

**Rethinking the Feminine:
Deconstructing Masculine Hegemony in Luce Irigaray's Postmodern Feminist Thought.**

إعادة التفكير في الأنثوي:

تفكيك الهيمنة الذكورية في الفكر النسوي ما بعد الحداثي عند لوس إريغاري.

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0009-0004-9794-0310 (Doi)

Received: 28/03/2026 published: 11/06/2026

تاريخ الاستلام: 2026/03/28 تاريخ النشر: 2026/06/11

Article abstract:

This article examines the feminist philosophy of Luce Irigaray in the context of postmodern thought, exploring the persistent marginalization of women within Western metaphysical, philosophical, and psychoanalytic traditions. It highlights Irigaray's contributions to understanding the ontology of the feminine, her critique of phallogentric rationality, and her innovative strategies for constructing a feminine discourse. By tracing the historical and symbolic repression of women, the study demonstrates how Irigaray recovers female subjectivity through language, embodiment, and sexual difference. Additionally, the article emphasizes the role of embodied memory and feminine knowledge as an ethical and epistemological resource, proposing a reconceptualization of identity, desire, and relationality beyond patriarchal hierarchies.

Key words : Feminism; Luce Irigaray; Deconstruction; Psychoanalysis; Feminine Knowledge; Postmodern Critique.

ملخص المقال:

تعالج هذه المقالة الفلسفة النسوية لدى لوس إريغاري في سياق الفكر ما بعد الحداثي، حيث تستكشف التهميش المستمر للمرأة داخل التقاليد الميتافيزيقية والفلسفية والتحليلية النفسية الغربية. وتُبرز إسهامات إريغاري في فهم أنطولوجيا الأنثوي، ونقدها للعقلانية المتمركزة حول الذكورة، واستراتيجياتها المبتكرة في بناء خطاب أنثوي. ومن خلال تتبع القمع التاريخي والرمزي الذي طال المرأة، تبين الدراسة كيف تستعيد إريغاري ذاتية المرأة عبر اللغة والتجسد والاختلاف الجنسي. كما تؤكد المقالة على دور الذاكرة المتجسدة والمعرفة الأنثوية بوصفهما مورداً أخلاقياً وإبستمولوجياً، مقترحة إعادة تصوّر مفاهيم الهوية والرغبة والعلاقاتية خارج البنى الهرمية الأبوية.

كلمات مفتاحية: النسوية؛ لوس إريغاري؛ التفكيك؛ التحليل النفسي؛ المعرفة الأنثوية؛ النقد ما بعد الحداثي.

Introduction

Within the framework of an entrenched Western culture, marked by a persistent rhetoric of centrality, discourses of the “first sex” or “second sex” have risen, positioning the male as the exclusive subject at the core of studies on gender and sexual ethics. Meanwhile, the topic of “woman” has been relegated to the margins of exclusionary practices that unhesitatingly cast her outside the dominant cultural order, rendering her existence a mere social specter—observed from a distance in relation to the active and vigilant role of male dominance. From this context, feminist stances emerged as a means to resist prevailing sexual hierarchies, through critique, writing, and protest.

In the field of philosophy, for instance, a distinct “feminine writing” or discourse has been developed to convincingly express women’s concerns and vulnerabilities—a discourse that escapes masculine arrogance and its exclusion from the circuits of thought, culture, society, and politics. Feminist criticism has directed its scrutiny toward the rational and logical propositions of male philosophers, from Plato to Hegel, as a censure of the long history of marginalization, denial, and male bias. Even modernity, with its Enlightenment values and claims for gender equality, has achieved only limited success in addressing these inequities.

The postmodernist movement, however, has opened social and intellectual spaces for rethinking the unjust categorization of women as peripheral to established systems and structures—viewed as an appendage or an unnecessary subject outside the sphere of progress, contradicting the ideals of Enlightenment. It can be asserted that women have not enjoyed the emancipatory promises afforded to their male counterparts: the white European man, reflecting an exaggerated centrality in dominance over gender and its political and cultural discourses, which reduce women to mere symbols of deficiency or negation. A vivid illustration of this perspective can be observed in modern art museums, where the female figure is often represented in its natural form, typically nude, reflecting male perceptions of women as fragile and powerless bodies.

1. The “Female” Dilemma in Luce Irigaray’s Thought

The critical insights brought forth by the postmodern wave have revitalized issues concerning women and the complexities of femininity, which had emerged with force in the depths of philosophical and psychoanalytic inquiry. This feminist critique represents an extraordinary ambition to open new and innovative horizons. Postmodern feminist theory constitutes a significant endeavor in the history of humanity to understand the “being of woman”: the symptoms of the feminine and the effects of the feminist perspective across various levels—political, social, cultural, economic, and religious. This approach has been notably explored in Francophone philosophical, literary, and psychoanalytic works by figures such as Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Françoise Collin, and Sarah Kofman, among others.

It is evident that the feminist orientation within postmodern narratives, for instance in France or Belgium, remains complex and somewhat opaque, as it integrates a vast archive of historical observations on the female across religion, anthropology, sociology, and culture. These heterogeneous elements are deconstructed to enable a revelatory thinking process aimed at reconstructing or creating a framework for the meaning of woman in contemporary thought. Feminine thinking engages the physical, material, and imaginary dimensions alongside the social and symbolic, forming a paradigmatic subversion in which whispers of language, fragments of writing, and bodily metaphors intertwine to generate new conceptions and pressing questions that reshape the feminine as a distinct ontological and structural entity.

One may pose a critical question: what is the dilemma of the “female” within masculine discourse? Why does the “female” always appear as a truncated element at the core of philosophical discourse, which claims universality and comprehensiveness? Does this not attest to the arrogance and culture of exclusion toward the “other”—the silenced internal voice of the other half of humanity? The emergence of women and their challenge to phallic language through the creation of distinctly feminine writing has disrupted, in unprecedented ways, the masculine norms and structures established over centuries of systems, standards, and scientific frameworks (Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n’en est pas un.*, 1977, pp. 18-22).

Luce Irigaray’s feminist thought is revolutionary in its conception. As a linguist and psychoanalyst, she consistently defended the duality of the human self and the necessity of sexual difference throughout her scholarly works, asserting that humanity is not singular but divisible into two: men and women. Others—especially women—have traditionally been considered mere copies of the ideal male, and therefore these copies do not seek to fight for equality but remain subordinate to an origin that does not admit replication. Moreover, these less-than-ideal copies have not been defined in themselves; in other words, these selves have been conceived not as distinct, but as deficient, sufficient to maintain their dependence on the ideal self.

This philosophical model positions the singular example as exemplary, while all others remain imperfect or secondary. Correspondingly, this mirrors the political model of the leader or ruler, deemed the best and the only capable of governing citizens, who are classified as more or less deserving of their human and civic identities.

Following this political and anthropological revolution, the theological dimension revisits the reconstruction of the divine concept, destabilizing the “I-He” dichotomy within religious discourse to probe deeply into the notion of God. Irigaray’s feminist thought represents a decisive critique of Western hierarchical thinking, which grants men, fathers, and God supreme authority, power, and veneration. She engages patriarchal dominance even in its theological obsession, arguing that the dimensions of sanctity and paternal dependency cannot be ignored. Her work raises theological questions about the sacred from a feminist perspective infused with deconstruction and psychoanalytic insight, critiquing monolithic or trinitarian religious models as reflecting purely masculine worldviews across religions (Krier, 2004, p. 117).

Irigaray emphasizes the necessity of imagining a feminine form of the divine—a concept that is deliberately ambiguous and symbolic, defending her endeavor to re-center the feminine subject. With men’s historical exclusion of the second sex, they no longer have the authority to define “the female,” prompting the creation of an imaginative, symbolic notion of the divine that challenges traditional male-centered conceptualizations. As Irigaray states, “one may say that the concept of the divine is subjected to the masculine intellect in many respects. (Irigaray, 1989, pp. 47-49)”

2. Irigaray’s Deconstructions: New Approaches to Thinking the Feminine

Luce Irigaray’s writing demonstrates a profound theoretical and practical transformation within Western cultural, literary, and intellectual frameworks. Her intellectual dexterity reflects a feminist vigilance capable of unsettling the assumptions upon which rational discourse—grounded in scientific, historical, and philosophical traditions—has long relied. Irigaray’s work draws on a rich, interdisciplinary knowledge base spanning linguistics, psychoanalysis, and philosophy, which equips her to confront foundational structures of Western rationality, deconstruct its bastions, and interrogate its claims.

From her linguistic analyses of psychoanalytic patients to her feminist theorization grounded in an ethics of sexual difference and the psychology of women, Irigaray illuminates female sexuality and its linguistic expressions, extending inquiry from the biological to the sensory and psychological, and through the theological and anthropological domains—all intimately linked to women's cultural representations and embodiments.

Her method of deconstruction (La Déconstruction) serves to destabilize rationalist logic, disrupting centralizing discourses and interrogating the roots of philosophy by navigating its substrata and hidden folds. She activates memory and rekindles what has been repressed—from Plato to Descartes and Spinoza—drawing on the voices of the marginalized (Krier, 2004, p. 98): the deprived, the insane, the deviant, and women; all those historically excluded from philosophical and metaphysical discourse. Through this process, Irigaray seeks to forge a feminine language or discourse, one that confronts the dilemmas and anxieties of sexual difference.

Irigaray rigorously deconstructs epistemic frameworks that have become entrenched within Western cultural contexts, offering alternatives, new pathways, and avenues for insight into both premodern and modern thought. Language itself occupies a central and inseparable role in her feminist writings (Irigaray, *Le Temps de la différence. Pour une révolution pacifique.*, 1989, pp. 63-67). Linguistics provides a robust theoretical platform from which she examines the intricacies and conflicts embedded in speech—its interpretive twists and culturally conditioned meanings—recognizing language as a crucial instrument for understanding human existence, thought, and historical experience.

This orientation led Luce Irigaray to develop a universal and encompassing form of writing, unleashing a radical energy to reshape the frameworks that have historically represented relationships with women. Her deconstructive approach draws inspiration from Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida, unsettling the premises of scientific and ideological discourses, challenging the legacies of religion, political slogans, and cosmological vocabularies, while engaging with rhetorical, philosophical, and psychoanalytic imaginings, as well as ethical considerations of markets and economic structures.

Beyond the biological realm, Irigaray's concern lies with the philosophy of the feminine across cultural, anthropological, psychological, and linguistic domains, tracing the historical roots of feminine gender and its transformative implications. By continuously interrogating the questions surrounding women, she produced dense and impassioned writings exploring the interplay between female sexuality and the desire embedded in language (Irigaray, *Sexes et parentés.*, 1987, pp. 23-25). In doing so, she profoundly altered the ways in which gender relations have historically been conceptualized, offering readers incisive critical insight, analytical sophistication, and eloquence grounded in an extensive engagement with feminist archives and their currents.

Following the upheavals of 1968, and the subsequent demands for women's civic rights, Irigaray began publishing widely across Europe, gaining a significant readership due to her employment of potent deconstructive strategies targeting dominant discourses. These strategies expose and destabilize prevailing norms, probing theoretical and historical intersections as well as gendered practices, and exploring their reflections in imagination, philosophy, drama, literature, theology, and science.

Her mission sought to reveal and critique the falsity of philosophical and psychoanalytic discourse, which has historically reduced or marginalized the female as merely a shadow of the male, perpetuated by men and institutional forces—religious, social, and cultural. Irigaray analogizes this systemic subordination to economic roles: on one side, there are agents of production, authority, and management [men]; on the

other, commodities, materials, and products [women]. This conceptualization underscores her critique of the structures that render women passive objects within both symbolic and material hierarchies.

This aligns with traditional philosophy, which seeks a singular, unified model of subjectivity: the masculine. at best, this monolithic model allows for a reconciliation between the one and the many, yet the singular—the one—remains the axis that governs the hierarchy of multiplicity. the individual is the man: unique, singular, and ideal (Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un.*, 1977, pp. 85-91). concrete individuality is but a reproduction of the ideal or an image derived from it. the platonic view of the world, through its concept of truth, manifests in practical reality daily. while one may believe oneself to be an independent reality or a singular truth, one is in fact only a relatively faithful copy of an idealized self, which exists outside one's actual self.

Consequently, the “woman” or “girl” is subjected to masculine domination, silenced, wounded in her selfhood, and lamenting her status as secondary or subordinate to the male. she internalizes blame, seeing herself as weak and burdened by fantasies imposed by the paternal ego, which subordinates her to men, confines her within the binary of clitoris/penis, or situates her in relations of actor/passive, negative/positive. these symbolic orientations, often enacted with masculine pride and a sense of superiority, are reinforced by paternal or divine authority. luce irigaray rejects such representations, viewing them as culturally exaggerated symbolic constructs. as she observes:

"there is, then, a silence that envelops this great confidence which spares you, at first glance, from error in judging the sex of the person you may encounter. what seems crucial is that your conviction is firm, without potential doubt, that you cannot err, that no confusion is possible, and that culture reassures you—or did it?—that the distinction you make is beyond error. (Irigaray, *Je, tu, nous. Pour une culture de la différence*, , 1990, p. 17)"

Irigaray acknowledges that women remain subjected to masculine imaginaries, which confine them to sexual desire. even psychoanalytic frameworks, from freud to lacan, have subsumed women under a phallic metaphysics. women—the girl, the adolescent, the female subject—have been construed as “feminized masculine,” reflecting a latent female desire to seek the absent phallic other. against this, irigaray seeks to uncover a different kind of woman: women as seen through women's eyes, free from male-centric perspectives, what she terms the “feminine-feminine.” (Irigaray, *Quand nos lèvres se parlent*, 1976, p. 25)

This approach foregrounds a deeper engagement with the sacred feminine, its ambiguities and contradictions, interpreting the holiness of the female body as generating a fragmented semantic cosmos—a self in crisis between love, oppression, injustice, and silence—yet infused with a distinctly feminine genius. it constitutes a radical divergence from male narratives and representations, which confine the sacred feminine to fixed systems or meanings linked to production, reproduction, or corporeal engagement with the male body. such male-centered interpretations, according to irigaray, inhibit the creative and generative visions of the sacred feminine, which have been obscured beneath layers of narcissistic masculine thought and its self-centered exceptionalism.

3. Psychoanalysis of Femininity: Irigaray and the Intimacies of Women

In her writings, Luce Irigaray consolidated a relentless critique of the symbolic authority of the masculine, which historically barred women from participating in discourse, politics, or the management of

social and economic life. Women were relegated to reserve roles, confined to motherhood, domestic labor, sexualized objects, or associated with “diabolical seduction.” This negative perception derives from entrenched social norms shaped by a male-centered universe. Irigaray identifies the “paternal” as a manifestation of the sexualized economy of social life, which enforces the “phallic contract” and suppresses alternative female sexualities. She advocates for a reimagined female sexuality, understood through her concept of the “feminine-feminine”, exploring the multifaceted terrains of the female body and actively challenging phallocentric constructs (Irigaray, *Quand nos lèvres se parlent*, 1976, p. 24).

Irigaray strongly critiques the biologically and psychologically grounded roles imposed on women by scientific discourse, calling instead for a new ethics of sexual difference. She questions the scientific and ethical classification of sexual identity, the unknown source from which masculinity and femininity are culturally produced—“what anatomy has yet to fully apprehend.” (Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n’en est pas un.*, 1977, p. 61) The ethics of sexual difference, she argues, requires concepts uniquely feminine, necessitating extensive engagement with anthropology, culture, psychoanalysis, and linguistics. Her feminist framework probes the complex interplay of passivity and agency, and the dialectic between masculine and feminine poles, advocating for a vision of coexistence and complementarity between the sexes.

Regarding sexual roles and women’s assumed passivity during intercourse, Irigaray deconstructs psychological and biological assumptions, interrogating cultural norms that render feminine sexuality inherently passive. She highlights women’s inclinations toward agency and certain intimate tendencies, including same-sex desire, proposing a model of female sexuality that challenges its traditional positioning as submissive to men. Women are portrayed as complex sexual subjects, encompassing integration and separation, containment and desire. Irigaray asks: is the woman active? masochistic? destructive? She observes:

"Competition and rivalry in sexual relations appear only among males. Does this justify prohibitions applied to female aggression? Consequently, women develop strong masochistic tendencies that eroticize self-directed destructive impulses—unless a woman transgresses social norms and her natural disposition. (Irigaray, *Le souffle des femmes*, 1996, p. 55)"

Irigaray emphasizes the internal/external dialectic, where the woman’s interiority may harbor destructive energies, given limited outlets for outward agency or aggression, except in socially transgressive acts. Her work documents the female struggle to assert selfhood, rejecting the notion of women as silent images, rigid frameworks, or objects of male desire and normativity.

Her deconstructive approach systematically dismantles the central phallic discourse, employing exaggeration and critical mimicry as tools of disruption. Irigaray’s critique navigates the risks of self-contradiction inherent in rebelling against male logic and narrative coherence. The feminine is positioned as the perpetual Other, enigmatic, volatile, and resistant (Irigaray, *Sexes et parentés.*, 1987, p. 98). Feminist writing, in her view, is a form of radical transgression: simultaneously structured and fragmented, deliberately generating contradictions that liberate expression from phallocentric institutions and their deep-seated narcissism. It stands at the threshold of joyous ruin, severing the supplemental, passive roles historically assigned to women as adjuncts to masculine authority.

Masculine discourse, in its hegemonic and transcendent presence, has historically produced a profound absence of feminist engagement with questions of the universal and the divine. By generating a global philosophical and discursive system tailored to its own needs and ideals, male discourse imposed constraints that limited the female intellect, which was often ill-suited to such elevated propositions or to its own

specific inquiries and reflections (Irigaray, *Le Temps de la différence. Pour une révolution pacifique.*, 1989, pp. 36-39). What men imposed shaped gender relations, interactions with the world, and the treatment of subjects and beings. Negative manifestations arose, privileging only men with access to notions of cosmic value and divine authority, thereby producing a male-centered conception of the sacred. The dominant discourse, operating within its own spheres, ascends metaphorically toward the heavens, inventing masculine interpretations and representations of the divine, asserting a form of neutrality over its own interpretive architecture of the universe, and imposing authoritarian, unilateral explanations on social and individual structures.

Through her critique, Luce Irigaray traces the genealogies of masculinity back to their origins, to the metaphorical cave where men have retreated since childhood at the dawn of history. She observes that men have not yet abandoned this topography or topological space, which dictates how they live, perceive, and exercise control over women (Krier, 2004, p. 102). The cave serves as a representation of a primordial space that organizes and confines male thought, obstructing access to the origin or primary matrix: the female womb. Men remain imprisoned within this cave, and over time, this repression has transformed into a sexualized hysteria that confines attention to genital and phallic organs, rendering sexuality a representational project of their own making. Consequently, male experience becomes a continuous movement in a single direction, confined to the same "cave" or theatrical space of representation.

Irigaray seeks to avoid strict binary oppositions, such as male/female, which inherently exclude one in favor of the other. She treats opposites not as ends in themselves but as strategic tools for liberating subjectivity. As she states:

"I do not favor opposites or extremes. I return to them as a means of liberation, a way to escape the pull of opposition, the obedience or submission to the singular. Opposition itself does not suit me—it is a necessity only to which I may be compelled. Nearly all structures and perspectives are opaque; I take from this lens a starting point to delay the arrival of 'truth' in order to highlight another perspective, another truth on the other side. Thus, it is preferable to rely on the logic of inversion or reversal, to seek the privilege of openness to all, to live life fully, to search for its essence—without which nothing else truly remains. (Irigaray, *Le souffle des femmes*, 1996, p. 74)"

Through this lens, Irigaray proposes a feminist vision in which women are perceived and interpreted from their own perspective, reclaiming both the sacred and complex dimensions of the feminine, rather than through the distorting lens of male-centered metaphysics, theology, and cultural imagination.

4. Feminist Theory and the Ontology of the Feminine

Feminist critiques oscillate between openness and closure: is the woman liberated or constrained? Can her identity be determined? Unfortunately, this proves elusive; she is neither fixed nor classifiable. She cannot be captured in a singular definition or conceptual unit, as one might assign a letter or number in a sequence. Yet, this indeterminacy does not imply that the feminine is without limits or significance. French feminist theory—particularly in the works of Irigaray, Cixous, and Kristeva—seeks to illuminate the

singularity of the feminine as it manifests linguistically, artistically, and corporeally (Irigaray, Je, tu, nous. Pour une culture de la différence, , 1990, p. 82). Its expressions are simultaneously clear and enigmatic, with emphasis on ontological dimensions: the feminine self or entity is foundational and indispensable to deconstructive analyses. These explorations reveal morphologies that transcend narratives of deficiency, passivity, and emotional subjugation imposed by patriarchal discourse, constructing distinctive networks of resistance through writing, art, and metaphor.

Within a closed, spiraling dynamic of negation—"neither/nor"—the sexual scene divides between male and female, each asserting its centrality. Irigaray aims to bring these two genders into renewed encounter, confronting each other in their ontological nakedness. In this space, they intertwine and intersect at a shared ontological point, facilitating a release from critique, a transcendence of neglect, and a dismantling of representations and structures that separate them. This encounter seeks the self beneath the surface, the being beneath the structure: we adorn ourselves with differences to please ourselves, often forgetting the existential self from which humans are divided into "I and You," where "You" is simply another "I." (Irigaray, Je, tu, nous. Pour une culture de la différence, , 1990, pp. 62-65) This complex otherness significantly mitigates conflicts and disputes between us.

To transcend the singular-plural model, Irigaray proposes a model of the two: two beings who are not repetitions of each other, not one dominant and the other subordinate, but a harmonious encounter of truly distinct individuals. This model of the couple relies on sexual difference. Why specifically sexual difference? Because two beings exist and are realized existentially; they need not occupy a hierarchical relationship. These two beings share the responsibility of mutual exchange, preserving humanity, cultivating culture, and honoring their differences.

Irigaray's quiet revolution advocates for a reinterpretation of relations with women and with the external world, establishing new ontological spaces where interaction, containment, and generative acts—embodied in motherhood, partnership, and sexual life—can coalesce. Her work seeks to reconstruct these relational frameworks, centering the feminine within discourse and lived experience, and enabling a fuller realization of both self and other (Irigaray, Sexes et parentés., 1987, pp. 74-77).

Beyond the deconstruction of masculine authority, one must also consider the embodied memory of the feminine, the cumulative knowledge encoded in women's lived experience, imagination, and cultural practices. Irigaray's emphasis on the feminine is not limited to abstract theorization; it extends to the corporeal, tactile, and affective dimensions of existence. The female body itself becomes a repository of historical, social, and ontological memory—a living archive of resilience, creativity, and resistance (Irigaray, Le Temps de la différence. Pour une révolution pacifique., 1989, p. 23). In this sense, women carry within themselves the traces of suppressed voices, hidden stories, and unrecognized labors of generations, which together form a substratum of feminine epistemology.

Acknowledging this embodied memory allows for a reconceptualization of knowledge and ethics, one that integrates sensibility, sensuality, and the imagination alongside reason. Feminine knowledge, thus, is not a derivative of masculine rationality; it is productive, critical, and generative, offering alternative perspectives on history, society, and the sacred. Through this lens, the act of remembering, narrating, and embodying becomes a form of intellectual and ethical insurgency—an assertion that the feminine presence is both irreducible and indispensable to human understanding and cultural continuity.

Conclusion:

Irigaray's perspectives converge with the deconstructive critique of logocentric and phallogocentric metaphysics that has dominated Western thought. Simultaneously, she engages critically with psychoanalytic frameworks, particularly the negative and deficient representations of the female subject in Freud and Lacan, who conceptualize the girl as a "man without a penis" or a "small man." The philosopher challenges the suppression of difference, which has historically portrayed women as incomplete or passive within modernist narratives. Because women were perceived as lacking the active sexual agency attributed to men, they were positioned as submissive, absent, or deficient. In response, Irigaray redefines womanhood as a reflection of humanity itself.

In dismantling masculine authority, Irigaray develops a new feminist language rich with feminine being, constructing a methodology that articulates sexual difference through a lexicon free of male-centric discourse. She deliberately obscures the speaker's identity, opposing pseudo-scientific authority that conceals the subjectivity of interlocutors—particularly women—while perpetuating their exclusion from knowledge, philosophy, and science. As she observes, conventional disciplines—linguistics and psychoanalysis included—are often unprepared to shoulder the responsibility of engaging with women's voices and experiences. Irigaray's project seeks to recover lost courage, trace the active female voice, and expose the artifices and falsehoods embedded in scientific and philosophical discourses that have historically misrepresented the feminine.

From certainty to deconstruction and probabilistic reasoning, Irigaray's feminist writing embodies a radical, rebellious stance, reinforcing feminine courage and the logic of a feminine identity open to both the tangible and the symbolic. Her work breaks free from the constraints of male rationality, which often sanctifies imaginary forms of divinity while subsuming women under patriarchal oversight. She boldly posits the female subject as distinct from the authority and confidence traditionally attributed to masculine reason, embracing skepticism and intensity as guiding principles. Woman exists always at the periphery, outside phallic boundaries and hierarchical identifications.

Through this distinctive demarcation of interior and exterior, Irigaray constructs the concept of femininity as a vehicle for representing female subjectivity and its relation to human desire. The pursuit of these complexities becomes both a labyrinth and an intriguing puzzle, inviting deeper exploration of the feminine psyche, its yearnings, and the multiplicity of its expressions.

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