

Luce Irigaray

MARINE LOVER
OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

TRANSLATED BY GILLIAN C. GILL

Columbia University Press
NEW YORK

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To write that "from the very first nothing is more foreign . . . to woman than truth," and then that "her great art is falsehood, her chief concern is appearance and beauty" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 232)* is surely to say the same thing twice, with the exception that one word has been forgotten the second time, the word *foreign*.

Neither falsehood nor appearance and beauty are "foreign" to truth. They are proper to it, if not its accessories and its underside. And the opposite remains caught up in the same. It grounds the economy—or economy—of sameness. With a flip of the coin, it forms the basis for its representations. Foreign, for its part, beckoned toward an outside. But it was *forgotten*.

Mimesis is not to be outflanked this way. Certainly not by "woman"—double. Her only function is to go along with the movement, clothing it well or badly, but letting it develop freely, undistorted. By "femininity" least of all.

But woman? Is not to be reduced to mere femininity. Or to falsehood, or appearance or beauty. Short of staying out of it, (*idem*, p. 232)† and projecting at (from) a distance that other of the self to which truth is, from the outset, hostile: falsehood, as well as beauty and appearance, . . . Although femaleness has taken it/them as part of her forms, although she cannot do without it/them if she is to pass for what is: the truth.

This operation also will be attributed to woman. Or is it to femininity? As a preparation for "woman." Who may be said to play with it as with a setting, framing, mounting, glazing. Until the time

*Quotations from Nietzsche's works are made from the following translations: *Beyond Good and Evil*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, translated by Walter Kaufman (Random House, Modern Library Giant, 1968); *The Gay Science, with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, translated with a commentary by Walter Kaufman (Random House, Vintage Books, 1974); *The Birth of Tragedy*, translated by Francis Golfin (Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956); *The Twilight of the Idols in The Portable Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Walter Kaufman (Penguin Books, 1954); *Daybreak*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge University Press, 1982).—Tr.

†In the French translation, "rester entre soi."—Tr.

she? gets out? If in fact she ever plays. But so many things are attributed to whoever remains foreign to self-definition. Who risks—the abyss. If that stays a little while, without return to the same.

Hence the comedy of the other. Another aspect of its performance that truth does not always appreciate: the comic. To attribute this to the other is once again to clothe it in a mask, but meanwhile reserve the right to make use of it from time to time. To take back, when the moment or the desire demands, something that is never given except as a loan. That can therefore be used freely, without incurring any debt. It was only held in trust.

The problems arise when the body by which this guarantee of dissimulation is ensured is in some way reactive. As is the case with “our hysterical little women,” for example. It is as well not to count on them for that affirmative dissimulation which seduces and plays the truth. Their feeling of resentment spoils “our” appearances.

How can one recognize oneself in their writhings and grimaces without being repelled? These are scarcely even caricatures of a work of art. When you come right down to it, it’s phony, false, fake, deceptive, etc. And undisguisedly so.

Mastery asserts itself by skirting such a naked obscenity. A disgrace to the whole theater of representation. Irreducible contortion of a nature mimicking the residue of a properly staged mimicry. Why do women, our women, lie so poorly?

And how is one to get through that absence of veils: horror. Immodest display of the mummified remains of the Dionysiac. Not those/its excesses overflowing in the Apollonian festival, but that extra element from before—and from “the fraternal union of the two deities” (*Birth of Tragedy*, p. 21)—that suffers from being cut into pieces by individuation even though it has never known completeness. Dispersal into fragments that do not tear apart unity, and can therefore never be put back together.

Except in the phantasy of the other. Of the same. Its veil(s). And what “operation” will cut through that cloth—phantasy? The “production” of another phantasy? Another phantasy of the other? Attributed to the other? Of the same. Male/female in its depth/superficiality according to the way they want to deck it out. So that the inside or the outside can be laid down or laid away in it. According to the pleasure or the pain that is wished for, the death wish that will be celebrated, at one moment in history.

Thus, if error becomes the “truth” of pleasure, the “idea” becomes woman. Woman becomes the possibility of a “different” idea, which amounts to a store of strength. “The eternal feminine” moves away, goes into exile in another representation: that will find pathos in the crucifixion of Christ, that scion of Dionysos.

“(Progress of the idea: it becomes more subtle, insidious, incomprehensible—it *becomes female*, it becomes Christian.)” (“How the ‘True World’ Finally Became a Fable. The History of an Error,” in *The Twilight of the Idols*.) This point is made with special emphasis by being tucked away—perhaps necessarily here?—behind brackets. One kind of distancing that pins down the feminine in a display. Woman, even Christ, would merely serve as dummies to be clothed in the finery needed to capture the pleasure of the idea. When she was too cold, she was boring; when too synonymous with being, she no longer left any place for the perceptible; too theoretical, she neutralized even the *pathos* of death. . . . Something red was lacking, a hint of blood and guts to revive the will, and restore its strength. A wound. Which however will only be opened up in its representation from within that extra setting: the brackets.

The articulation of two repetitions, of two different circles around the re-beginning, isn’t this always, and still, the way a sign is made? And is “woman”—plus femininity—anything but that residue of ideas that, once it has been doubly wrapped up, serves to capture doing as sign?

This may be read as: she gives herself out to be: what she is not.* This operation would be implied in the game of the other. Of the same. Interpreted in this way, she stakes him in a new game without his needing to borrow from the kitty. And therefore go into debt, risk losing. Mastery. Which the other (of the same) threatens him with. From afar, given the way he is placed at a distance by the economy of truth.

How to defend oneself from an adversary who is so subtly absent? The danger is dizzying in its deceit. How to finance the death of one’s other? Since one is master only at that price, which is not even really paid. By oneself. And the other, in its mirage, threatens only by a recall of what one has secretly confided to its care: this deposit of death. That the master needed. But not for self.

And if he once had made the tour of his properties, and found

*In the French, “elle se donne pour.”—Tr.

everything to be mortal, how could the other fail to send him back this reflection? He still had one chance: not to mix up and homogenize castration (theoretical construct) and castrating (act of gelding). Not to forget that marks and masks are different in their relations with signs. The absolute of mastery injures itself thereby, deprives itself only of the whole. Not of life: of pleasure, of pain. Nor of play, or appearance. Because to play all on one's own? . . .

Castration stems/sublates from the giving of the self into the making the self "out to be." From doing as sign. Or else operates in an undecidable zone between truth, "truth," and appearances. That castration would claim to arbitrate, even while playing it, playing with it, making sport of it. Scheming, seductive, not foreign to the processes of affirmation and dissimulation—which will nonetheless be held at bay. Not foreign, of course, to reaction.

The femininity of woman, that would be her other, which amounts to the same. It would even at times slightly hint at the-act-of-castrating, but only in a scientific perspective. Now science . . . Freud/Nietzsche. It is preferable to move on to art where one can play with castration better. Everything fits in. For example: maternity-femininity-prostitution. Even matter: they're the same. And appearance, forms, masks, veils—the whole paraphernalia of beauty. And if beauty is to be intensely perceived, differences are essential, it seems? Even ugliness, and the suspension between the one and the other.

Castration? Wasn't that, precisely, the gesture of repetition which gave the key to the whole stage set by the same? And therefore gave it some play, gave the game the possibility: to be played. In the second or third degree: the Apollonian dream, the Socratic truth, the simulacrum (both of them within a certain indifference, a repeat that suspends the gash between them, covers the [female] one and the other and yet never really does so, still adhering to a belief in difference, if only to play with it).

Castration would be merely some simulacrum—with nothing added on—unless the other has nothing, and is not lent what she doesn't have, what she would have been allowed only to take care of. So that she can threaten, by playing or not playing according to the charge she has been invested with—of castration. Castration might be interpreted as a simulacrum used to frighten oneself, and therefore as the source of pleasure in continuing the game.

For example? To simulate depth in the guise of the bigger or the smaller. To bring erection and limpness into the game of castration. And the other into the same: a comparison between the bigger

and the smaller, the harder and the softer, etc., until it becomes impossible to evaluate anything except in terms of *less* and *more*.

A repetition, then, with signs. Which are now agreed to be simulated in part, with which there will be a generalization of the giving oneself out to be: that which is not. The economy-economy of what is is thereby affected. Not necessarily the mastery. Perhaps by admitting the part played by illusion, by claiming it openly, airing it publicly, one is cleared of the burden of a secret, the guilt of concealment, of the pure and simple assurance of being adequate to mastery. Not by losing. Especially if the scenario is now presumed to be *general*. Including this residue: the other would threaten castration. The other? Of the same? If castration means the same thing as: kill him, if it is equivalent to death, then the other is equivalent to the same. Or else perpetuates the alternation of everything and nothing. Fulfilling the master's desire. Which he can dress up differently, according to the historical moment.

Given up more and more to "foreignness" now that castration has been taken over by the master's desire, the-act-of-castrating circumscribes the practice of the game from some kind of outside. But it is forgotten in castration.

Or, sometimes, circumcision. Now the Jewish operation, despite what is cut away, lies in the realm of the sign. What is cut away is only cut away in order to make a sign. It is "true" that it is also in the realm of the body. But almost the reverse of castrating, this excision is what marks the body's entry into the world of signs.

And that will make a stain, a spot. No one is supposed to notice the opening onto the stage of sameness. Otherwise that unfortunate, that disconcerting change would have to be paid for, everywhere, by everybody. Therefore it has to be "repeated," so that it can be erased, forgotten, put back in the pack. All of which is no longer possible without suppressing the whole of the body. And when horror is law, the result is exile, death. The stage is set outside-inside for the theater of representation.

Unless the Jew agrees to take on the actor's role? As an affirmative doubling of his operation, just for laughs. Which (he believes? they believe?) he can allow himself since he has already paid for it.

"What good actor today is *not*—a Jew? The Jew as a born 'man of letters,' as the true master of the European press, also exercises his

power by virtue of his histrionic gifts; for the man of letters is essentially an actor. He plays the 'expert,' the 'specialist' " (*The Gay Science*, p. 361).

And rightly so, moreover: circumcision attests to a specialist's expertise in the field of signs. Should the rest of the stage be transformed into a protesting chorus, in the name of castration no less, that changes, in fact, nothing. The spot left by the Jew is still there. To make him play it over again as a simulacrum is worth more. Provided he is made to pass as other. And without a veil? The thing taken from him was (only) a blind. Though a necessary one. His role will therefore be to enact dissimulation.

Finally *women*. Reflect on the whole history of women: do they not *have* to be first of all and above all else actresses? Listen to physicians who have hypnotized women; finally, love them—let yourself be 'hypnotized' by them! What is always the end result? That they 'put something on' even when they take off everything. Woman is so artistic . . . (*The Gay Science*, p. 361)*

"Do they not *have* to be"/"histrionic gifts"; effect of castrating/effect of circumcision? An indispensable masquerade/a comedy acted with a specialist's expertise?

Finally women, who of course are actresses. In order to please. But without any qualities of their own. Whence, when speaking of women, the recourse to typographic signs, various kinds of suspension markers, bracketing, quotations marks, parentheses, cuts in the texts, exclamations, and . . . As "Dass sie 'sich geben,' selbst noch, wenn sie—sich geben." "That they ' . . . ' even when they—' . . . '"

Women—the deal. For—the game. What is still, and always, hypnotic is when there is still a blank left blank. That can be dealt only by pretending it to be what it is not: still a blank. The game goes on and the blank is given a suit. Or rather is covered up, since it can take on any suit. Woman is so artistic. . . So well disguised, made up, masked. . . The comedy of the other that she plays so artistically only because she "is" not in it, has no personal involvement. Remains—the blank?

*In footnote 94 of his translation, Walter Kaufman glosses passage thus: "Dass sie 'sich geben,' selbst noch, wenn sie—sich geben. Literally that they 'give themselves' (that is, act, play a part, pose as . . .) even when they—give themselves." The French translation of the German text is here closer to the original since it reproduces Nietzsche's pun on "sich geben," with the distinction between "se donner" and "se donner pour." This expression "se donner pour" is a key term throughout the essay "Veiled Lips," with "pour" repeated over and over again as a one-word reprise of this complex idea.—Tr.

Castrating, of course, is not a simple amputation. Except as it is seen by the same, who categorizes it thus in his theater: as a threat. In order to frighten himself. Castrating is the "absolute" spot in the economy of signs. The absurd: which is not sublated, nor repeated in any way at all. Neither event, nor phenomenon, nor form, nor ideality. . . That which cannot be represented. Not the unrepresentable in the sense of opposite, negative, reverse. For that would once again amount to the same thing. As mirror, blank, hole. That which cannot be represented—in its economy. That which is—not representable in it. Presentable.

Whence all the storytelling to get her to give herself all the same—to put in at least a token appearance. Though it will always be a case of her giving herself out to be. Even though one may well be deceived. Among, between, the veils of the one, of the other, some misunderstanding may still, at times, subsist. As a shot missing its mark. Hitting: some thing.

But, in general, she poses as . . . (se donne pour.) As a result of being nothing in this theater but a nothing that resists representation, and also of being an apparatus that sometimes gets in the way, she interprets the generalization of posing as. . . Because she is castrated, she is the threat of castration. She might act as prompter for the whole scene because she stays outside this way. In the wings. But also outside the scene of the action in a wider sense.

Thus: she is disguised for the performance of representation, hidden in the wings—where she doubles up her own role as other, as well as same—, beyond all that is taking place.

This beyond is nothing that can be called truth, unless so many doublings of parentheses and quotation marks are used that it gets lost in them all. This beyond is none of these/her wrappings, even if she seems still to be there. The/a woman is not to be reabsorbed into truth, or appearances, or semblances. Provided that she still manages to withhold herself from the generalization of the stage set. All the more since that set would now like to treat itself/her as woman. Hold her also in the veils of love. Self-love. Signify her in some way herself. Which is impossible.

So therefore she is unable to talk about herself as he does, without getting lost in the process. Illusion spun by the master to seize hold of her again in what she says. But, as master—and in every sense,

non-sense, counter-meaning, double meaning . . . —he cannot hear her. Can scarcely find anything to talk back to. Which sets things off again, thanks to a negation or denial. To the nth degree. The operation is always the same.

To talk about her—even supposing a woman could do it—to try and talk about her, comes down to exposing oneself to being only the object, the aim, of a repetition of negation, of denial. To lending oneself to a reexclusion, a repression, outside the general performance of representation. By masters, of all types, who quarrel over the scene. But, however little one gives oneself (*se donne*)—in order to take back (which cannot and may not be avoided) a formula that has already been produced, by a man talking about women—one always runs the risk, also, of posing as . . . (*se donner pour*.)

What comes of this pretense? Above all not to want to take control of it. Pretend to be . . . whatever you like. That is, according to your need or your desire. This “posing as” will actually be a bonus. The bonus that, as yet, plays no part in her economy. This “posing as” is not her due. She strays into it, without finding herself.

Unless she is reduced to the master’s desire: coin whose value is equal to the credit invested in the wrapping by the work of nature. Her only value is an assumed value. In herself, she has none. Can have none. She can only possess herself, trade herself, as a representative of something else. If she were to be attributed anything as an essential quality, this would amount to forgetting, or wishing to forget, that she plays her part so well only because it is not her due, gives her no advantage. Unless she wants in fact to take part in the master’s game. In which she cannot win. . . Indeed, never. Nothing: her “absolute” ruin.

The/a woman never signs up for the game without losing herself. And as she does not know how to play: losing radically. She must give up her gender, or die “in actual fact.” Which can happen to her. One might write: it is “her” happening.” And not laugh.

But, beyond, she might sub-sist.

In herself she has what it takes to sub-sist.

Statement that makes a spot on the text. Dropping the quotation marks, the parentheses, the dashes . . . the veils, the framework, the distance. . . Which is inconceivable in public. Stripping off a few strata, deposits, of truth/lie, being/appearances, beautiful/ugly,

good/evil, simulacrum/“truth”. . . A few layers of blanks with different decorations, colors, suits. Since several centuries of silence have taken on quite a number of roles: echo, place, interval, abyss, thing, possibility of repetition, or articulation . . . mirror. . .

That would make a sign of something moving beyond, falling short. Of something out-of place, out-of-context, in everything said, written, painted, played. That always arises from and depends upon a certain specula(riza)tion. Which explains the master’s desire in regard to taking possession of that (male) other.

And whether or not woman wants castration, whether or not she believes in that operation, and finds it casting her again as seductress, isn’t this/the id still thinking on the male side? This is still what man’s woman would be like. And, perhaps, the masculine’s feminine? This (male) other over which he hangs a veil to attest to his truth as a man. But from which he will derive what he needs to question the rightness of his judgments past and present. As if drawing from a well of uncertainty that has not been—and doubtless never will be—formulated adequately.

This is what the value of any of man’s truths would be like: it stands against a non-background of its form. To make it apparent is always a piece of extreme daring. Shameless effrontery that is worth its weight in gold. Whence the need for wraps of all kinds.

Whereas, on the women’s side, it would be possible to manage without gold. She doesn’t really need it. Even in the desire for an ornamentation she has no belief in. But which might possibly seduce the other. Though not necessarily. If she plays the game, it is as if with death—the death of man?—insofar as she puts on a show.

For her, gold is not indispensable. Her relation to exchange can do without that pledge. She has a relation to herself that has no need of that guarantee dividing and joining the one (male or female) and the other. In the quest to enjoy the value of her form, being covered, especially by gold, is of no avail. She needs only to embrace herself. Women need only to embrace each other for their truth to have a place—matter and form intertwined in the instant, without abyss or eternity.

Man lacks this operation. Hence the “content” and the representation of his truth. Alone or with other men he cannot “embrace himself”: he cannot exchange himself with the other while remaining in the same. And should the other serve as a sheath for him, at best he will make a wrapping of it, but not an embracing. He who

wraps keeps matter in one form but makes no exchange as he remains in the same "truth."

Is it not because woman can do this that her operation as castratrix has been invented? But this is to think of her solely as they do in the men's camp. And thereby deprive her of a relation to her "own" sex. Of any auto-affection that has not been determined by and for the masculine. Which woman could manage without. Though this is not to say that she must manage without. She may manage without in the relation with herself.

She does not set herself up as *one*, as a (single) female unit. She is not closed up or around one single truth or essence. The essence of a truth remains foreign to her. She neither has nor is a being. And she does not oppose a feminine truth to the masculine truth. Because this would once again amount to playing the—man's—game of castration. If the female sex takes place by embracing itself, by endlessly sharing and exchanging its lips, its edges, its borders, and their "content," as it ceaselessly becomes other, no stability of essence is proper to her. She has a place in the openness of a relation to the other whom she does not take into herself, like a whore, but to whom she continuously gives birth.

And she has no need *once* to be a mother, *one* day to produce *one* child, to make her sex the place of unceasing birthing. To be woman, she does not have to be mother, unless she wants to set a limit to her growth and her gift for life. Motherhood is only one specific way to fulfill the operation: giving birth. Which is never one, unique, and definitive. Except from the male standpoint.

The/a woman can sub-sist by already being double in her self: both the one and the other. Not: one plus an other, more than one. More than. She is "foreign" to the unit. And to the countable, to quantification. Therefore to the more than, as it relates to something already quantifiable, even were it a case of disrupting the operations. If it were necessary to count her/them in units—which is impossible—each unit would already be more than doubly (her). But that would have to be understood in another way. The (female) one being the other, without ever being either one or the other. Ceaselessly in the exchange between the one and the other. With the result that she is always already othered but with no possible identification of her, or of the other. Who is not even a foundation for identification: some mirror, for examples. There will therefore never

be a her and her other. The possessive, the mark of belonging, does not belong to her. Nor does the reflexive. That comes back/down to the same thing. Re-produces some sign in order to take possession of it/oneself.

The/a woman does not simply make (herself) signs. That existing mediation remains im-proper to her. She cannot relate it to herself. And even if that manifestation should correspond to her, there would be no need to see it as a necessary phenomenon. The feminine goes beyond "phenomenology." Were it not for the demands of the economy of sameness. Because "she" affects herself already (within herself) without the appearance of a sensible sign. She has no overriding need to produce herself under any form whatever. At least as far as (she is) herself. She gives herself out to be—herself if one falls for it—because she herself is unable to present herself. But this lack is also the source of her "bonus." If her "logic" did not shy away from pluses or minuses.

In herself: does not mean in the intimacy of a "soul" or a "spirit." As it risks being understood at a first approximation. Provisionally, let us drop what this "approximation" may imply in the way of detour, straying, repressing, sublimation . . . of the depth of woman. She falls back into a depth of thought: that goes right to the bottom of things, beyond appearances, would therefore be difficult to penetrate because it is more internal, more secret, but also more durable because it is not subject to the fluctuations of the sensations, of the perceptible world. From time to time it is worthwhile to flatten out this "inside" (of the spirit), bring it to the surface. Though it has never ceased being a surface. A protection-projection screen that, by dint of returning upon the self to the point of doubling up and circling the self, is nonetheless superficial in its full extent. Planes that elude, exclude, keep on the outside, external to her, and limit with their developments the depth of the other.

Reserve: the abyss. To go back to it. Except for him—and even then . . . providing he does not fall—depth is essentially superficial. To give depth back as what she is would therefore amount to raising the mortgage on it: preventing her from producing any pretense of being: what is.

This plastering over of the depths of truth, in order to play with them on the basis of a display that will not be exhausted too quickly, also reduces in its game the truth of the other. Let it appear: risk.

Putting it aside in the generalization of the simulacrum is a way of keeping something in reserve. Borrowing from the reserves of the other, that has perhaps been a not-giving-oneself-out-to-be-the-same: which it is not.

Into *her* depth, the scene might still collapse. Not into the abyss of meaning, its inversion or aversion. Let's leave the abyss, the chasm, . . . Here "simply" in that deep female other that sub-sists. Beneath the general economy of truth—therefore also of appearance, simulacrum, suspense between, even of that reserve: the undecidable—woman is still deep. The fact that she may have served, may still serve, as mirror of every kind does not solve this remainder: extra, deep. Which upsets the whole thing.

This depth is, in fact, neither single, nor essential, nor a potential for foundation and its excess—the abyss—nor the hole-scaffolding of the scene's systematization which cannot be rigorously deduced or derived therefrom. The fact that she has been travestied in this manner amounted to putting everything to work so as to set her up as an outside. The other outside.

Now the/a woman is not one. And this way of reducing the outside marks the limit of the method of questioning. Not identical to self, the/a woman does not answer *one* question. The question that would be appropriate to her is always and forever impossible to formulate even if one wanted to make the effort.

Short of giving up all principles? But that would still be staking in one's game that against which they fixed the rights of the same. It's better to keep principles so as to glimpse what another gender might not be about. Whose depth cannot be represented except in the form of error and appearance. With this error still being a property of being. A representation of the other as perpetual becoming and change—wanderings. At best, errancy. Because she has no place in the time of essence, of durability, of self-identity, the other errs: reverse of the same.

To compose oneself an object to suit one's fantasy and believe henceforth that one would possess it wholly as the lover does with his beloved, the father with the child: what joy than in possessing!—but here it is the appearance that suffices us. We imagine the objects *that we can attain* in such a way that their possession seems most valuable to us: we compose to suit our pride the enemy that

we *hope* to conquer; and in the same way the woman and the child. (*Joyful Wisdom*, posthumous fragment 11:34)*

In the clearing of a blind spot of truth, a space is opened up for the games of the imagination in the possession of a property—in this way we can have it with more subtlety.

Something that no longer has any secret place to hide in could not escape us, since the full knowledge of the thing is appropriation enough. But if there is no secret, where can there be reserve? How is the will-to-have, the will-to-keep, to be perpetuated?

Full awareness—dissimulation that hides (itself). The most subtle kind of possession.

The depth of woman cannot be closed up over having—knowledge of a secret. Except from the point of view of the truth in which she is played as a store (of) dissimulation: her representation therein will never have been anything but pretense, in a different way. She is denigrated or valued according to the historical moment. And—both at the same time.

The thing that the depth of woman is supposed to be the hiding place and hiding mechanism for is what representation obliterates even from the visible. For "she," also, is visible. But she is not repeated, reproduced, in traditional representation because she is already split "within herself." And the economy in being cannot account for this. For fear of putting all its properties into question: one, simple, self-identical, grounded, derivable, etc. Even if that economy goes so far as to admit the work of repetition in presence, the splitting of the unit within itself remains foreign to it.

Therefore the *access* to woman's depth. Since neither the female one nor the other is separable as such in the appearance or in the abyss, and hidden from view only within the simulacrum. With each female one already upset and overwhelmed, she neither is nor becomes the other. And to say that she signifies wandering, errancy, comes down to mixing these up in the other—of the same. A moving stake in the articulation of essential definitions or values, secret resource for phenomena, necessity for the dissimulation that is affirmed in the game.

* *Le Gai Savoir: Fragments inédits 1881–1882*, texte et variantes établis par G. Colli et M. Montinari (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 310.—Tr.

It seems then that she plays the game, without playing it. In fact she has no equipment available to play with. But her functioning "within herself" is ludic: the single aim of her physical or mental activity would be the pleasure it procures. But with no consciousness.

Therefore she doesn't strictly speaking play. A game, if it implies risk, cannot be separated from the desire to win, or lose, or accumulate: more or less. Luck is still the chance that assists or even substitutes for capitalization. And if expense is possible, pleasure does not come free. By way of proof: it is a factor of the value assigned to the pawns, their hierarchy, their falling by mastery or by chance—or is it the mastery of chance?—to one player or the other at the end of the game.

Is exchange, once free of the laws of truth, in fact more cynically capitalist? Liberalism without restraint because freed of customs duties by chance? "Morally not deliberate," therefore without error. Luck—the deal. Can only be dealt out for what he/she is not. Is never simply dealt as such (male or female) for fear of no longer believing it. The strength of this dissimulation reverts to the master-player. What does he lose? There no longer falls to his lot: pleasure.

The stake of woman's ludism has no fixed value. Value is never attributed. Even though her having no value may be the cause of her despicability does not spoil, for her, the pleasure of endlessly exchanging herself "within herself"; does not cut off her access to depth. That throws off the opposition deliberate/lucky. Except insofar as it applies to the chance of her gender: female. Once this casting has been made—and it also goes beyond, and stops short of, truth, appearances, semblances—pleasure comes to her with no forethought. Unless she gives up that excess of good fortune: being born a woman. The whole game is set up so that she should do so. But "within herself" she never signs up. She doesn't have the equipment.

As, to take "an example," the division subject-predicate, subject-object.

So, when she touches herself (again), who is "she"? And "herself"? Inseparable, "she" and "herself" are part the one of the other, endlessly. They cannot really be distinguished, though they are not for all that the female same, nor the male same. That can be reassembled within some whole. This is to say again, or further, that it would be impossible to decide definitively which "of the two" would be "she" and which "herself."

Thus—by a (perhaps misleading?) comparison with discourse—the identity of the subject can no longer be established through its relation to the object, and none of these functions is more important than the other. With this disjunction signifying their yielding to discursivity itself. And even if "to touch oneself," for the masculine gender, is defined as that which begins to set up the distinction subject-predicate, subject-object, in the most archaic fashion, i.e., in the relation of attribution: x is (to, in, . . .) y —which still allows passivity to have a place in auto-affection, or else a suspension between activity and passivity in the attribution of being—it will never be known who/what is x , who/what is y in the female. Each female is at the same time " x " and " y " but not by being addition, subtraction, division. . . Not even multiplication, as this would risk closing up the volume. With difficulty, it is true. . . Since each side cannot be dissociated from the other without thereby forming with it an angle of which the span would be a or b . . .

The values are indeed impossible to calculate, determine, assign, . . . Therefore *are* not. Perhaps woman is predicated in the absolute. This operation then derives from the masculine gender. This is the case with female objects, that are variously qualified according to their utility. Predicable insofar as she is an "object in general," the/a woman remains external to the objective. From this outside position she grounds its economy—by being castrated, she threatens castration. Glimpsing that she may sub-tend the logic of predication without its functioning having anything properly to do with her, leads to the fear that she may intervene and upset everything: the death of the subject would be nothing less. A ground rises up, a montage of shapes disintegrates. The horror of the abyss, attributed to woman. Loss of identity—death.

Her life is not something else: death. Death is always minus one, less simple than one imagines. It resists belonging, it subsists beyond appropriation. It is still left over. There is always *more* of death, than the one already identified. And the/a woman who withholds herself from the identifiable, therefore threatens—with death. A residue left over by the set up of representation: she lives in death.

She does not die from it. Except as a subject. This life in death sustains the death that is the life of the spirit, a death that gives (back) life by dint of the fact that the other (male or female), who buttresses it, is not really dead. Only as subject; that which the