran Connell: Before you arrived? I mean were you kind of on the left?

Janet Batsleer: I was in the Labour Party, before going to Birmingham and I stayed in the Labour Party right through that time. I was quite interested in Birmingham, encountering the Communist Party again because in Cambridge the Communist Party had been quite elite, and I think that is still my view about the Communist Party really, it was made up of quite elite people really, but obviously in that period they were attempting to build what they termed the Democratic Alliance, weren't they? I am sure you would have written about this in your doctorate so there were various, obviously the Centre had close links, key figures at the Centre had close links with the Communist Party, and Tony Davis who was involved in the English studies group was in the Communist Party. Is anybody ... are your family Communists, are they?

Kieran Connell: Well my grandfather may have had Communist sympathies.

Janet Batsleer: Okay, but not actually a member?

Kieran Connell: He may have been, he lived in Ireland.

Janet Batsleer: Sorry, I am just being really like rude about Communists!

Janet Batsleer

(0:10:40)

Kieran Connell: No, no I think he may have been a member. I mean I never met him so I don't know, but I think he was very sympathetic anyway.

Janet Batsleer: So that was all quite interesting, because they did still have, I think, quite a vanguardist view of the world, while attempting not to have, and that fitted with my sense of this is elite, these are people who want to lead, they see themselves as coming from the elite, and of course other kinds of class politics. I mean elite within the class not elite within the ruling group, but elite within, they are going to lead the working class. But they are quite posh as well, quite a lot of them were quite posh. Yes.

Kieran Connell: How did your Labour Party membership go down?

Janet Batsleer: Not very well!

Kieran Connell: Because I know that a lot of people like Big Flame and ING.

Janet Batsleer: Yes, I used to go to Big Flame things actually. I mean the people around Big Flame were quite ... I liked them I was interested in them, yes, and of course at that time, there was a huge Trotskyist presence in the Labour Party of various kinds, so I would have been more drawn to that really. And women's liberation, I mean that was huge! And really important, and then the way that the anti-racist politics developed, alongside that really and in conflict with it, and in contradiction with it, and just very ... people were living lives that connected them to intellectual work in their politics I think, that is what you can say really. So when I say it was all quite studenty, it was all quite studenty, but people were living their lives in ways that they were seeking to create something different, something better, looking for a way of enabling that.

Kieran Connell: You mentioned the phrase the contradiction but I have been reading on the way on the train, I have been reading a paper about, you might have heard of it, it was written in the Centre called 'On Contradictions'.

Janet Batsleer: Oh yes!

Kieran Connell: Do you remember that?

Janet Batsleer: Vaguely.

Kieran Connell: So that is '79, and it talks a lot about basically a lot of these different forms of commitments, political commitments and how they ---

Janet Batsleer: Oh yes I do remember it actually!

Kieran Connell: --- how they intermeshed with each other in the Centre, and how it affected Centre life.

Janet Batsleer: They really did, yes.

Kieran Connell: How did they affect it? The way it operated and relationships and that kind of thing? And professional?

Janet Batsleer: Well as I say, because I was sort of on the edge, it would be hard for me to be really sure about that. I would think the contradiction between what the staff were holding and what the students were hoping for would have been a huge thing and I think that is partly what the paper might be about, as I recall.

Kieran Connell: Because they had a commitment to going beyond the conventional stuff, student relationships?

Janet Batsleer: Oh very much so, yes. But they must have still been having to go --- I now realised they must have still been having to go to faculty meetings and they used the talk about the fact that the Centre was under enormous, enormous pressure and I remember them talking about that, so we might be going oh come on you lot, get more active or get more engaged, and they would have been going but we are already under the cosh because they are seeing us as this troublesome place, and I am sure that they were often, when the student union was being active, I am sure there were often threads that could have been drawn between people who are activists, who are associated with the Centre and the student union, so I am sure the authorities in Birmingham University were not keen on the Centre, actually. And I think Stuart and Richard and Michael must have, and Paul and Christine and Maureen, they must all have had to think about how to operate quite hard in terms of those contradictions. And then I think within the different perspectives that there were there, the emergence of what we call feminist perspectives. I was remembering yesterday when I was thinking about talking to you how the theory course and the history course, which form the MA, somebody proposed replacing Raymond Williams as a theorist with Julia Kristeva, I think I have remembered this right?

(0:15:40)

Kieran Connell: Yes yes someone else mentioned it.

Janet Batsleer: And that kind of held for me something about these conflicting agendas really, that were around. Of course I had just started myself, although I was learning about feminism and women's liberation and becoming more understanding of it and taking more ownership of it myself, the idea of taking Raymond Williams off a theory course was shocking, really shocking. I was thinking who was this psychoanalyst? So she had been middle-class, obviously!

Kieran Connell: Yes!

Janet Batsleer: In my head!

Kieran Connell: So was that hard for you to ... when that came in, when you came into close contact with feminism, in the 70s, also the commitment to class politics and the Labour Party and such like, how did that kind of work its way through?

Janet Batsleer: Well in the Labour Party at that time there were some very strong feminist activist groups, there was the Women's Action Committee, and obviously there were lots of campaigns around anti-abortion/pro-abortion choice, so there were plenty of opportunities to be an activist in the Women's Liberation Movement, and be in the Labour Party. Which I took, and yes I had also been, and I am again, up until going to the Centre, I had had a strong faith, well not necessarily strong faith, but I had carried on going to church, so I wasn't just struggling with class things, it was also like abortion! So I was already thinking my way through that.

Kieran Connell: And more generally, what was the kind of impact of feminism on the Centre? Whilst you were there? How did it the men in the Centre ... how were they dealing with it?

Janet Batsleer: React? Pretty well I would say, on the whole. I mean I think really we were very much encouraged to carry on those enquiries, that we were engaging in, so Rebecca did a lot of work around women's rights at that time. And that whole unpicking of the current in order to see how it looked from underneath. And really I think we had nothing but encouragement from somebody like Michael, who was the kind of academic that I was working with. And then 'Beyond the fragments' came out in 1980 was it? No, we had just had another anniversary with 'Beyond the fragments', so it must have been a bit later. But a lot of the stuff that was going on in the history workshops, Richard would have been reflecting on that, in the course that he taught, the history course that he taught. And I don't think I knew many of the men who were students, oddly, I mean the ones that I was in groups with I think were okay, I mean I don't remember anybody being ... kind of going ---

Kieran Connell: Hostile?

Janet Batsleer: Hostile, no I don't actually. But I think there was some tension about ... I remember when the race and politics group got going, which was really important for my learning and development, I remember some spats between people in that group with people who were leading the women's group. So it is almost like, this is what I feel in a way about that period politically anyway, but what had been held down was so long under the cusp had to erupt.

(0:20:40)

Kieran Connell: Like the identity politics?

Janet Batsleer: Yes, I mean what came to be called identity politics, although I don't think it ever really was identity politics in the way it gets slagged off now. I think it was a justice politics and a politics of challenging exploitation and oppression, I don't think it was identity politics really, but you know women's liberation or black politics, whatever it would have been called at the time, it was as if as all that emerged, people were struggling to get their voice, at that big table, and maybe those conflicts or spats that I heard were because of that, that is how I would read it. I think there was a fear about letting go of Marxism, but maybe that is where ... in terms of hostility, but I wouldn't be able to locate where that was, either in the staff or in the students. But certainly there is some weird stuff, and when you take issue, that is all about having to basically make sure you are a proper Marxist feminist, and not one of those overly ambitious feminists.

Kieran Connell: Within the feminist movement, did that get quite ... because then it became also like the politics of sexuality and all that kind of thing. When did that start to become ...?

Janet Batsleer: Well I remember going to the last women's liberation conference, and that was associated ---

Kieran Connell: Was that the one in Birmingham? 1978?

Janet Batsleer: Yes. And that is associated with the Centre, for me, because I remember being in Cath Hall's kitchen, this is the interesting bit, and she had got this enormous thing for boiling eggs, and we had to make hundreds of hard-boiled eggs, in order to feed the women who were going to come to this women's liberation conference. So I had never been to a women's liberation conference, I wasn't even sure about all this women's liberation stuff, but I was getting immersed in it, anyway. And we were making eggs, which was fine, actually. I had never made them in those quantities, but I kind of knew what I was doing with that, and it was great, because later on in life, if I was running things with youth groups and stuff, that kind of skill is fantastic, a fantastic skill. But in terms of them being friends, there was a lot of conflict, a lot of conflict in the event, and yes the course, I can't remember, it was the demand, I think it was the demand to end male violence against women that lead to ... nobody would agree, there was a really big disagreement about whether it was right to put the word male in front of violence. And ...

Kieran Connell: And did that factor over the liberal and the radical lines?

Janet Batsleer: I guess that is how it would have been put now. I can't really remember. There were people who were very organised. I heard Sheila Overton talk recently, you couldn't even say this now because of what has just happened this past week with the poor sods in the Maui sect, but apparently in the very early women's liberation conferences, there were Maoists groups who came, and they wanted to organise women's liberation, and that was really the reason that it became women only because it was the only way they could think of of getting rid of these people who knew how it should be done, and were continually, continually wanting to make forward demands, but I think by about the third or the fourth women's liberation conference, this is how I understand it now, those groups having a big tip of Maoist men, were still present and some of those ways of organising from the left came into the movement, obviously, so Sheila Overton tells the story that there had to be a demand, and that the first four demands were written by one of the Maoists, but you wouldn't be a proper movement if you didn't have demands, and of course that was the Trotskyist thing as well, you had to have the impossibilist demands, you had to have the transitional demands, so there would have been women organising, there were women organising very, very strongly, to make sure the movement adopted this demand, and if they would have had lower intellectual justification, and political justification, as to why it had to say 'end male violence against women' and not just 'end violence against women', you

know, and if you are not in that group, that is making ... doing all that, it is the same going to back to why I didn't like the Communist party much either, you know, the elite group.

Kieran Connell: The top-down thing?

Janet Batsleer: Yes. You are left feeling what on earth is going on here? You don't know what is going on. So I think I spend quite a lot of my life at that age not knowing what was going on!

(0:26:08)

Kieran Connell: What effect did that have then? I don't know if it was the inclusion in 1978, but that bitterness, did that have an effect on you?

Janet Batsleer: Later on.

Kieran Connell: In politics and how that developed?

Janet Batsleer: Well my own politics became very strongly involved in the women's movement, actually. And I got involved in Greenham and then saw some women who I had been at the Centre with, sometimes occasionally I would find myself sitting on a blockade and there would be somebody just behind who was from Birmingham, yes so I think that is where I would locate the Big Flame thing, it would be around the people who were more drawn to direct action. In a variety of ways, and I realised that, so eventually not too long after that, I did stop being in the Labour Party, and became really quite involved in direct action type politics. And here when I came, then I was involved in the miner's strike, and then after that I came here in the late 80s and the scene that was happening, kind of post the strike, was some very major anti-deportation campaigns, so that nexus of anti-racist and women's liberation politics and direct action had an enormous impact on me, really big and it was you know the Birmingham Centre had a big part to play in my immersion in that politics really, I think. But it is really hard to disentangle.

Kieran Connell: Sorry?

Janet Batsleer: It is so hard to disentangle what was the Centre and what was ... you know I could have maybe had that and just worked in London, I don't know. I just don't know.

Kieran Connell: But it seems like one of the characteristics of the Centre was that entanglement between the intellectual work and the political work, it may well have been going on elsewhere as well. But certainly it was going on at Birmingham.

Janet Batsleer: Yes, we know about it at Birmingham, don't we? We know about it in Birmingham.

Kieran Connell: I was going to ask you about ... like chat to you about work in a bit more detail really. Like the benefits. What do you think were the kind of plus points about it? And what do you think were the drawbacks of it, if there were any?

Janet Batsleer: I just think it is so good really. My big regret really about what has happened since is that that has been lost for ---

Kieran Connell: In education?

Janet Batsleer: --- your generation really. Well I think basically intellectual work is a collective endeavour, and that we should represent it in that way. And do it in that way, when we can. It is probably why I am interested whether you are running the conference on your own. It is that sort, isn't it?

Kieran Connell: And I guess it is one of the things that has changed incalculably since the late 70s?

Janet Batsleer: Oh absolutely. There was no expectation that I would get a PhD, none whatsoever. And actually I think they were wrong to be honest, I think they should have expected me to get a PhD I think, because they had taken the money for that! And I wasn't middle class so I didn't have years to float

about getting my PhD, if I didn't get it in that three years. So I do think they were wrong about that, but I think it ought to have been possible to have the collective work and the support people to do their doctorates really. And it ought to be the same today, but that ethic around ... and you know we published as the English Studies Group.

Kieran Connell: And was Michael quite proactive in that?

Janet Batsleer: He was, yes.

(0:30:06)

Kieran Connell: How did that work? Because him being I guess ---

Janet Batsleer: He was so lucky.

Kieran Connell: Sorry?

Janet Batsleer: He was deeply lucky.

Kieran Connell: So he was able to kind of not lead?

Janet Batsleer: Yes.

Kieran Connell: He didn't come across as being a leader, or a staff member?

Janet Batsleer: No, he was just ... he made sure it happened, he brought in a lot of good ideas and facilitated and enabled an enormous, solictive amount, yes. And probably the leadership in terms of the thinking would have been somebody like Tony Davis, who was in the English department, and he was in the Communist party so he would have been used to taking that role. But it is ...

Kieran Connell: What about Stuart's leadership? Because he was the director? But I guess certainly in the archives and the early periods, he comes across as being really committed to trying to go beyond not being the leader, but of course he was older than everyone else, he had read a lot of stuff. Do you have any reflections of how that position of leader kind of played out, in terms of the students wanting collective work being done, and the various themes of politics that were floating about?

Janet Batsleer: I am sure there were challenges to his authority, I am sure there were. Continually I expect, actually is what I kind of remember, as we would have been sitting together. But I think it was probably water off a duck's back, because he just was a man of enormous authority, so you can't take that away from somebody can you! Just by going excuse me you are the patriarch around here, or whatever! Because he was, and I guess people were just noticing that sort of stuff, you know. Oh there are three men who are members of staff, oh that is not right! So I think they probably got quite a lot of stick about that actually. But they took it in very good ... that is probably where something like this paper would have come from, because we would have been arguing, students would have been arguing for the politics.

Kieran Connell: Because I noticed Stuart left in '79? So that would have been when you were there? How did that play out? Did that affect the Centre's running? And did it change things? How did it?

Janet Batsleer: Well, I was only then there another year, wasn't I? Maureen came, didn't she? I was just ... he had been off, I remember him telling us, and he had offered this professorship, hadn't he? And I thought he had done really well, to be offered a professorship at the Open University, and I thought it would really suit him, because he was very committed to the kinds of things that the Open University was catering to, so that is what I mean, I never knew what was going on, really, so I just thought that is a really good job, work ethic, you know? If you have just been offered a really good job, you should take it! Not oh God it is going to be the end of the Centre, or anything like that. So he must have been in a position of ... he must have been there a long time. How long had he been there?

Kieran Connell: Well '64 he joined. 15 years.

Janet Batsleer: That is a long time, isn't it? He is just so charismatic, isn't he? That is the other thing, his authority, his charismatic authority. I don't know, Richard and Michael had different kinds of authority. But they both were very authoritative, and ... yes I think they had all put themselves on the line, in a lot of ways, actually, in their lives, actually. I have got great admiration for them, and I think there was a genuine mutual learning going on, I don't think that we were learning and they were teaching, I think there was a really --- you know a paper like this would have been part of their learning, but not necessarily of their putting forward the wisdom that they have got.

(0:34:39)

Kieran Connell: I mean I know you have got to shoot off in ten minutes or so, so I just wanted to kind of ask more generally about whether, looking back at the time, did you see it as being a positive experience?

Janet Batsleer: Yes, on the whole, I would think.

Kieran Connell: How has it shaped your subsequent development? Politically or intellectually?

Janet Batsleer: Well pretty completely I would say! Really, because the political trajectories that were happening for me were what led me to do the work I did, really. And then of course once you are in a ... but then having got that work, I was always interested in the questions that I had become interested in. And I still am interested in those questions, really. So what does it mean to be an organic intellectual would have been a really big question for me, still is.

Kieran Connell: That is quite a buzz word, isn't it, 'organic intellectual'? Do you think people ---

Janet Batsleer: I think it made so much sense to me, that idea. Yes.

Kieran Connell: Do you still see yourself as ---

Janet Batsleer: Yes I mean I wouldn't use that phrase, probably now because nobody would have a clue what I was talking about! I think it needed more, and still needs more ... kind of give a better account of what that might look like, really, because I suppose one of my memories is either Michael or a guy called ... a paper at a conference in Essex, that I heard, Frances and it was about the moment of scrutiny in leaders and how they had gone out and they had established ... kind of lever sites into schools, and then they had started to change the teaching of English in schools as a result of how they had organised, through a journal, and I remember thinking oh that is what they are trying to do at the Centre. I remember really thinking oh yes that is what they are trying to do, and then there was a discussion about well do you have the hundred good books, you get people to write really great books and those books are going to reshape things and change things, or do you have people in key organisations? So you have ... and I suppose one image that then I think what happened in the later '80s stopped all this in its tracks really, but one image would have been of key people who had been influenced by that thinking, working in major institutions. But I don't think, I don't know whether you have found that? Have you found that? Have you found people in the BBC, or in ---

Kieran Connell: Who were kind of influenced by this?

Janet Batsleer: No, or who might have been at the Centre? Or trained people who might have been at the Centre.

Kieran Connell: Not in the BBC, but I mean there are interesting (inaudible 0:38:00) where people tend to ... and have been doing interesting things like film festivals or artists.

Janet Batsleer: That is the kind of thing, isn't it?

Kieran Connell: And I think ---

Janet Batsleer: That kind of anticipated really, at that time. So going into youth community work just felt like ... that is how you did this thing.

Kieran Connell: On the flip side, though, there are also a lot of people of course who then became like very ---

Janet Batsleer: Or just studies academics.

Kieran Connell: The professor of cultural studies.

Janet Batsleer: So it created the institution of cultural studies, essentially.

Kieran Connell: Yes, because I was going to ask was that ever there at the time? Was there a sense of academic careerism, even in that high-end political climate?

(0:38:49)

Janet Batsleer: I would think so, I would think so. You would know the ones that were going to get the doctorates, I would have thought. And they weren't doing the collective work, but I wouldn't know really, I mean I think they were there, but I don't know.

Kieran Connell: I mean that is one of the things like to use a term, they used a lot of contradictions. The emphasis on organic intellectuals on the one hand, but on the other hand a lot of the work that was produced was really quite dense and difficult to penetrate. You know?

Janet Batsleer: Yes. Well that is probably why I didn't stay, I would imagine. Because I couldn't produce that kind of a text.

Kieran Connell: Was there a tension between that high theory and the more (inaudible 0:39:40) that kind of people like Paul were doing with Dorothy?

Janet Batsleer: Yes, I think a big tension actually. And I think there still is. But maybe it is just necessary?

Kieran Connell: To have that tension?

Janet Batsleer: To have that tension whereas I think, I can say that now, but I think maybe at the time, I would have been ready to throw the whole of the full marks and pass, whoever it was that was telling me that the ... there was this awful phrase, about politics. What was it?

Kieran Connell: The politics of intellectual work?

Janet Batsleer: There was that, which I think there is a politics of intellectual work, but there was also ... theoretical practise. Which always seemed to be a complete cop-out basically, but if what you were doing was theoretical practise, and of course if you followed us then, in getting that right, that is how revolution is going to come! You know, and so that is what I mean, in the end it is an elite Vanguard model and that has had its day, hasn't it? I think we do know that. But having said that, I am still very drawn to Gramsci, very drawn to (inaudible 0:41:10). I think those ideas and practises, so I would certainly say what you are doing, what I think I am doing, is part of a broad cultural project, to challenge liberalist ... you hope, so I hope there will be lots of collective work at this conference!

Kieran Connell: Let's hope so, yes that is certainly how we are trying to plan it.

Janet Batsleer: I will come and help you! I will boil the eggs!

Kieran Connell: On that note ---

Janet Batsleer: Maybe you should get the catering that way!

Kieran Connell: Try and get the eggs into it, perhaps?

Janet Batsleer: That would be funny, wouldn't it?

Kieran Connell: Thanks very much.

Janet Batsleer: That is alright.

[End of Transcript]