

On the Female Feminist Subject; or, from "She-Self" to "She-Other"

Whoever has known de-personalisation will recognize the other under any disguise: the first step towards the other is to find within oneself the man of all men. *Every woman is the woman of all women, every man is the man of all men and each one of them could answer for the human, whenever s/he is called upon to do so.*

—Clarice Lispector, *La passion* selon G. H.

Approaching Lispector

The story takes place at the top of a tall building in one of the many metropolises that pollute our planet. The event itself occurs in the furthest room of this spacious apartment, which, being the maid's quarters, is also the humblest. The spatial metaphor is all-pervading in the text. The character sees her dwelling as her bodily self, defining the maid's room as "the womb of my building."¹ This space is compared to the top of a mountain, or the tip of a minaret: it is a microcosm endowed with a heightened level of intensity, of depth.

The experience that G. H., protagonist of Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector's *Passion According to G.H.*, undergoes at the top of that building is her encounter with dimensions of experience and levels of being that are other than herself and other than human.

The otherness begins in her interaction with the absent maid: by entering her quarters, G. H. transgresses the boundaries of both class and ethnicity, the maid being of a different ethnic origin from the comfortable urban, middle-class G. H. There is also a dislocation of both space and time: the shape of the room seems to defy description according to Euclidian geometry, it has the dry hostile appeal of the desert, it is more akin to raw matter than to urban dwellings. It is an empty, anorexic space of suspension.

In this environment, G. H. will experience total depersonalization, or the failure of her socialized identity; this process of dissolution of the boundaries of the self (*dépouillement*) is an experience both of expansion and of limitation of her subjectivity. It is described with both great intensity and precision. The event that triggers off the most intense sense of desubjectification is her relationship to a hideous insect, a cockroach, that inhabits the undescrivable space of this room. The insect as nonhuman is totally other; it also a borderline being, between the animal and the mineral: as ancient as the crust of the earth and gifted with astonishing powers of survival, it is a configuration of eternity. It is also, by definition, an abject being, object of disgust and rejection.

G. H.'s experience will consist in realizing first the proximity and then the commonality of being between herself and the living matter, half animal, half stone, the matter that lives independently of the gaze of the human beholder. Through the other and the abject, G. H. encounters primordial being in its incomprehensibly and blindly living form. The realization of the noncentrality of the human to life and to living matter leads G. H. to undertake the dehumanization of herself. This experience puts her in touch with the most remote and yet existentially most alive parts of her being. This process becomes for her a form of admiration and, finally, adoration of the life that, in her, does not carry her name; of the forces that, in her, do not belong to her own self. She enters the perfectly alive, that is to say, the inexpressive, the prediscursive, the presymbolic layers of the being. Almost like a zombie, seduced by a force that she cannot name because it inhabits her so deeply, she consumes the intercourse with the other by the totemic assimilation of the cockroach: a gesture that transgresses a number of boundaries and taboos (human/nonhuman; fit to eat/unfit to eat; cooked/raw, and so on).

The ecstasy that follows from this encounter is one of utter dissolution of her own boundaries, and it is at that moment when she is both

pre-human and all too human, that she discovers the femaleness of her being: that, in her, which is prior to socialization is already sexed female. The woman in her, like the woman in all women, is the being whose relation to living matter is one of concomitance and adoration. It is in a pose of careful and receptive "being-one-with-the-world" that the story is concluded, though there is no ending as such.

This story has been amply commented by sexual difference theorists. The Italian philosopher Luisa Muraro² sees a religious significance in the topography of the room and in the "verticality" of the entire building. Resting on Luce Irigaray's notion of the "divinity of women,"³ she compares the location of the story to the Cross on Golgotha and reads the events as a moment of intense *passio*, resulting in the transcendence toward the superhuman. In Muraro's understanding, the passion of G. H. is of the religious kind; the religion in question, however, is not patriarchal: what G. H. celebrates on the top of her sacred mountain is the divinity of her gender, the mystery and grace of sexual difference defined as a specifically female experience of transcending the boundaries of the human.

Luisa Muraro is careful to separate the transcendence in question and the sense of being that G. H. perceives from the dominion of the phallus, that is to say of phallogocentric language. In other words: in order to gain access to the universal, Lispector knows she has to abandon human subjectivity altogether, but in that moment of ascesis what she does find is the overriding significance of her gender, of her being the woman of all women. Her being-sexed is part of her innermost essence.

In a more laic and less mystical reading, Adriana Cavarero⁴ sees instead the affirmation of a feminist materialism in the passion of G. H. The life that in one does not bear one's own name, is a force that connects one to all other living matter. Cavarero reads this insight as the woman's attempt to disconnect her sense of being from the patriarchal logos; in so doing she proposes the dislocation of one of the central premises of Western thinking: that being and language are one.

Following the insight of Irigaray, Cavarero criticizes the assimilation of the universal to the masculine and defends the idea of a female-specific notion of being. That the living matter may not require the thinking "I" in order to exist results in the placing of more emphasis on the centrality of the sexed nature of the "she-I": her being sexed is primordial and inextricable from her being, in a way that is unrepresented by the grammatical structure of language, that is to say by her "I." Sexual dif-

ference is definitional of the woman and not contingent: it is always already there.

In a very different reading of the same text, the French writer Hélène Cixous⁵ reads the event as a parable for women's writing, *écriture féminine*, understood as a process of constitution of an alternative female symbolic system. G. H.'s passion is for life without mastery, power, or domination; her sense of adoration is compared to a capacity for a giving kind of receptivity, not for Christian martyrdom. Cixous connects this faculty to the ability to both give and receive the gift, that is to say to receive the other in all of his/her astounding difference.

In her ethical defense of the politics of subjectivity, Cixous speaks of the ability to receive otherness as a new science, a new discourse based on the idea of respectful affinity between self and other. The passion is about belonging to a common matter: life, in its total depersonalized manner. The term *approach* defines for Cixous the basis of her ethical system: it is the way in which self and other can be connected in her new worldview where all living matter is a sensitive web of mutually receptive entities. The other-than-human at stake here is that which, by definition, escapes the domination of the anthropocentric subject and requires that he/she accepts his/her limitations. More specifically, the divine in all humans is the capacity to see interconnectedness as the way of being. For Cixous this heightened sense of being is the feminine, it is the woman as creative force: poet and writer. The divine is the feminine as creativity.

Feminism and Postmodernity

G. H. is a tale about women's "becoming": it is about new female subjectivity. The first and foremost element for women's becoming, in both a political and existential sense, is time; in *Passion According to G.H.* Clarice Lispector tells her readers all about the time, the rituals, the repetition, the symbolic transactions and blank spaces of that continuum that is commonly called time. In the choice of language and situations, Lispector echoes the century-old tradition of mystical ascesis, but also moves clearly out of it. G. H. symbolizes a new postmodern kind of materialism: one that stresses the materiality of all living matter in a common plane of coexistence, without postulating a central point of reference or of organization for it. Lispector's point is not only that all that lives are holy—it is not even that. She strikes me rather as saying that on the scale of being there are forces at work that bypass principles

of rational form and organization: there is raw living matter, as there is pure time, regardless of the form they may actually take. The emphasis is on the forces, the passions, and not on specific forms of life. In other words, I think Lispector is better read with Spinoza and Nietzsche than as a Christian mystic.⁶

Lispector's text seems to me an excellent exemplification of one of the central issues in the debate between feminism and postmodern discourse.⁷ What is at stake in this debate is the "deconstruction of metadiscourses," as Jean-François Lyotard argues⁸ and therefore also the assessment of the vision of subjectivity embedded in the tradition of the Enlightenment. Several analysts of feminist theory have pointed out⁹ the shift away from the mere critique of sexist or androcentric biases and the construction of alternative theories based on the experience of women, toward the elaboration of more general epistemological frameworks. These concern both the pursuit of scientific knowledge, as Sandra Harding¹⁰ puts it, and the revision of the very foundations of abstract scientific reasoning, as both Evelyn Fox Keller¹¹ and Genevieve Lloyd¹² have argued.

The specific angle of debate that interests me here is the extent to which the feminist critiques of theoretical reason as a regulative principle, by paving the way for the deconstruction of the dualistic oppositions on which the classical notion of the subject is founded, have resulted in approaching the notion of sexual difference as laying the foundations for an alternative model of female subjectivity. The question then becomes: What is the image of theoretical reason at work in feminist thought? What images and representations do feminists propose for their specific approach to theoretical practice?

As Jane Flax argues,¹³ this is a metadiscursive approach, related to the simultaneous occurrence of the crisis of Western values¹⁴ and the emergence of a variety of "minority" discourses, as Gayatri Spivak,¹⁵ Chandra Mohanty,¹⁶ and Trinh T. Minh-ha,¹⁷ have pointed out. This historical circumstance makes it urgent to think through the status of thinking in general and of the specific activity of theory in particular. For feminists, it is especially urgent to work toward a balanced and constructive assessment of the mutual interdependence of equality and the practice of differences.

By raising the question of whether the links between reason and exclusion/domination are implicit and therefore inevitable, feminists have challenged the equation between being and logocentric language.

In other words, feminist theory in the nomadic mode I am defending is the critique of the power in/as discourse and the active endeavor to create other ways of thinking: it is the engagement in the process to learn to think differently. Feminism as critical thought is therefore a self-reflexive mode of analysis, aimed at articulating the critique of power in discourse with the affirmation of an alternative vision of the female feminist subject.

I would then ask: what does it mean to think as a female feminist? What sort of a subject is the subject defined by the political and theoretical project of "sexual difference"?

I see as the central aim of this project the articulation of questions of individual gendered identity with issues related to political subjectivity. The interaction of identity with subjectivity also spells out the categorical distinction between dimensions of experience that are marked by desire—and therefore the unconscious—and others that are rather subjected to willful self-regulation. I have argued previously that although both levels are the site of political agency, there is not one dominant form of political action that can encompass them both. The key to feminist nomadic politics is situatedness, accountability, and localized or partial perspectives.

Another Image of Thought

In other words, feminist theory, as I argue in the previous chapter, expresses women's structural need to posit themselves as female subjects, that is to say not as disembodied entities but rather as situated beings.

Identity and subjectivity are different but interrelated moments in the process of defining a subject position. This idea of the subject as process means that he/she can no longer be seen to coincide with his/her consciousness but must be thought of as a complex and multiple identity, as the site of the dynamic interaction of desire with the will, of subjectivity with the unconscious. Not just libidinal desire, but rather ontological desire, the desire to be, the tendency of the subject to be, the predisposition of the subject toward being. Jean-François Lyotard describes this notion of the subject as a clear break from the modernist project; the latter is understood not only in terms of the Enlightenment legacy of the complicity of reason, truth, progress with domination, but also as the marriage of the individual will with the general will of capital. According to Lyotard modernism marked the triumph of the will-to-

have, to own, to possess, within each individual; this in turn entailed the correlative objectification of many minority subjects.

By contrast, postmodernism marks the emergence of the desire to be at the very heart of the question of subjectivity. It is the triumph of the ethical vision of the subject as a discontinuous and yet unified bodily entity. The distinction between will and desire is useful in that it separates different qualitative levels of experience. It can also help us rescue postmodern thought from the charge that is often made against it: of being merely nihilistic. That postmodern thought, including the feminist strand, may be a reaction to a state of crisis does not make it necessarily negative; on the contrary, I see it as offering many positive openings.

The crisis of modernity is marked, as Foucault points out,¹⁸ by the emphasis placed on both the unconscious and on desire by psychoanalysis, taken as the exemplary modern discourse. The hypothesis of the unconscious can be seen as inflicting a terrible wound to the transcendental narcissism of the classical vision of the subject. The unconscious as an epistemological assumption marks the noncoincidence of the subject with his/her consciousness; it is the grain of sand in the machine that prevents the enunciation of yet another monolithic, self-present subject.

The fundamental epistemological insight of psychoanalysis is that the thinking process as a whole plunges its roots in prerational matter. As G. H. exemplifies, thinking is just a form of sensibilization of matter, it is the specific form of intelligence of embodied entities. Thinking is a bodily not a mental process. Thinking precedes rational thought.

The crisis of rational thought is nothing more than the forced realization, brought about by historical circumstances, that this highly phallogentric mode of thought rests on a set of unspoken premises about thinking that are themselves nonrational. In other words, the logocentric posture, the enunciation of a philosophical stance rests on a prephilosophical moment, namely the human being's capacity for, disposition, receptivity, and desire for thinking. The disposition of the subject toward thinking, that is, representing him/herself in language is the nonphilosophical basis of philosophy that Deleuze defends; it is a pre-discursive element, as Patrizia Violi points out,¹⁹ which is excess of and nevertheless indispensable to the act of thinking as such. It is an ontological tendency, a predisposition that is neither thinking nor conscious and that inscribes the subject into the web of discursivity, language, and power.

This predisposition or receptivity of the subject toward "making sense" frees our vision of subjectivity from what Gilles Deleuze²⁰ aptly calls the imperialism of rational thought, which appears in this perspective inadequate as a vision of the self. Thinking thus becomes the attempt to create other ways of thinking, other forms of thought: thinking is about how to think differently.

The vision of the subject as an interface of will with desire is therefore the first step in the process of rethinking the foundations of subjectivity. It amounts to saying that what sustains the entire process of becoming-subject is a pre-discursive foundation. As I have argued previously, desire is that which, being the a priori condition for thinking, is in excess of the thinking process itself.

This is why I want to argue here that the task of thinking about new forms of female subjectivity, through the project of sexual difference understood as the expression of women's ontological desire, implies the transformation of the very structures and images of thought, not just the content of the thoughts. In other words: sexual difference opens out toward the redefinition of general structures of thought, not only female-specific ones.

Embodiment and Difference

The concept of the body in the specific inception given to it by the philosophy of modernity and the theories of sexual difference²¹ refers to the multifunctional and complex structure of subjectivity, the specifically human capacity for transcending any given variable—class, race, sex, nationality, culture, and so on—while remaining situated within them. The body in question is best understood as a surface of signification, situated at the intersection of the alleged facticity of anatomy²² with the symbolic dimension of language. As such, the body is a multifaceted sort of notion, covering a broad spectrum of levels of experience and frames of enunciation.

In a move that characterizes it among all others, however, Western culture has set very high priority on the production of the sexed body, situating the variable *sexuality* on top of the list. The embodied sexed subject thus defined is situated in a web of complex power relations that, as Foucault points out,²³ inscribe the subject in a discursive and material structure of normativity. Sexuality is the dominant discourse of power in the West. In this respect the feminist redefinition of the subject as equally though discontinually subjected to the normative effect of

many, complex and overlapping variables both perpetuates the Western habit of giving sexuality a high priority and also challenges it as one of the dominant traits of Western discursive power.

Sexuality as power, that is as institution, is also a semiotic code that organizes our perception of morphological differences between the sexes. It is obviously the inscription into language that makes the embodied subject into a speaking "I", that is to say a functional, socialized gendered entity. In my understanding, there can be no subjectivity outside sexuality or language; that is to say, the subject is always gendered: it is a "she-I" or a "he-I." That the "I" thus engendered is not a nominal essence but merely a convenient fiction, a grammatical necessity holding together a multiplicity of levels of experience that structure the embodied subject, as poststructuralist thought convincingly argues,²⁴ does not alter the fact that it is gendered, that is to say, sexually differentiated.

The view I am putting forth is that the starting ground for feminist redefinitions of female subjectivity is a new form of materialism that places emphasis on the embodied and therefore sexually differentiated structure of the speaking subject. The variable of sexuality has high priority in the bodily materialism thus advocated. In feminist theory one speaks as a woman, although the subject "woman," as I have argued earlier, is not an essence defined once and for all but rather the site of multiple, complex, and potentially contradictory sets of experience. "Speaking as" refers to Adrienne Rich's "politics of location," that is to say, to embodiment as positionality. As a consequence, the female feminist subject, to whom I will refer to as: "she-self" or "I, woman," is to be redefined through the collective quest for a political reexamination of sexuality as a social and symbolic system.

One of the points of tension of this project is how to reconcile the feminist critiques of the priority traditionally granted to the variable sexuality in the Western discourse about the subject with the feminist proposition of redefining the embodied subject in a network of interrelated variables of which sexuality is but one, set alongside other powerful axes of subjectification, such as race, culture, nationality, class, life-choice preferences, and so on. This double-edged project of both relying on gendered or sex-specific notions in order to redefine the female feminist subject and on deconstructing them at the same time has led to some strong feminist rejections of sexed female identity and to the critique of the signifier *woman* as a meaningful political term.

For my part, however, I do not experience this tension as anything more than a historical contradiction: that the signifier *woman* is both the concept around which feminists have gathered, in a movement where the politics of identity are central, and that it is also the very concept that needs to be analyzed critically—is a perfect description of our historical situation in late capitalism.

As I have argued in this book, the best way out of the dichotomous logic in which Western culture has captured sexed identities is to *work them through*. In this respect, I find Luce Irigaray's notion of "mimesis"²⁵ highly effective, in that it allows women to revisit and repossess the discursive and material sites where "woman" was essentialized, disqualified, or quite simply excluded. *Working through* is a nomadic notion that has already given proof of both its strengths and its limitations.²⁶ Working through the networks of discursive definitions of "woman" is useful not only in what it produces as a process of deconstruction of female subjectivity but also as *process*, which allows for the constitution and the legitimation of a gendered female feminist community.

In other words, the "she-self" fastens upon the presence of the female embodied self, the woman, but it does so only as long as other women sustain, *hic et nunc*, the project of redefining female subjectivity. It is a sort of ontological leap forward by which a politically enforced collective subject, the "we women" of the women's movement, can empower the subjective becoming of each one of us "I, woman." This leap is forward, not backward, toward the glorification of an archaic, feminine power or of a well-hidden "true" essence. It does not aim at recovering a lost origin or a forgotten land, but aims rather at bringing about here and now a mode of representation that would take the fact of being a woman as a positive, self-affirming political force. It is an act of self-legitimation whereby the "she-self" blends her ontological desire to be, with the conscious willful becoming of a collective political movement. As I said earlier, the distinction between identity and subjectivity is to be related to that between will and desire.

That is to say, between "she-self" and "she-other" there is a bond that Adrienne Rich describes as the "continuum" of women's experience. This continuum draws the boundaries within which the conditions of possibility of a redefinition of the female subjects can be made operative. The notion of the community is therefore central; what is at play among us today, in the interaction between the writer and her readers,

is our common engagement in the recognition of the political implications of a theoretical project: the redefinition of female subjectivity.

Several attempts have been made by feminists to theorize the community of women, some in pedagogical terms:²⁷ Evelyn Fox Keller takes Kuhn's notion of scientific community; Teresa de Lauretis uses the Foucauldian model of a micropolitics of resistance; several others, such as Jane Flax and Jessica Benjamin,²⁸ turn to Winnicott's object relations theory as a model. Jessica Benjamin argues that self and other are inextricably linked and that it is in being with the other that I experience the most profound sense of self; Jane Flax argues along similar lines that it is the capacity for mutual, reciprocal intersubjective connections that allows for the constitution of subjectivity.

As a feminist theoretician, psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin takes Flax's argument even further, arguing that female desire must be conceptualized as the in-between space, connecting inside to outside, in a constant flow of self into other that cannot and should not be disrupted by falsely dichotomous distinctions. Emphasizing the genderedness of embodiment, Benjamin collapses the inside/outside distinction of the body, stressing the in-between spaces. She thus attempts to replace the mediation by the phallus with the capacity for interconnectedness and agency, so that desire need not be conceptualized according to the murderous logic of dialectical oppositions.

The "transitional space" that Benjamin defends must be understood as an interface, marking both the distance and the proximity between the spatial surface of bodies. "Something that both forms a boundary and opens up into endless possibility",²⁹ it is a space not only of reception of the other but also of receptivity as the very condition for otherness to be perceived as such. Something in the ontological structure of the subject is related to the presence of the other.

My question is, what sort of discursive space can feminists construct and share together? The multiple levels of nomadic interconnections that form subjectivity affect also the enunciation of feminist statements. These are consequently not immune from discontinuities and shifts. Feminism is not a dogmatic countertruth, but the willful choice of non-closure as an intellectual and ethical style.

In other words, it is in language, not in anatomy, that my gendered subjectivity finds a voice, becomes a corpus, is engendered. It is in language as power, that is to say, in the politics of location, that I as "she-self" make myself accountable to my speaking partners, you, the "she-

other" fellow feminists who are caught in the web of discursive enunciation that I am spinning as I write. You, the "she-you" who like me, the "she-I", are politically engaged in the project of redefining the gender that we are. The language cracks under the strain of this excessive genderization, the personal pronouns cannot sustain the interpersonal charge required by the feminist project. Something in the structure of the language resists; how can one express adequately that which is lacking from or in excess of existing parameters? How does one invent new ways of thinking?

Accountability makes the feminist project into a critical and at the same time ethical theory, insofar as it stresses the primacy of the bond, the presence of the other, the community as a vital step in the redefinition of the self.

In *Technologies of Gender*, Teresa de Lauretis argues that this is, however, fundamentally an epistemological project. In her understanding of the term, epistemology is the process of comprehending and of formalizing subjectivity as a process, as a network of complex interplay between different axes of subjectification.³⁰

The question is how to determine the angle through which we can gain access to a nonlogocentric mode of representation of the female subject. To determine that, we need to think anew about power: not power only as a site of visible forces, where it is the most identifiable because that is where it displays itself (parliament, churches, universities, and so on), but power also as an invisible web of interrelated effects, a persistent and all-pervading circulation of effects. The importance of this point is not only epistemological and methodological, it is also political: it will in fact determine the kind of alliance or social pact that we women are likely to undertake with each other.

Toward a Genderized Symbolic

Thinking about thinking, in the metadiscursive mode I have been defending is not just thinking for its own sake; rather, it marks the feminist intellectual's responsibility for and toward the act of thinking, lingering in the conceptual complexities that we have ourselves created, giving ourselves the time to think through and work through these complexities so as not to short-circuit the process of our own becoming. As Lispector pointed out, we are nurturing the beginning of the new; the depersonalized female subject lays the foundations for the symbolization of women's ontological desire.

This implies the redefinition of the relationship of power to knowledge within feminism: as women of ideas devoted to the elaboration of the theory and practice of sexual difference we are responsible for the very notions that we enact and empower. Thinking justly—of justness and not only of justice—is a top item in our agenda. This ethical dimension is for me as important as the political imperative. Feminist thinking cannot be purely strategic—that is, be the expression of a political will—it must rather attempt to be adequate as a representation of experience. Feminist theorizing must be adequate conceptually, as well as being suitable politically; one's relationship to thinking is the prototype of a different relationship to alterity altogether. If we lose sight of this ethical, relational foundation of thinking, that is to say the bond that certain discourses create among us, we are indeed in danger of homologation and therefore of purely strategic or instrumental kinds of thought. There can be no justice without justness, no political truth without equation of our words, our ideas, and consequently our thought to the project of redefining female subjectivity in a nonlogocentric mode.

As a consequence, the first priority for me today is to redefine the subject as a gendered unity inextricably connected to the other.

For feminism, in the beginning there is alterity, the non-one, a multiplicity. The founding agent is the common corpus of female subjects who posit themselves theoretically and politically as a collective subject. This communal bond comes first, and then—and only then—there arises the question of what political line to enforce. It is the ethical that defines the political and not vice versa; hence the importance of positing the feminist audience as the receptive, active participant in a discursive exchange that aims at changing the very rules of the game. This is the feminist community to which the "she-I" makes herself accountable.

The paradox of the ontological basis of desire is that not only it is intersubjective but also it transcends the subject. Desire also functions as the threshold for a redefinition of a new common plane of experience: "each woman is the woman of all women . . ." The recognition of a common ground of experience as women mutually engaged in a political task of resistance to "Woman"—the dominant view of female subjectivity—lays the foundation for new images and symbolization of the feminist subject. If we take as our starting point sexual difference as the positive affirmation of my facticity as a woman, *working through* the layers of complexity of the signifier *I, woman*, we end up opening a win-

now onto a new gendered bond among different women. As I have stated earlier, the point is to radicalize the universal, not to get rid of it.

By genderized collective subjectivity I mean a symbolic dimension proper to women in the recognition of the nonreducibility of the feminine to the masculine and yet, at the same time, of the indestructible unity of the human as an embodied self-structurally linked to the other. It is the complex intersecting of never-ending levels of differing of self from other and self from self. As Adriana Cavarero³¹ put it: what is at stake in this is the representability of a feminine subject as a self-representing entity. It is less a question of founding the subject than of elucidating the categories by which the female feminist subject can be adequately represented.

This is an important political gesture because thinking through the fullness of one's complexity, in the force of one's transcendence, is something women have never historically been able to afford. What seems to be at stake in the project of sexual difference is, through the extreme sexualization of the subject, a Nietzschean transmutation of the very value we give to the human and to a universal notion of commonness, of common belonging.

I want to argue that the aim of this transmutation of values is to be able to bring to the fore the multilayered structure of the subject. As Lispector points out: "the life in me does not have my name"; "I" is not the owner of the portion of being that constitutes his/her being. To the extent that "she-I" accepts this, can "she-I" become the woman of all women and be accountable for her humanness. Only this highly defined notion of singularity can allow us to posit a new general sense of being; only situated perspectives can legitimate new general standpoints. In this sense, the experience of utter singularity that G. H. undergoes in her microcosm remains emblematic of the process of women becoming other than the "Woman" they have been expected and socialized into being. G. H. shows us paths of transcendence specific to our gender and to women's own, discontinuous time of becoming.