

**Éric Laurent**

## **Womanly Positions of Being<sup>1</sup>**

*This article, drawn from a lesson of Éric Laurent's 1992-3 Course Positions féminines de l'être: du masochisme féminin au pousse à la femme and published in La Cause freudienne, Issue 24, pp. 107-113, appears here in English translation for the first time. (The article published in The Psychoanalytical Notebooks Issue 5, 2001, pp. 33-58, and reprinted in The Later Lacan, Suny Press, 2007, pp. 222-242, under the title "Feminine Positions of Being", corresponds to another lesson from this Course, originally published in the Cahier de l'ACF-VLB, Issue 12, May 1999, pp. 17-33<sup>2</sup>).*

It took Freud's analysis of his daughter for him to introduce the concept of feminine masochism into psychoanalysis, even though he had previously stressed the importance in the female subject of the pain inflicted by the loved one.<sup>3</sup> The dates when the two key articles on female masochism were drafted correspond to Anna's two stretches of analysis. Freud is looking again at the problem of masochism in women back in "A Child is Being Beaten"<sup>4</sup>, but it is with "The Economic Problem of Masochism" in 1924 that he introduces a three-headed Cerberus: "Masochism comes under our observation in three forms: as a condition imposed on sexual excitation, as an expression of a feminine nature, and as a norm of behaviour."<sup>5</sup> Freud is hard-pushed to name "feminine" the willingness to be treated "like a small and helpless child, [...] particularly, like a naughty one", and this is marked by his recourse to a Latin expression to justify his choice:

if one has an opportunity of studying cases in which the masochistic fantasies have been especially richly elaborated, one quickly discovers that they place the subject in a characteristically female situation; they signify, that is, being castrated, or copulated with, or giving birth to a baby. For this reason I have called this form of masochism, *a priori* as it were, the feminine form, although so many of its features point to infantile life.<sup>6</sup>

It is the difficulty of this articulation that Lacan would raise when he remarked that this comes to a head with “the promotion of a partial drive [...] to the status of a pole of genital maturity.”<sup>7</sup> Here, Lacan is objecting to Freud by bringing up another warning from Freud himself, “not to reduce the supplement of the feminine with respect to the masculine to the complement of the passive with respect to the active.”<sup>8</sup> As soon as this Lacanian objection is present, we have the idea that if there is a Being of woman, then it is in a supplement. The term does however appear to contrast with the term “lack” which marks the place of the girl in the Freudian problematic, assigned as she is with a minus faced with the presence of the penis on the boy’s side.

## A supplement

It takes the whole development that Lacan produced on the phallus as a signifier to be able to qualify the womanly position using the term “supplement”. With sound structuralist method, Lacan shares out the opposition of *to have/to have not* the penis into a symbolic opposition, one that is marked or unmarked and ascertained on the basis of the phallus. The structural opposition turns the phallus into a symbolic trait that shares out two terms, marked and unmarked by the presence of the organ, an imaginary trait. It is in assigning to the unmarked term a correlate outside the system qualified as jouissance that Lacan outstrips the structural operation. In a sense, locating the “Being of woman” on the basis of a specific jouissance amounts to following a Freudian indication. Lacan doesn’t do this using the hypothesis of a libidinal co-excitation supposed to stem from a developmental mechanism, but using a systemic hypothesis: supplementary womanly jouissance cannot be grasped with the phallic measure, it exceeds it. A number of clinical examples from Freud and from Freud’s students bear witness to the recourse to the concept of feminine masochism to account for the excess of privation that love leads to in women, beyond any consideration proper to the pleasure principle. For example, Helene Deutsch had summed up feminine masochism as “overstepping normal limits”:

What the woman belonging to our erotic type achieves through love, other women achieve by more circuitous, more social paths. The willingness to

serve a cause or a human being with love and abnegation may be a reflection of feminine masochism. Here too, just as when it takes a direct sexual turn, it can overstep the normal limits: then the woman gladly exposes herself to privations, sufferings, and even the danger of death.<sup>9</sup>

So, a woman puts herself in a position of being entirely for a man or a cause, regardless of the indignity of that man or that cause. If the impact of the beyond of the pleasure principle may be qualified as feminine masochism, it is because phallic measure, the “normal limit”, which is so present in male masochistic perversion, breaks off here. From the point of view of love, there is a zone that for women presents itself as a sort of turntable where the subject moves ever further on the path of “giving everything to the loved one”, “being everything for him”, a path upon which the subject tries, in the name of love, to transform all her having into being: “give everything to be everything” in what we might call, in homage to Marcel Mauss, the “potlatch of love”. As she moves forward on this path, a tipping point is reached. The subject may come to realise that she is no longer anything for the other. She is a mistreated waste object. She finds herself empty. The false solution of feminine masochism is that, between all and nothing, the subject wants to ensure a place in the man’s fantasy for herself. It is a false solution because the truth of the womanly position is not to be all or nothing, but to be Other for a man.

Deducing the Being of a subjective position from a lack is an operation that imposes itself based on the psychoanalytic discourse, but which Lacan hints at in the framework of philosophy from a time when he was re-thinking the Freudian aporiae of female sexuality in the fifties. The opposition between *Being* and *Nothingness* was then providing the French translation for Heidegger’s opposition between *Being* and *Time as a modality of non-Being*. A whole movement of French thinkers who were structuring the intellectual milieu outside the university, Georges Bataille, Raymond Queneau, Michel Leiris, were interested in locating the subject on the basis of a negativity in act, and they grasped the Freudian death-drive from this angle. Lacan took up this angle afresh by inscribing womanly jouissance into the picture. First of all he did it from an extreme position: psychosis, for which, he insists, it is here and here alone that The Woman exists. He shows how in the case of President Schreber “divination by the unconscious no doubt warned the subject very early on that, unable to be the phallus the mother is missing, there remained the solution of being the woman that men are missing.”<sup>10</sup> In bringing together paranoia and the feminine position, Lacan was re-examining the indication put forward by Freud: “the second phase, the unconscious and masochistic one, in which the child himself is beaten by its father, is incomparably the more important [...] I should not be surprised if it were some day possible to prove that the same fantasy is the basis of the delusional litigiousness of paranoia.”<sup>11</sup> Except that, when Lacan takes up

the examination of this hypothesis, he does so with a mind to determining what separates the two positions.

The term “divination by the unconscious” deserves some comment. Is it the unconscious that does the divining? Is it destiny? Is it the subject? Faced with the idea of an automatic unconscious that fixes a destiny by way of sheer repetition, Lacan recalls the compatibility between formal systems and interpretative deduction. He places the unconscious in the setting of “divinatory intelligence”<sup>12</sup> and recalls to what extent, from the time of the invention of writing, omens would be interpreted as the reading of a text in which the order of the world was inscribed, “a tablet on which the gods would trace out the destinies of men”, some civilisations pushing this reading to the point of extracting a “divinatory logic” of a “rigorous binary”, in Jean-Pierre Vernant’s words.<sup>13</sup> In this regard, one might wonder at the continuity in Chinese and Far Eastern zones between divinatory practices and the taste for gambling that is infiltrating the way subjects from these areas game in the capitalist marketplace. The absence of monotheistic religion has surely played its role in keeping up astrological, divinatory practices and fortune telling through game playing in this part of civilisation.

## **A logic of the *all***

What so-called “feminine masochism” and the delusional homosexuality of Schreber’s *The Woman* have in common is the foregrounding of a logic of the *all*. In the cases isolated by Helene Deutsch, what holds our attention is a point we might formulate as follows: women put themselves into a position of “being all” for a man, regardless of the indignity of the man in question. And this is where a zone of overlap between all and nothing comes in. This zone may be broached on the basis of the well-known property of the empty set, namely that it is able to add itself to any counting up of the parts of a set. A one-element set:  $\{1\}$  includes at least two sub-parts:  $\{1\}$ ,  $\{\emptyset\}$ . For the female subject, there is a zone in love that can present itself as a sort of turntable where the subject moves ever further on the path of “giving everything to the loved one”, a path upon which the subject tries, in the name of love, to transform all her having into being: “give everything to be everything.” As she moves forward on this path, inexplicably things tip over. The subject may come to realise that she is no longer anything for the other. She is a mistreated waste object. She finds herself empty. If we may be granted this analogy, we could say that the false solution of feminine masochism consists for the subject in ensuring herself a place in the man’s fantasy in the same way that the empty set ensures itself a place when parts of the set are counted up. It is a false solution because what is involved in the womanly position is to be, not this ubiquitous element, but Other for a man who situates himself on the basis of the phallic trait. “Being the woman that men are

missing” is a psychotic solution because it is worded in universal terms: in fact, what is involved is being Other of the Other. Not having come across any representative in the symbolic system, it is a solution that consists in turning oneself into its substance. The subject turns himself into the absolute addressee of this discourse spoken by mankind, this incomprehensible phallic signification that circulates. He turns himself into the *jouissance* that is missing in the system. This is the point at which the different definitions of the psychotic subject overlap: the psychotic subject as “master in the city of words”, as “receptacle, locus” of the *jouissance* that in the case of neurosis is missing and only present *qua* symbolised by the phallus. Outside psychosis, it is not about confronting universal discourse, but rather being Other for a man, one selected from the countable set of men.

## Being Other for a man

This is the indication Lacan gives when he specifies the particular chicane of access to the Other of the phallus in the speaking being, which has nothing to do with the false “natural” symmetry of sexual difference: “The difference between the sexes is denatured [...]. A man serves here as a relay so that a woman becomes this Other to herself, as she is to him.”<sup>14</sup> The metaphor of the relay reminds us of the importance of races in the descriptions of the One’s relations to the Other, since the brilliant Zeno, with his Achilles and the tortoise.<sup>15</sup> That woman should become Other signals that she is divided by her *jouissance* between a portion that falls under phallic *jouissance* and another ecstatic dimension, the same that Bernini captured in his Saint Theresa. This is why, in his Seminar *Encore*, Lacan is opposed to reducing mystic *jouissance* to a substitute of phallic relation as a whole rational trend had been trying to do since the eighteenth century. This would amount to reducing the Other to the One. The operation that is aimed at is such that the One refers to an Other that finds itself barred, divided and cleft in the operation: A/One.<sup>16</sup>

The relay race, with its chicane, is the structure that has to be realised. It has variations. Hysterical intrigue is one of them. The hysteric subject only manages to locate the Other by introducing another woman and questions the mystery of the Other by means of a man, titleholder of the One. Instead of using the man as a relay so as to bring about her division, the subject doubles up and, in the mirror-games of jealousy, follows the place of womanliness. How is the womanly position to be distinguished from the hysteric set-up? Lacan gives several versions of this. We shall consider two of them: one from the 1958 “Guiding Remarks...” text, the other from 1973’s “L’*étourdit*”.

First of all, let’s consider how, in 1958, he splits up the positions of desire and love in men and women. On the man’s side, just when he declares to his

partner “You are my woman”<sup>17</sup>, in other words, just when he castrates himself for one, the *phallus-girls* surge up “in a Venusberg to be situated beyond.”<sup>18</sup> Lacan gives an amusing commentary on this structural effect: “it is confirmed thereby that what reemerges in the subject’s unconscious is the Other’s desire, that is, the phallus that was desired by the mother.” Thus, just as the subject thinks he is making every effort to be independent and autonomous, he is fulfilling the Other’s desire in him. This is not what principally holds our attention, let’s look rather to the other term of the alternative, the woman’s side. Rather than considering things to be resolved by the terms that are commonly maintained in the Freudian development on penis-envy, Lacan situates the difficulty beyond this. Admittedly, the particularity of the womanly position is to take the phallic organ from the body of the man she loves, but “after which, the question arises of knowing whether the real penis, because it belongs to her sexual partner, destines a woman to an attachment devoid of duplicity.” It is from this perspective that the female subject’s life is considered as having but one true event: detachment from the mother and turning towards the father. Once this point has been reached, there will supposedly just be the ups and downs of a detachment that is only ever brought about incompletely. Attachment to the father apparently won’t pose any obstacle in itself, the detachment in favour of a man happening more or less “naturally”. This is why Lacan adds “devoid of duplicity... although it does not effect the elimination of the incestuous desire which supposedly occurs naturally here.” This is the very point Lacan puts in question. Rather than a natural elimination of incestuous attachment to the dead father, he observes the place of a painful appeal at this point to a man who would be Other enough for her to worship him. “It is a castrated lover or a dead man (or the two in one) who, for woman, hides behind the veil in order to call her adoration to it.” These private religions can present singular figures that will each go on to bring about a painful split. One such subject might choose on one side a man whose desire is sufficiently mortified to be able to then address herself, on the other side, to a series of impotent lovers. Another such subject might choose to restrict her choice of lovers to those professions in which the risks are such that the death toll is higher than the general norm in our recently pacific societies. For the female subject, the problem is not one of proliferation in the temple of Venus, but fixation “beyond the maternal semblable from which the threat came to her of a castration that does not really concern her.” Due to the fact, which Freud noted, that the threat of castration borne by the father is inoperative on the position of the female subject who is always already castrated, Lacan deduces a particular difficulty: the irrealisation of the paternal position. The wording of this deduction deserves to be spelt out: since the threat doesn’t really concern the subject, then he who bears it becomes irrealised in the position of the Ideal. What then turns out to exist is a special form of jouissance, dedicated to this father beyond the living, which has to be brought to bear on the partner’s organ. It can be seen to

what extent Freudian penis-envy designates a structure of overlap. "It is because of this ideal incubus that an embrace-like receptivity must be displaced in a sheath-like sensitivity onto the penis." In a first sense, the ecstasy of Saint Theresa vouches for a relation to the dead father, beyond anything living, and this is why the angel's arrows are arrows from a celestial Eros. You can also see how religion delivers you from superstition. It's either Saint Theresa or else the horror films that enjoy such great success in the industry of spectacle.

## The duplicity of the womanly position

So, Lacan brings out the duplicity of the womanly position along with its difficulty. For the real transfer from the "embrace-like receptivity" to the "sheath-like sensitivity" to come about there must not be any obstacle to the subject standing to be the locus of a jouissance beyond the phallic measure, outside of the pseudo-quantification of the male organ. It is this that "is thwarted by any imaginary identification a woman may have [...] with the phallic standard [*étalon*] that props up her fantasy." Indeed, there is no means of getting to the Other if the subject already considers herself to be One. This obstacle meets its formula in the Lacanian writing of the fantasy  $\$ / \varphi \diamond a$ . This formula allows Lacan to have us grasp the subtlety of the question such as he is opening it out throughout these years. The female subject, who is symbolically in the phallic position, is really object of desire. It still remains for her to make sure there is no imaginary obstacle to the opening out of this structure. Herein lies the importance of the mask and the womanly masquerade that has received so much attention from the finest of psychoanalysts. With regard to the mask in general, which has held a great deal of intrigue for specialists of history and religion<sup>19</sup>, Lacan summarised in one line the appeal it has for psychoanalysis: "a mask that unmasks the face it represents only by splitting in two and that represents this face only by remasking it."<sup>20</sup>

In sum, there are two schools of thought with regard to the mask. One, a naïve one, that thinks it possible to ultimately unmask the subject, and another that knows that behind the mask there is but another mask, that the mask itself only reveals its mystery by its splitting in two: there lies nothing behind the mask, which is a kind of natural model of a symbolic structure plunged into the imaginary. The mask is the successful writing of subjective division. Joan Riviere herself stated that the womanly masquerade is not in itself a pathology, it is the very presentation of a semblant that the subject mustn't be duped by.<sup>21</sup> This is the whole difficulty of knowing how to operate with the nothing, of making oneself Other without adhering to the imaginary of the One. In concluding the development from the text drafted in 1958, Lacan locates the radical difficulty of the womanly position: being caught "between a pure absence and a pure

sensitivity". Pure absence when the subject addresses herself to the love of the dead father, pure sensibility when there is jouissance. It is through the existence of this alternation, this pulsation, that the subject holds onto the desire to subsist.

## The narcissism of desire

It is at this point in the text we are commenting on that a term crops up which has remained very singular, "narcissism of desire", a term which is almost antinomic in the Lacanian categories. How can narcissism, self-love, come to be applied to desire which is first and foremost for the Other? Lacan introduces this term as a mediator between the two poles that the female subject's desire can hypostatise itself into. This invention accounts for a reproach that the fascinated man addresses to the narcissistic woman. Freud accounted for this by accepting the fiction of narcissistic woman. Lacan rejects this. Freud noted the deleterious yet enchanting charm of this kind of woman, explaining her by the fact that one meets here the primary narcissism that each subject ought to have renounced but which comes about. This would be what the woman who loves herself is designated by, the woman at her mirror enchanted with her mask. It would be this completeness through her image that supposedly fascinates the man who is hung up on her. Go a little further, and it would look natural to replace Narcissus with the nymph Echo. Lacan refuses the fiction of this narcissism by showing that there is nothing primary about it. It is a response to a primary division, to a primary dependence on the Other, a primordial alternative. The secondary mask of the *ego's* narcissism is common to both sexes.<sup>22</sup> What is particular to the womanly position is narcissism of desire that we could understand as a love of desire or even as a form of desire for desire that comes to the place of the phallus to seal the woman's outcome. This love of lack is a paradoxical narcissism, whose place is marked here. In the course of her move towards this lack, the subject hangs onto this narcissism of the *ego* in a secondary way. This term "narcissism of desire" seems to introduce what would later be developed in the study of privation. In this *imago* of the narcissistic woman, behind the symbolic phallic identification that suits the fetishistic nature of man's love, a special relation to lack lies hidden, in which women can be passionately in love with the nothing. This is a zone into which any woman can find herself pushed, in her relationship with a man. The man then serves as a relay for the female subject to glimpse the Other for herself, but this is within a deathly passion that can engulf everything.<sup>23</sup> There are realisations of this position that can be less tragic than Medea's, they have none the less the same disposition. One such subject is very well able to lend herself to the sexual whims of a certain number of her lovers, and yet she could never go without a strange repetition. Refusing any preventative contraception, she insisted on a series of abortions, verifying her privation in holding onto this deathly ritual.



There are also subtle forms that the call to “be Other for me” can assume. The gentlest form of this is: “we don’t talk enough”, i.e., “let’s sit down in the locus of the Other and be sure to make phallic signification emerge.” There is also the version that consists in choosing a homosexual friend as a confidant so that the discourse won’t come round to taking the turn of the object. There are also the not so gentle versions that can go “die for me”, or even its subtle gradation, “become a friend to womankind, understand yourself as a woman, castrate yourself, become Tiresius”. This major figure, the Greek soothsayer, taken up by Ovid, underwent a transformation into a woman that lasted seven years, after which he regained his status as a man, albeit a blind one.

## **A jouissance beyond the phallic measure**

All the versions in this series start off from the same point: the demand for recognition of the Other’s existence. Starting off from the other term of the alternative, brought out back in 1958: the presence of jouissance, Lacan was able to reformulate the woman’s call in a very different way in a text from 1973. “You’ve satisfied me, lil’ man...”<sup>24</sup> This call is a reformulation of the riddle that the Sphinx puts to Œdipus. It is not about leading Œdipus to rush to recognise himself as man in the riddle put to him, it is about situating the psychoanalyst’s discourse beyond Œdipus’ answer. The male subject is confronted not with the phallic symbol to be recognised in the four, two, and three legs, but with women’s satisfaction beyond its representation. This is a veritable embodiment of the superego, the “*surmoitié*” says Lacan, the “Über-half”<sup>25</sup>, which cannot be reduced to the maternal superego so frequently invoked by psychoanalysts as an archaic figure of a horror beyond the paternal superego. It really is a feminine superego which presentifies the demand for a jouissance beyond phallic jouissance from which the gaze cannot be averted so easily. Situating the powers of the superego in this way, with the real of jouissance and not the proscriptions of conscience, is in step with Lacan’s constant doctrine on the superego. It is a veritable push-to-crime. This is why he can say that the “Über-half is not so easily *damp-palmed off* as is the universal conscience.”<sup>26</sup> The call pushes the little man either to reduce himself to the dead man, “the hand that shall answer you, calling her Antigone as you do”, or to become the castrated lover, “come evening, to make yourself the equal of Tiresius, and, like him, having played the Other, figure out what I’ve told you.” In sum, there is a good and bad way to make oneself the equal of Tiresius. The deceptive way consists in wanting to turn oneself into the castrated lover in order to feign to have gone beyond the phallic measure. It is doubtless in order to whisper to each other that we are alike too, and nothing can separate us. The good way is to know how to figure out that this imperative is only mortifying for he who refuses to face up to the originality of the

womanly position, he who denies the originality of an act of saying that is specifically womanly, with the Other inciding directly. In another sense, Saint Theresa vouches for the fact that beyond the dead father's embrace, there lies the joy of the Other, which is nameless but whose presence is a certainty. The 1958 alternative between pure absence and pure presence is here being thought through afresh on the basis of a certainty of a jouissance of the Other, beyond the Ideal father whose threat doesn't concern the female subject directly. Outside phallogentrism, the temptations to tear free of imposed limits find their source here.

The position of the modern subject, which Lacan is inviting us to, is not one of being bound to the ship's mast like Ulysses to resist the call. What is involved is to call upon all the resources of what can be said, all the twists and turns of what has been said, to show to what extent what the Sphinx says only has mortal power if one ignores the fact that it has to be faced up to as a sexed being. Either we are dealing, in a world that represses, denies and forecloses castration, with a call from the "obscure gods"<sup>27</sup>, or the subject will know how to recognise that the voice of the gods is the voice of The Woman. It presents itself as Über-half to whoever doesn't want to hear it, but it meets up anew with its status and true place when he who makes himself the addressee thereof can take into account, one by one, which jouissance it is a matter of obtaining. For this to happen, for he who derives his authorisation from the discourse of the analyst, he has to do things in such a way that the superego can demonstrate itself to be incomplete, "refuting, in-consisting, un-demonstrating and un-deciding" itself. Here we have a logical reformulation of the ethical imperative of psychoanalysis. It is through this that both men and women shall find a way out of the chicanes of sex they are prisoner to.

### Translated from the French by Adrian Price

1 [TN, The English language boasts three adjectives and at least two nouns where French makes do with one of each. We have opted to render "féminin" and "féminité" variously as "womanly/womanliness", "feminine/femininity", and "female" (*femelle* being a strictly biological, botanical or zoological adjective in French). As a rule of thumb, we have striven to use "womanly/womanliness" when sexuation appears to be at issue; "female" to denote the female subject in general; "feminine" when the author is considering positions of Being that do not necessarily come down on the woman's side of the table of sexuation. Quotations from material published in English have not been adapted to comply with this guiding principle.]

2 [A third article by Éric Laurent bearing the title "Positions féminines de l'être", drawn from a lesson from the same seminar, appears in *Quarto* Issue 90, June 2007, pp. 28-33.]

3 Young-Bruehl, E., *Anna Freud*, London, MacMillan, London, 1988, p. 108, 109 & 121.

4 Freud, S., "A Child is being Beaten" (1919), in *Penguin Freud Library, Vol. X, On Psychopathology*, transl. by A & J. Strachey (ed.), Penguin, 1993, pp. 157-193.

5 Freud, S., "The Economic Problem of Masochism" (1924), transl. by J. Riviere & J. Strachey (ed.), in *Penguin Freud Library, Vol. XI, On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, Penguin, 1984, p. 415.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 416-7.

7 Lacan, J., "Guiding Remarks for a Convention on Female Sexuality" in *Écrits, The First Complete Edition in English*, transl. by B. Fink, New York: Norton & Co., 2006, p. 615.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Deutsch, H., *The Psychology of Women, Vol. I*, New York: Grune & Stratton, 1944, p. 273.

10 Lacan, J., "On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis" in *Écrits, op. cit.*, p. 472.

11 Freud, S., "A Child is being Beaten", *op. cit.*, p. 182.

12 Vernant, J.-P., "Parole et signes muets" in *Divination et rationalité*, Paris: Seuil, 1974, p. 9.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

14 Lacan, J., "Guiding Remarks...", *op. cit.*, p. 616.

15 Miller, J.-A., "Séance du 1er mars 1989", in *Letterina*, Bulletin of the ACF-Normandy, Issue 3.

16 [TN, Here the capital A stands for Autre, Other.]

17 [TN, The French "tu es ma femme" could also be translated as the conjugal "you are my wife", as indeed B. Fink translates it on p. 246 & 617 of Lacan, J., *Écrits, op. cit.* R. Grigg puts "you are my woman" in his translation: Lacan, J., *The Seminar Book III, The Psychoses*, New York: Norton & Co., 1993, pp. 36-7.]

18 Lacan, J., "Guiding Remarks...", *op. cit.*, p. 617. The following quotes are from the same page, commented on step by step. So as not to weigh down the bibliographical references, we shall indicate with an endnote only those moments when we are no longer referring to this page of the *Écrits*.

19 Lévi-Strauss, C., *The Way of the Masks*, transl. by S. Modolski, Seattle: University of Washington, 1982, *passim*, and *Structural Anthropology*, transl. by C. Jacobson & B. Grundfest Schoepf, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books.

20 Lacan, J., "The Youth of Gide, or the Letter and Desire", in *Écrits, op. cit.*, p. 633.

21 Riviere, J., "Womanliness as Masquerade", in this issue p. 78, "The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the 'masquerade'. My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference."

22 [TN, "ego" appears here and hereafter in the French text (and not "moi").]

23 Miller, J.-A., "Petite introduction à l'au-delà de l'Œdipe" in *La Cause freudienne*, Issue 21, May 1992, pp. 7-11.

24 Lacan, J., "L'étourdit", in *Autres écrits*, Seuil: Paris, 2001, p. 468. We shall be moving through this paragraph step by step. The following quotes are taken from here. The only subsequent bibliographical note indicates a different reference text.

25 [TN, Lacan's neologism combines "surmoi" – the superego – with "moitié", from the French expression "ma moitié" – "my better half" or "my other half".]

26 [TN, The French sentence goes: "C'est là surmoitié qui ne se surmoite pas si facilement que la conscience universelle." The neologism "surmoite" combines "surmoi" – superego – "mains moites" – "sweaty hands" – and "surmonter" – "to surmount".]

27 Lacan, J., *The Seminar, Book XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, transl. by A. Sheridan, Penguin: 1994, p. 275.